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Study for the Demand of Nature Tourism in Northern Finland for Chinese Tourists

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ABSTRACT

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Due to the rapid growth of the Chinese economy, outbound tourism has become a major part of Chinese nowadays. As it was predicted by the World Tourism Organization, China will become the world's major source of outbound tourists by 2020 with over 110 million travellers per year. In addition, inbound tourism to Finland has experienced steady growth over the last years. In 2008, over 6 million foreign visitors arrived in Finland, constituting an increase of 6 % compared to 2007. This development has built the fundament for this study.

The purpose of this study was to research the demand of nature related tourism in Northern Finland for the Chinese outbound market. This study identified to what extent nature attractions in Northern Finland are significant for Chinese tourists, what type of image Chinese travel agencies have on Finland and to what extent Chinese travel agencies are interested in including Northern Finland in their product range. In addition, sources were discovered that could make Northern Finland unappealing for Chinese tourists. Based on these findings, impulses were identified that help promote Northern Finland and its touristic offer in China.

For the theoretical part of this study, the focus was on the description of nature tourism aspects and concepts of Chinese consumer behaviour. Therefore, tourism and consumer behaviour related literature was researched. Secondary data was mainly derived from academic books, statistics, and other thesis material and from internet sources. In terms of primary data, a qualitative research was conducted in form of telephone interviews. The questions asked were partly unaided open-ended, dual-choice and multiple choice as well as in the form of metric response format questions.

This study discovered that Chinese tourists are mainly attracted to Finland due to its unspoiled nature, environmental friendliness and cultural aspects of the country. In addition it was identified that the distance and the high price category are the main sources why Northern Finland could be unappealing. In terms of nature related activities, wildlife watching/photography and Northern lights/midnight sun have the highest significance for Chinese tourists. Based on the findings, recommendations were elaborated for marketing activities and product development. The conclusion was drawn, that the future focus should be on the cooperation with Chinese travel agencies since they build the link between potential tourists and the holiday destination.

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Ulkomaanmatkailusta on tulossa merkittävä osa tämän päivän Kiinaa maan nopean kansantalouden kasvun vuoksi. Maailman matkailujärjestö ennustaa, että vuoteen 2020 mennessä Kiinasta lähtee vuosittain yli 110 miljoonaa ulkomaanmatkailijaa. Kiinalaisten matkailu myös Suomeen on noussut tasaisesti viime vuosien aikana.

Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli selvittää Pohjois-Suomen luontomatkailun kysyntää kiinalaisten matkailijoiden parissa. Tutkimus havainnollistaa, kuinka merkittäviä luontomatkailuaktiviteetit ovat kiinalaisille matkailijoille, millainen kuva kiinalaisilla matkatoimistoilla on Suomesta matkakohteena ja kuinka kiinnostuneita he ovat lisäämään Suomen matkakohteisiinsa. Tämän lisäksi tutkimus selvitti, onko Pohjois-Suomi mahdollisesti epämiellyttävä matkakohde kiinalaisille turisteille ja minkä vuoksi. Tutkimustulosten avulla voidaan helpottaa Pohjois-Suomen matkailutarjonnan mainontaa kiinalaisille matkailijoille.

Tämän opinnäytetyön teoriaosa pohjautuu matkailija- ja kuluttajakäyttäytymistä käsittelevään lähdeaineistoon, joka koostuu pääasiassa akateemisista kirjoista ja tutkimuksista, tilastoista sekä Internet-lähteistä. Tiedot kerättiin ensisijaisesti puhelinhaastatteluina kvantitatiivisina kyselyinä, jotka sisälsivät avoimia, kaksiovaihtoehtoisia ja monivalintaisia kysymyksiä.

Tutkimuksen alussa kerrotaan yksityiskohtaisesti luontomatkailusta ja sen eri kategorioista. Kolmas luku tarjoaa yleiskatsauksen Kiinan nykyisestä matkailumarkkinatilanteesta keskittyen ulkomaan matkailumarkkinoihin ja kiinalaisten matkailuun Suomessa. Neljäs luku käsittelee kiinalaista kuluttajakäyttäytymistä viidennen luvun kertoessa matkailijoiden kuluttajakäyttäytymisestä yleensä. Kuudennessa luvussa tutkitaan Kiinan markkinoita markkinasegmenttien avulla. Opinnäytetyön tutkimustulokset selvitetään luvussa seitsemän, jonka jälkeen. opinnäytetyö päättyy pohdintaan siitä, onko Suomen luontomatkailulla sijaa Kiinan ulkomaanmatkailumarkkinoilla.

Kieli	Englanti
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PREFACE

This thesis is based upon studies conducted from January to May 2010 and is compiled in fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor's Degree in Tourism Management at the Kajaani University of Applied Sciences. This thesis has been compiled solely by the authors, Hanne Torvinen and Jennifer Brosy, with the help of valuable academic literature for which references are provided at the end of this paper.

It is a pleasure for us to thank Niina Kaplas of the Arctic Flavours Association for the provision of the thesis topic and for her beneficial impulses and cooperation.

We would like to express gratitude to our leading supervisors Ruey Komulainen and Anneli Karppinen for their valuable support and advice. Furthermore, we would like to thank our co-supervisor Prof. Dr. Bochert for his contribution and cooperation.

We would like to thank in particular Wong Hoi Ki and Zeng Cheng for their unconditional assistance in conducting the telephone interviews with the travel agencies in China by using their mother tongues, Mandarin and Cantonese. Without their help, this thesis would never have become reality.

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INTRODUCTION

The nature tourism industry, which is one of the latest touristic trends such as sustainable tourism and cultural tourism, is steadily attracting worldwide interest. Indeed, nature tourism has been acknowledged for many years, in particular in Northern Finland, covering the Kainuu region and the Ostrobothnia region. The importance of nature tourism to Finland's tourism industry cannot be underestimated. Northern Finland offers a unique natural environment with resources that enrich and fascinate its visitors. Despite its vast amounts of forests, numerous trails and lakes, Northern Finland is only one of many nature tourism destinations worldwide from which travellers can choose from. For this reason, it is important to understand what aspects attract tourists to pursue nature related activities in Finland, particularly overseas tourists.

This study was commissioned by the Arctic Flavours Association in accordance to their project "From Nature to you II". The general goal of this project is to develop nature related travel products in Lapland, Northern Ostrobothnia, Kainuu and North Karelia. In order to improve business relations, there should be an emphasis on cooperation with companies operating in different areas such as the tourism and nature products sector. Therefore, it is essential to gather information about the latest market trends in regards to the tourism sector. With the help of the "From Nature to You II" project, companies will be provided with necessary information on how to improve their organisations and on how to target growing economies, such as the Chinese outbound tourism market.

The project "From Nature to you II" provides a framework for three years. It came into force on 1.8.2009 and will be finalised on 31.7.2012. The project receives funding provided by the European Union, namely through "The Rural Development Programme for Mainland Finland" under the umbrella of "The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development".

A total amount of € 360 000 is disposable for the total duration of the project. "The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development" contributes € 342 000 of this sum. The remaining amount of € 18 000 is provided by several Finnish companies in the form of annual fees.

Research aim and objectives

The central topic of this thesis is to analyze whether there is demand for nature tourism in Northern Finland for the Chinese outbound tourism market. The aim of this thesis is therefore to analyze Chinese travel agencies' perception of Northern Finland as a travel destination for Chinese tourists, in particular for nature related activities. This research was limited to travel agencies located in Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Shenzhen and Hong Kong.

The study was carried out by analyzing the collected data from telephone interviews of travel agencies located in the cities mentioned above. The main goal was to find out about the extent Chinese travel agencies are informed about the travel destination Northern Finland. Additionally, to what extent they are interested in selling this product to their customers as well as what the current trends are for Chinese consumers in regards to their travel decision.

However, this question raised even more questions that can be outlined as further targets for this study. These targets help to identify the following:

- What type of image do Chinese travel agencies have on Finland
- What nature attractions in Northern Finland are significant for Chinese tourists
- Why Finland, in particular Northern Finland, could be unattractive for Chinese travel agencies and tourists
- What type of factors indicate if Northern Finland's touristic offers are attractive for Chinese tourists
- What impulses help promote Northern Finland

Research Methodology

For the theoretical part of this study, comprehensive tourism and consumer behaviour related literature was researched in order to present a detailed outline of nature tourism and consumer buyer behaviour. Secondary data was mainly derived from academic books, statistics, and other thesis material. Due to the relevance of this study, a major part of the information used was gathered from internet sources. In terms of primary data, a qualitative research was conducted in form of telephone interviews. The questions asked during the interviews were mainly based on the theoretical context of this study.

Outline of the study

Since there is no consensus on a single definition of nature tourism, the first chapter gives a theoretical framework of this study by providing a detailed description of nature tourism and its sub-categories. A considerable part of nature tourism are activities that are pursued outdoors, very often these activities are sports-related. Therefore, a major part of this chapter is dedicated to outline adventure tourism and its outcomes.

The second chapter introduces nature tourism in regards to Northern Finland. In this context, the target group for Finland will be introduced with a list of the most important nature related activities.

Consumer behaviour in terms of tourism will be studied in chapter three. The theoretical context will be underlined by consumer behaviour models and travel motivation models.

In the fourth chapter, the Chinese market will be researched in detail via market segmentation. Hereby, the focus is on Chinese culture and its influence on purchase decisions.

In chapter five, the concept of Chinese consumer behaviour is outlined according to a study compiled by McKinsey in 2009. This will help provide a fundament for consumer behaviour trends in China. In addition, this study helps to understand the Chinese economy and how it functions.

Chapter six gives an overview about the current tourism market in China with a focus on the outbound market. Furthermore, distribution channels in the Chinese tourism market and the Chinese inbound tourism to Finland will be outlined.

The seventh chapter constitutes the research that was conducted for this study, where methodology, research processes and limitations are described. The most important results are represented comprehensively and will be compared with the theoretical outline of the Chinese culture and its influences. At the end of this thesis, a conclusion will be drawn on whether the Finnish nature tourism market can sustain the Chinese outbound tourism market. In addition, this research will examine, whether or not further interpretation can be drawn from the results. Also, this study aims to provide an answer to the Arctic Flavour Association in regards to the interviewed travel agencies and if they foresee an interest in nature tourism in Northern Finland for Chinese tourists.

1 NATURE TOURISM

Nature tourism covers all types of tourism that depend directly on the use of natural resources in a reasonably undeveloped state regarding topography, scenery, wildlife, vegetation and water resources of the particular nature destination. Furthermore, nature tourism involves aspects of adventure tourism, which includes physical risks. For example, risks like white-water rafting, countryside motor biking and hunting. Even though these activities are executed in a natural environment, the use of the nature is not necessarily sustainable. These activities even compromise the preservation of the nature to a certain degree. (Cellaballos-Lascuráin 1996, 19.)

Nature tourism is often characterized under the umbrella of alternative tourism. Alternative forms of tourism include practices and activities that stand in opposition to mass tourism. However, it is difficult to separate the operation of nature tourism and its impacts from the tourism market at large. For example, *sun-sea-sand* tourism is most commonly seen as mass tourism. However, the same elements of *sun-sea-sand* tourism can serve as a basis for activities related to nature tourism whose scale might be related to mass tourism destinations. In some *sun-sea-sand* tourism destinations, such as Hurghada in Egypt, which can be associated with a mass tourism destination, activities like scuba diving and surfing are very popular whilst being directly connected with nature. (Hall, Muller & Saarinen 2008, 131.)

Moreover, nature-based tourism is the fastest growing tourism market these days. The reason for the rapid growth could be that more and more people around the world are living in urban areas, in many cases, with no access to nature (Renn & Walker 2008, 115). In China, the percentage of people living in cities is growing continuously. Currently, there are 699 cities in the country and more than 100 of them have more than 1 million inhabitants. In China, the urban population was around 40 % in 2007 and the number is expected to rise to 60 % by 2030. Each year, around 20 million Chinese people move to urban areas. (Hays 2008.)

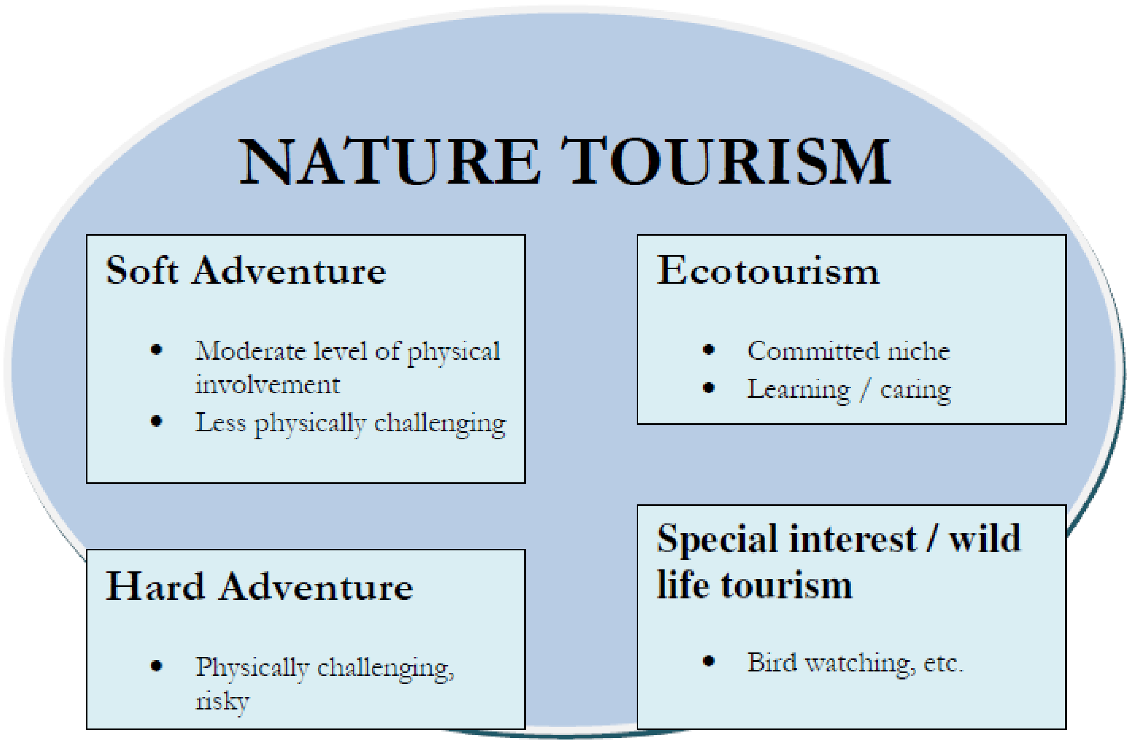


Figure 1. Nature Tourism (adapted from New South Wales)

Various nature tourism activities can be categorized in four different categories, such as:

- Ecotourism
- Special interest/wild life tourism
- Hard adventure
- Soft adventure

Figure 1 indicates that nature tourism, in its widest sense, includes the experience of natural places, most commonly in form of outdoor activities that are more or less sustainable in terms of their influence on the environment. These activities can vary from active to passive, and can include aspects of adventure tourism and sightseeing up to wildlife viewing. In many cases, a tourist can combine several of these elements in one single trip. (Tourism New South Wales.)

1.1 Ecotourism

Generally speaking, ecotourism is a responsible form of travel that has its major emphasis on educational factors and the appreciation of the nature environment. Ecotourism depends on the tourist's motivation to satisfy educational needs that are derived from interactions with nature. Additionally, ecotourism is a sustainable, non-disturbing form of nature tourism that focuses predominantly on learning about nature at first-hand. It is managed ethically to be low-impact, locally oriented and non-consumptive. It typically takes place in natural areas and contributes to nature conservation of these areas. (Fennell 2008, 24.)

2.1.1 Ecotourism factors

Ecotourism includes three essential factors, such as:

- Encouragements that help understand the impacts tourism has on the human environment, its culture and nature
- Ecotourism highlights a fair and honest distribution of costs and benefits in the form of local employment
- Ecotourism generates direct employment in the tourism sector through support and resource management sectors

Furthermore, ecotourism optimizes profitable domestic industries, such as hotels, restaurants, transportation systems, guide services and handcrafts. Ecotourism plays also a role in the encouragement to use land productively, for instance land that is used for marginal agriculture. (Wearing & Neil 1999, 8.)

Moreover, ecotourism assesses monitors and manages the impacts of tourism, creates reliable methods of environmental responsibility and compensates potential negative effects. At last, the development of recreational facilities should be mentioned. Recreational facilities can be used by both international and domestic tourists. This helps contribute to the conservation of historic districts, buildings and archaeological sites. (Wearing & Neil 1999, 8.)

1.2 Special interest/wildlife tourism

The quality of the natural environment plays a major role in attracting tourists. However, the quality of the environment can be a determinant of demand, rather than only a nice bonus. The quality aspect is a driving force in particular for those tourists who are looking for an experience that enables them to explore a new ecosystem including all its habitats. However, not all these visitors have the same motivation. That is why special interest tourism is categorized with wildlife tourism. Several visitors might be interested in the conservation of endangered species, habitats and biodiversity. While others are interested in photography and hunting wildlife. (Shackley 1996, 1.)

Tourists who pursue wildlife tourism make use of the opportunity to observe animals in their native habitat while experiencing a natural unspoiled environment. It is a subset of nature tourism in which a high level of interest exists. Wildlife and special interest tourism involve "non-domesticated and wild animals, and can encompass free-ranging and captive circumstances". (Tourism New South Wales.)

Wildlife tourism tries to maximise the benefits for local communities while avoiding pollution and other disturbances to wildlife. The environmental impacts associated with wildlife tourism and special interest tourism varies with the type of tourism activity practiced. Some of them can be obvious and easy to notice, while others can be indirect and hard to define. (Tourism New South Wales.)

1.3 Hard Adventure

Adventure tourism can be divided into two classifications, namely soft adventure and hard adventure. What distinguishes the experience of a soft adventure compared to a hard adventure is the level of how much the adventure tourist dedicates towards the experience. The level of dedication is hereby expressed in terms of the physical effort as well as the interest level in the respective attraction. It is also specified that one major difference between a soft adventure and a hard adventure apart from the level of physical dedication is the level of emotional commitment. Hard adventure tourists commit themselves often in specialized nature tourism travels. Whereas a soft adventure tourist engages in nature tourism throughout the entire vacation only to a small extent. (Weaver 2001, 82.)

According to Weaver, dedicated “hard-core” nature tourists often have an expertise and a deep level of interest in a related subject, for example a passion for canoeing (2001, 74). Also, a “hard” adventure tourist has divergent abilities concerning the different levels of comfort and physical challenge they wish to experience. A “hard” adventure tourist might even desire to live with very few comforts. He/she might also desire to travel in difficult circumstances for long periods of time in the wilderness in order to experience nature to the fullest. (Weaver 2001, 74.)

1.4 Soft adventure

The term soft adventure tourism describes the type of tourism that requires little or no experience, and has a low risk level. Soft adventure tourism might involve mechanized transportation, such as cars and motorbikes. This could include also comfortable accommodation. Soft adventure activities are many times based upon their hard adventure alternative but happens at a less physical and risky level. (Swarbrooke et al. 2003, 23.)

A “soft” adventure tourist has an occasional interest in nature attractions and wishes to be less involved in the experience of the attraction. Therefore, the “soft” adventure tourist is less prepared for physical challenge or discomfort. A “soft” adventure tourist might also want to spend a considerable amount of time surrounded by regular tourists. (Weaver 2001, 74.)

1.5 Adventure tourism

The concept of adventure is subjective and contains different characteristics for different types of people. Some of the aspects that are commonly included in a person’s everyday life could possibly be a rare adventure for another person. This depends on the respective personality and level of experience. (Swarbrooke, J., Beard, C., Leckie, S. & Pomfret, G. 2003, 5.)

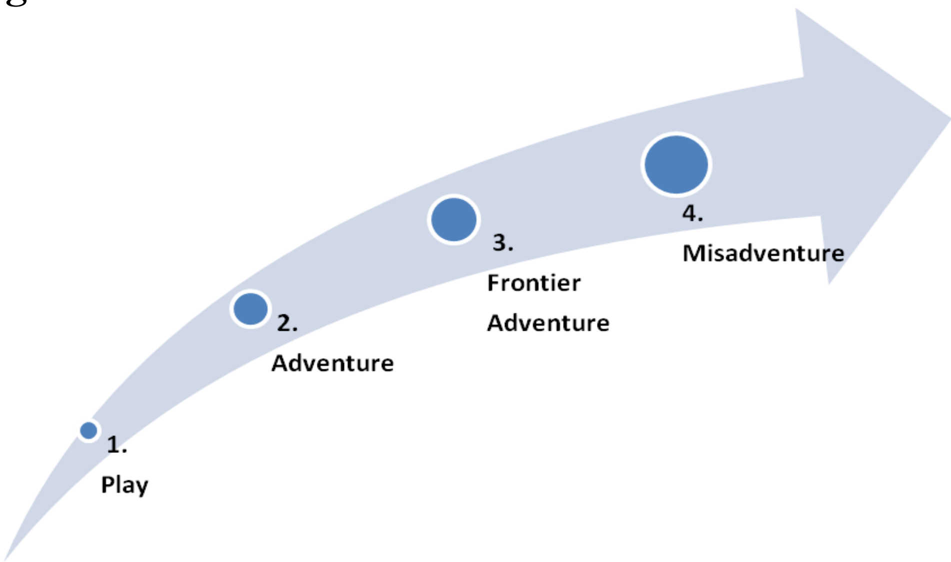
To date, only some empirical data has been collected from adventure tourism. There are no generally accepted characteristics that successfully summarize the nature of the term "adventure". The core characteristics based on this analysis are:

- Uncertain outcome:
    - The absence of a guaranteed experience stimulates excitement and commitment (Swarbrooke et al. 2003, 12).
- Danger and risks:
    - Uncertainty on its own creates a sense of risk and danger; risk contributes to uncertainty (Swarbooke et al. 2003, 11).
- Challenge:
    - Danger and uncertainty of outcome create a challenge of moral, emotional, spiritual, intellectual or physical nature (Swarbrooke et al. 2003, 12).
- Anticipated rewards:
    - Adventurers are to a high degree self-motivated and inner- directed
    - Failure to achieve the original goal is not a barrier to benefit from the adventure (Swarbrooke et al. 2003, 13).
    - Rewards can be tangible and intangible (Swarbrooke et al. 2003, 11).
- Novelty:
    - Travellers who seek for new adventures with a touch of uncertainty are likely to search for it in form of novelty (Swarbrooke et al. 2003, 12).
- Stimulation and excitement:
    - Adventurers are exposed to situations that stimulate emotions, intellectual and physiological aspects
    - High levels of stimulation create excitement (Swarbrooke et al. 2003, 13).

- Exploration and discovery:
    - Self-awareness and increased knowledge go hand in hand with the discovery of new destinations (Swarbrooke et al. 2003, 12).
- Absorption and focus:
    - Adventures require mental and emotional concentration and absorption (Swarbrooke et al. 2003, 13).
- Contrasting emotions:
    - Adventurers invest mental and emotional energy in the form of hope, anxiety, pleasure, despair (Swarbrooke et al. 2003, 14).

It should be considered that any of these characteristics used on their own do not automatically create an adventure. However, in case all of them are present at the same time, the adventure is more or less guaranteed. (Swarbooke et al. 2003, 6.)

Stages of risks



Competence (knowledge, skills, confidence and commitments)

Figure 2. Mortlock's four stages of adventure (adapted from Mortlock 1984)

The adventurer should have the expectation to overcome or meet challenges. If the experience is taken as an adventure, the adventurer should feel obligated to succeed. This statement illustrates Mortlock's view of adventure is highly dependent on psychological and mental factors. (Mortlock 1984, 4.)

Stage one: Play

At this stage of activity the participant works substantially below his/her normal abilities. The participant has minimum involvement in terms of concentration, mental control, skills and emotions. The participant's response to this activity can vary from fun, up to a waste of time. (Mortlock 1984, 22.)

Stage two: Adventure

The person feels in control of the situation and uses his/her abilities to overcome a problem. Thus, physical harm and fear can practically be avoided. Even if the participant feels fear, there are still uncontrollable situations. (Mortlock 1984, 22.)

Stage three: Frontier Adventure

The participant is experiencing psychological stress and is no longer in control of the situation. However, the participant feels that any problem can be overcome without mental strain. If the participant just accepts this, his/her abilities will be put to the test. (Mortlock 1984, 22.)

Stage four: Misadventure

When the challenge is beyond the control of a person, the final stage of Mortlock's four stages of adventure is reached. The ultimate form of the result could be death. However, between serious injuries and death, there are still numerous degrees of psychological and physical damage. The reaction of participants could be immediately determined as unsatisfactory. The learning experience in this stage could be of great value to participants. (Mortlock 1984, 22.)

2 NATURE TOURISM IN NORTHERN FINLAND

This chapter begins by providing an overview of the main tourism target group for Finland. The aim of this chapter is to define the term “nature tourism activities” and to give a detailed overview of the different categorizations of this term. Subsequently, this chapter outlines the most important nature tourism activities that can be pursued in Northern Finland, with emphasis on the Kainuu region. Communities within the Kainuu region include: Kajaani, Sotkamo, Hyrynsalmi, Suomussalmi, Puolanka, Vaala, Ristijärvi, Paltamo and Kuhmo.

Figure 3. Kainuu region/Finland (adapted from Kainuu 2006)

2.1 Target Group Finland

The target group of tourists travelling to Finland in general are people who pursue an active and modern lifestyle and who make use of their vacation by looking for new experiences. Tourists coming to Finland are curious to experience outdoor activities. Moreover, they are experienced travellers with high values in regards to the choice of their holiday destination. Concerning demographic aspects, the target group are active people of the ages 25 – 60 including families with children as well as single travellers and couples. What bonds them is an intermediate to high disposable income to make their vacation in Finland a unique experience. That’s why Finland can meet the tourists’ need for quietness and unspoiled nature. Furthermore, they can pursue activities that are not available in their home countries.

Finland as a holiday destination targets people who are guided by a responsible lifestyle towards protecting the nature. Furthermore, tourists that decide to come to Finland are willing to spend time with different people in order to widen their horizon towards different cultures. (Visit Finland 2009.)

2.2 Nature tourism in Finland

Nature plays a major role for Finnish tourism in general. As a matter of fact, nature tourism is one of the most important single attractions for Finnish tourism in the international market and the main driving force for tourists visiting Northern Finland. Nature tourism activities can take place in natural environments or in natural environments that have been adapted for the activity. (Hemmi 2005, 285.)

The key features of Finnish nature tourism are: hardly any pollution, multiple lakes and forests, nature preserves, a big range of nature activities and snow. Adventures and experiences play a key role in the touristic attraction of Northern Finland. In today's tourism market, touristic experiences are often derived from activities related to nature. (Kauppi 1996, 37.)

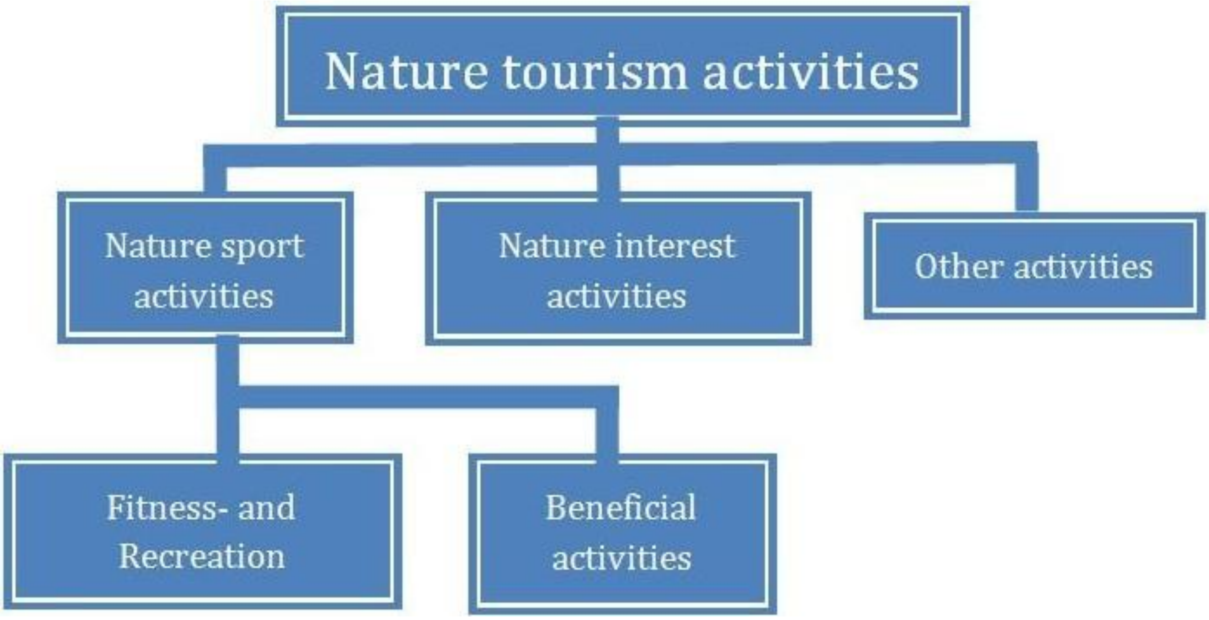


Figure 4. Nature tourism activities (adapted from Hemmi 2005)

Nature tourism activities can be characterized in three different types of activities, such as: nature sports activities, nature interest activities and other activities. Furthermore, nature sports activities can be subdivided into two different classifications: fitness and recreation activities and beneficial activities. (Hemmi 2005, 286.)

2.3 Nature sports, nature interests and other activities

Tourism related sport and recreation activities are defined as physical activities that happen outside the residence of a tourist. Professional athletics take place in nature, but they are not an activity according to tourism. A common motive for nature sports is relaxation in nature and improving one's health. (Hemmi 2005, 289.)

2.3.1 Cross-country skiing

Cross-country skiing is the most effective nature tourism activity that directly utilizes the nature in Northern Finland in terms of economic benefits for tourism. (Hall & Boyd 2005, 45.)

Cross-country skiing, also known as Nordic skiing is the most popular winter activity in Finland. The popularity of cross-country skiing has increased also in other parts of Europe, Canada, and even in China. (Hemmi 2005, 291.)

Touristic areas that are specialized in skiing often offer ski schools. Skiing instruction is often adapted to the tourists' level of skills. Cross-country skiing as a tourism product can be implemented by providing outstanding ski track networks. (Hemmi 2005, 292.)

During the winter, the Kainuu region offers ideal settings for cross-country skiing. The Kainuu region has excellent ski areas that attract both, domestic and international cross-country skiers. The closeness of nature is a major element that strikes the tourist and in particular, the majestic snowy landscape during the winter is an attraction itself. There are several ski resorts located in the Kainuu region that have pristine conditions for cross-country skiing and alpine skiing. The key locations are:

- The Paljakka resort in Puolanka www.paljakka.fi
- The Ukkohalla resort in Hyrynsalmi www.ukkohalla.fi
- The Vuokatti resort in Sotkamo www.vuokatti.fi

In Sotkamo, there is also the possibility to try the world's first indoor cross-country ski-track that provides skiers snow during the snow free period as well. Numerous cross-country ski tracks run through forests and over frozen lakes. There are family friendly tracks as well as tracks for advanced skiers. (Kainuu, 2006.)

2.3.2 Skiing

There are hundreds of ski resorts located in Finland. The most significant ski resorts are located in Finnish Lapland, East-Finland, North-Karelia and in the Kainuu region. Also, there are a few ski resorts in Central Finland. However, these ski resorts are smaller in size and at a lower elevation than other ski resorts. This also applies to ski resorts in Southern Finland. (Hemmi 2005, 300.)

Alpine skiing is a suitable winter activity for those who enjoy outdoors and speed. There are two different styles of Alpine skiing. When *Telemark skiing,* the heels are released from the skis and are free to rise. When turning, the downhill-sided foot moves forward, the uphill-sided foot stays behind while the heel goes up. *Free-ride* means skiing outside of maintained ski runs, which has become popular in recent years. In Finland, the opportunities for free-ride skiing are quite limited. Thus, the majority of amateurs are looking for free-ride skiing adventures. (Hemmi 2005, 300; 302.)

2.3.3 Hiking and walking

Hiking takes always place in natural environment and lasts several days. In Finland, it is possible to hike flagged hiking trails, meadows and open terrain. When hiking outside of flagged hiking trails it is important to remember *everyman's rights,* which is supposed to limit the amount of hiking. Hiking includes other elements related to nature, such as: fishing and photography. There have been established *governments' hiking areas* (valtion retkeilyalue) in Finland, where anyone has the opportunity to fish, canoe, and pick berries. The governments' hiking areas in Northern Finland are Hossa in Suomussalmi and Iso-Syöte in Pudasjärvi. Based on the decisions of the National Board of Forestry, there have been two other hiking trails established: Inaris hiking area and the Arctic Circle hiking area. (Hemmi 2005, 302.)

The Kainuu region is popular for hikers. Hiking trails are well maintained and equipped with camp fire sites as well as open log shelters where it is possible to provide food or stay overnight at one of the camping facilities. The Kainuu region offers attractive possibilities for Nordic walking and hiking in areas such as: Hiidenpolku, Teerisuo, Elimyssalo, Isopalo and Sininen polku. Suomussalmi offers hikers in Hossa and Vuokatti different options between the Vuokatin vaara, Tiilikka National Park and the Hiidenportti National Park. Other destinations are Puolanka and Hyrynsalmi, which offer a network of hiking trails spanning between the Ukkohalla resort, the Paljakka resort and the Vaala (Lake Oulunjärvi). Vaala includes the Oulunjärvi hiking area and Rokua National Park. (Kainuu. 2009.)

2.3.4 Canoeing and rowing

In Scandinavia, Finland is apart from Sweden and Norway an ideal country for canoeing due to the high amount of water resources. Canoeing can be divided into *wild water canoeing* (koskimelonta) and *canoe touring* (retkimelonta). Canoe touring can take from several days to several weeks. Canoeing trips are always team oriented and build team spirit since all team members are responsible for each other. (Hemmi 2005, 303.)

2.3.5 Horseback riding

Horseback riding takes place in natural environments and in adapted environments. Horses and riders should be in good physical condition, since a trip can last up to one day or more. This can be challenging for both the rider and the horse. The horse breeds used for trail riding are heavy built, kind, calm and easy to handle. In the Kainuu region there are several stables that offer trail-riding packages:

- Kainuun vaellustallit oy (Sotkamo) www.kainuunvaellustalli.fi
- Huuskon talli (Sotkamo) www.huuskontalli.fi
- Hiidentorppa (Sotkamo) www.hiidentorppa.com

2.3.6 Snowmobile safaris

A snowmobile is known as a sled or skimobile. Snowmobiling combines nature, own perpetration, convenience, and different elements of adventure. A snowmobile is designed to be driven on snow and ice. Most commonly, a snowmobile is built to carry one driver and occasionally one passenger. (Hemmi 2005, 343.)

Snowmobiling activities have become a significant tourism product and source of income, in particular in Northern and Eastern Finland. In Lapland, snowmobiling is one of the most important tourism activities and that is why it should be developed regardless the attitude towards it. Safari entrepreneurs are in the central position in the snowmobile tourism branding who contribute to the high number of tourists visiting Northern Finland during the winter. (Hemmi 2005, 346.)

According to a study compiled for the Travel Development Centre in Finland, snowmobile safaris are in second place, after dogsled safaris, on the list of the most favourite winter activities foreign tourists. (Kauppi 1996, 19.)

2.3.7 Other sport and recreational activities

Climbing

The different forms of climbing are: rock climbing, cave climbing, wall climbing and ice climbing. There are many ridges to climb during the summer in Finland. However, Finland is not a famous climbing destination since the country is relatively flat. Steep cliffs that are suitable for climbing are not common in Finland. In Northern Finland, the Rovaniemi area offers various climbing places. (Slouppi 2010.)

Snowshoeing

Snowshoeing offers direct access to peaceful nature and forest. Even in deep snow, there are no trails required when snowshoeing. With snowshoes, it is possible to walk on hilly terrain regardless their condition. Snowshoeing is an ideal way to experience the natural environment at first hand. Another type of snowshoeing is called Nordic snowshoeing. Hereby, ski poles are used to increase the level of exercise. Northern Finland offers many opportunities for snowshoeing, including equipment rental and guided tours. (Visit Finland. 2010 c.)

2.4 Beneficial activities

In this context, beneficial activities cover all activities that a tourist pursues in order to receive tangible benefits by combining educational, physical and recreational activities. The following section introduces three beneficial activities, namely fishing, hunting and berry picking. By executing these activities, the activist is likely to benefit of the outcome by a special feature, namely nourishment.

2.4.1 Fishing

According to a saying, “time spent on fishing waters is not deducted from your life time” (Visit Finland. 2010 a). Therefore, one of the main purposes of fishing as a tourism activity is the recreational aspect. Thus, the tourist leaves his/her permanent residence for fishing and recreation. (Hemmi 2005, 357.)

Rapids and rivers in Finland offer an excellent opportunity for establishing new, pro-level fishing destinations in particular for salmon fishing. However, the main income of fishing tourism in Finland, as for nowadays and predicted for the future, is derived from domestic tourists. (Vapaa – Ajankalastaja. 2010.)

Some of the most common fishing methods in tourism are angling (onginta), spinning (heittokalastus), fly-fishing (perhokalastus), and ice-fishing (pilkintä). (Visit Finland. 2010 a.)

2.4.2 Hunting

The different opinions concerning hunting as part of nature tourism are contradictive. Hunting is not considered a nature tourism activity for some individuals. However, hunting is officially approved as a nature tourism activity since the experience of the nature is an essential aspect. The most significant hunting areas in the Kainuu region are Kuhmo and Suomussalmi. A foreign hunter can hunt independently in Finland. However, for safety reasons, it is recommended to hunt with company. (Hemmi 2005, 371.)

Hunting is not a successful tourism product in Finland. Reasons for its unsuccessfulness are the requirements of hunting licenses and the small population of species (riistakanta). Furthermore, local people are urged to hunt to limit access for guest hunters. (Hemmi 2005, 372.)

2.4.3 Nature products

In the context of this study, nature products are explained as mushrooms, berries and herbs. Picking natural products is a wonderful way to experience the nature whilst doing exercise. In each Nordic country, *everyman's right* is to go to forests and pick nature products to use them for own purposes, which is very beneficial for those who are interested in this nature activity. However, it is rather challenging to make a tourism product of this *everyman's right* since tourists do not need necessarily agencies in order to pick mushrooms, berries and herbs in Finland. (Hemmi 2005, 378.)

Mushroom picking

According to the Arctic Flavours Association, there are hundreds of edible mushroom species in Finland. Mushrooms are an ideal part of a healthy diet since they are low in energy, but rich in minerals. The most common mushrooms used for the cuisine are boletes and trumpet-shaped chanterelles, milk-caps, wood hedgehogs and sheep polypore. (Arctic Flavours Association. 2010 a.)

As it was mentioned above, it is difficult to develop an actual tourism product from nature products picking, in particular from mushroom picking. A successful mushroom picking trip requires a good guide with expertise as well as a mushroom rich autumn. (Hemmi 2005, 379.)

Berry picking

In the periphery of the Arctic Circle, forest berries have been a major part of a healthy diet for hundreds of years. Like mushroom picking, forest berry picking is allowed without any permission from landowners. This is a major reason for the difficulty of making a tourism product from berry picking. Since both visitors and locals can serve themselves whilst being on a hiking trip. However, many tourists focus on berry picking and use accommodation services. (Hemmi 2005, 379.)

The most commercial valuable forest berries are lingonberry, bilberry, raspberry, cloudberry, crowberry, cranberry and buckthorn berry. Nearly 250 million kilos of lingonberries are picked every year in Finland. Apart from the lingonberry, the bilberry, also known as wild-blueberry, counts to the most common forest berries in Finland with approximately 170 million kilos per year. The cloudberry harvest amounts to 6-8 million kilos every year. The reason why berry picking could attract Chinese tourists is the cleanliness of the nature. In Northern Finland there is virtually no pollution caused by cities, industry or traffic. Pesticides are forbidden by law and this makes forest berries a 100 % natural product. (Arctic Flavours Association. 2010 b.)

2.5 Nature interest –activities

2.5.1 Bird watching

Approximately 240 bird species are officially listed in Finland. However, there are 400 different species noticed in the country overall from which the most are only occasional birds that are moving to other places through Finland without nesting. The most common bird in Finland is the Finch. (Hemmi 2005, 390.)

Tourists who come to Finland for bird watching are typically interested in different species than average Finnish bird watchers. Foreign tourists are mostly interested in species that are typical to the Finnish environment. People who are familiar with bird watching usually travel alone, whereas beginners take part in courses and are often accompanied by a guide. In Northern Finland, the most popular places for bird watching are Lapland and Kuusamo. (Hemmi 2005, 388.)

2.5.2 Nature photography

Nature photography is one of the most environmental friendly nature activities since it does not cause any harm to the nature. Nature interested photographers travel further in order to see the most exotic and original landscapes. Photography is a time consuming activity that rewards the tourist with beautiful snapshots of the Finnish nature. (Hemmi 2005, 406.)

2.6 Other nature tourism activities

Apart from the nature activities described in the paragraphs above, there is a variety of other nature tourism activities that contribute to Finland's attractiveness. The most important of those are husky and reindeer safaris. (Hemmi 2005, 411.)

Husky safaris

Dog-sledding has deep roots in Finland's history. Dog-sledding has been a useful way of transportation as early as the Stone Age, even before reindeers were used. Husky safaris are usually practiced on trails that are several kilometres long. Short safaris are usually implemented on ready sled routes since the dogs can not pull a sled in thick snow for a long time. Longer safaris are possible only in "hard snow" and on ice with only little snow. Kainuu offers various husky safari possibilities for tourists, such as: Vuokatti, Ukkohalla, Hossa and Kuhmo. (Hemmi 2005, 409.)

Reindeer safari

For a tourist, sleigh riding is an enjoyable as well as exotic way to experience the real wilderness of Northern Finland. When tourists visit a reindeer farm, they acquire the opportunity to meet local people and their livestock, as well as tourists can learn about reindeer herding in Lapland. Tourists are often fascinated by reindeers since reindeers are famous for Finland and are usually related with Finnish Christmas as much as with Santa Clause. (Visit Finland. 2010 b.)

Finland recovered from a shortfall on demand in reindeer safaris during the 1990's. Since the beginning of 2000, the demand has been steadily increasing. This is due to the mass inflow of new entrepreneurs entering the Northern Finland market. Nowadays, in particular foreign winter tourists consider reindeer safaris as a real attraction. Reindeer safaris are organized usually in the area of tourism centres, especially during Christmas and last from several hours up to one day. If the safaris take place on Reindeer farms, there are usually also other services offered for tourists, such as hand-made souvenirs, meals and snacks or even accommodation. (Hemmi 2005, 411.)

3 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN TOURISM

A formal definition helps focus on the most important concepts and key points of consumer behaviour. Consumer behaviour covers mental, emotional, and physical activities that people engage in when selecting, purchasing, using, and disposing products and services in order to satisfy needs and desires. (Wilkie 1994, 14.)

This chapter is designed to provide a compact outline of consumer behaviour in tourism. Understanding consumer behaviour is the key for all marketing activities that develop, promote and sell tourism products. In order to optimize efficiency and effectiveness of marketing activities, it needs to be understood how consumers make their purchase decisions regarding tourism products. (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 3.)

Consumer behaviour studies concentrate on how decisions are made and how resources on consumption-related items are spent. For this purpose, different scientists elaborated consumer behaviour models in order to comprehend the process of a purchase decision. The purpose of those models is to cover each of the consumer behaviour stages. (Bowen & Clarke 2009, 58.)

However, there is a challenge with academic disciplinary in consumer behaviour models, as there has been only little empirical research for the use of these consumer behaviour models on actual behaviour patterns. Consumer behaviour includes many different factors. The user and the purchaser of the product might not be the same person. In addition to that, the entire environment of the purchaser is influenced by buying processes. (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 3; 43.)

The formal consumer behaviour definition as stated above shows the basic implications about the consumer behaviour. Being aware of these implications is the key to knowing the field of consumer behaviour, as indicated in the following discussion about the “seven keys” to consumer behaviour. (Wilkie 1994, 14.)

Figure 5. Seven keys to consumer behaviour (adapted from Wilkie 1994)

3.1.1 Consumer Behaviour is motivated

Consumer behaviour is motivated behaviour that aims to achieve specific goals. If these goals are achieved, the desires and needs of the consumer are satisfied. (Wilkie 1994, 15.)

The relationship between human needs and motives are so close that it is difficult to identify the differences that may characterize them. Motives lead to behaviour and direct it towards particular types of activities. A motivated individual will participate in an activity more efficiently than unmotivated ones. “Wants” have been identified as initiating forces of behaviour. These can be characterized as “positive” driving forces that direct specific “wants” towards objects, or “negative” forces such as fears that lead “wants” away from objects. For example, motives of fear can cause people to avoid travelling by airplanes if there are no alternative methods of transportation available. (Chisnall 1997, 51.)

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow has proposed that human needs and motives develop in a sequence order from lower wants to higher wants. On the bottom layer, there are physiological needs that derive from different needs that are mostly unconsciously. These include basic requirements for human survival, such as air and food. When physiological needs are satisfied, safety needs become active. Whereas children often display signs of insecurity, adults have little awareness of security needs except in case of emergency. When it comes to social needs, people seek to overcome feelings of loneliness. In regards to esteem needs, there are two types of needs included. One type is the need for respect and attention and the other one is the need for self-confidence, independence and freedom. Self-actualization is a person's need to become what he/she was destined for, for instance fulfilment in the form of creativity or spirituality. (Chisnall 1994, 49.)

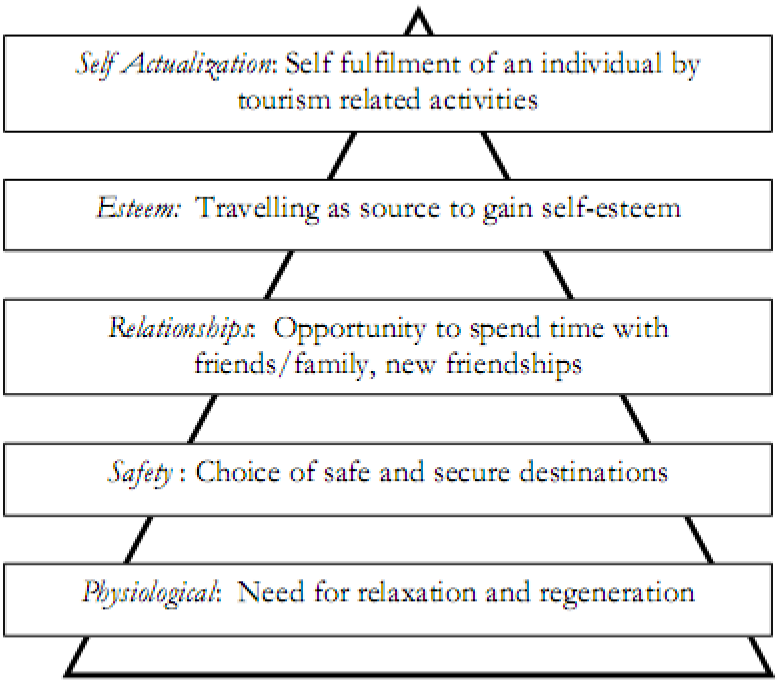


Figure 6. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs in the context of tourism (adapted from Holden 2005)

The hierarchy of needs is used to argue if leisure and tourism are capable of satisfying a wide range of human needs. In regards to tourism, physiological needs emphasize on basic services such as food, accommodation, space and sanitation. Furthermore, the tourists seeks to satisfy the most common purpose for going on holidays, namely relaxation, regeneration and resting from everyday responsibilities. According to the following level of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, the tourist chooses a destination that has the reputation of being safe and secure. For example, the tourist chooses destinations that are safe from nature catastrophes or terrorism attacks. When it comes to relationship needs, a vacation can be seen as an occasion where people can spend quality time with friends/family. Furthermore, holidays help facilitate social interaction and beneficiate new relationships. In this context, the need for belonging appears in form of family and leisure activities and team sports. (Holden 2005, 66.)

Esteem needs are often satisfied by engaging in cultural activities and by pursuing sport activities that require special skills. Moreover, the choice of the holiday destination plays a role for prestige and thus enhances self-esteem. These factors can also mean self-actualization for individuals when pursued in a more exquisite way. Certain activities support the self-fulfilment for some tourists as well as the mere destination can help for an individual self-exploration. (Holden 2005, 66.)

If a consumer is motivated by multiple motives, he/she purchases several benefits combined in one single product. If a marketer is able to identify all these benefits that a consumer is looking to find in one product or service, a product can be designed to deliver maximum satisfaction and appeal. However, this is a challenging task since different consumers are looking for different benefits and all involved motives are hard to identify. Therefore, consumer motivation builds the fundament for destination marketing. (Wilkie 1994, 15.)

3.1.2 Consumer behaviour includes many activities

"The most important thing is to forecast where customers are moving and to be in front of them"

Philip Kotler

Consumer behaviour consists of activities that are goal oriented. The consumer has dreams, thoughts, feelings, plans, decisions, purchases and experiences that follow after the purchase is made. A marketer who observes only the act of the purchase will miss relevant activities that lead to the actual decision of the consumer to buy or not buy a product. (Wilkie 1994, 16.)

Since there is a wide set of possibilities to appeal consumers, it is essential to research activities that lead to the final purchase decision. Understanding the activities of a consumer provides a useful basis for developing strategies for marketing. (Wilkie 1994, 16.)

Mathieson and Wall (1982) suggested a five-stage linear buying behaviour model, which shows consumer behaviour activities that can also be applied to consumer behaviour in tourism. (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 40.)

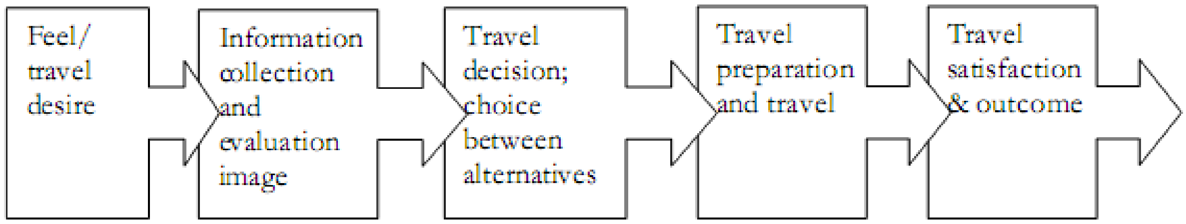


Figure 7. Five stage linear buying behaviour in tourism (Swarbrook & Homer 1999)

Figure 7 shows the different stages of a typical buying process in tourism. The consumer passes five different stages, namely the desire to travel, after that the information collecting and evaluating between different alternatives that lead to the travel decision. The following step is the travel preparation and the travel itself, and finally there is the travel satisfaction and outcome. As it is shown, the buying process starts before the actual purchase and will have influence and consequences afterwards. (Kotler 2000, 178.)

Feel/travel desire

The buying process starts when the consumer recognizes a problem or a need. The need can be trigged by internal and external stimuli. If it is the former case, one of the person's basic needs, like relaxation and regeneration, rises to a certain level and becomes a drive. In the latter case, the need is aroused by an external stimulus. (Kotler 2000, 179.)

Information collection

An aroused consumer will be interested to search for more information about the product, for instance a holiday destination. There are two different types of arousals, heightened attention and active information search. At the heightened attention level, a person becomes more open for information about a product. At the level of active information search, a person is interested in gathering information about the product. The key interests discovered from the information sources will in turn highly influence the final purchase decision. According to Kotler, these information sources of consumers fall into four groups:

- *Personal sources:* Friends, family, neighbours
- *Commercial sources:* Salespersons, dealers, displays, advertising, packaging
- *Public sources:* Mass media, consumer rating organizations
- *Experiential sources:* Handling, using the product, examining the product

A high amount of these sources and the influence they have on the consumer vary with the buyer's characteristics and the respective product category. In general, the highest amount of information is gathered from marketer-dominated sources, meaning commercial sources, whereas the most effective information comes from personal sources. (Kotler 2000, 179.)

Travel decision/choice between alternatives

Currently, there are no specific evaluating processes that apply to all consumers in purchasing situations. Firstly, the consumer is aiming to satisfy a need. Secondly, the consumer is searching for certain benefits from the product solution. Then, the consumer sees in each product a bundle of attributes with varying abilities of delivering the benefits that are sought to satisfy needs. These attributes vary depending on the product. The attributes evaluated when considering for example hotels would include location, cleanliness, atmosphere and price. (Kotler 2000, 180.)

Travel preparation/travel

Travel preparation covers all steps that are needed to conduct the journey. These steps can include visa arrangements, packing, medical issues, accommodation and flight arrangements as well as information gathering about the destination, for instance weather conditions. The amount of time needed for travel preparation depends on the destination and on the experience of the traveller. (Kotler 2000, 181.)

Travel satisfaction and outcome

After purchasing a product, the consumer will experience a certain level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction. It is important to monitor purchase satisfaction, post purchase actions, and post purchase product use. This shows that the marketer's job is not finished after the product has been sold. (Kotler 2000, 182.)

Satisfaction is defined as the consumer's fulfilment response. It is predisposed that a service/product provides a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfilment, including levels of under or over fulfilment. (Oliver 1996, 13.)

However, it is essential to determine whether the consumer will be highly satisfied, somewhat satisfied, or dissatisfied with the purchase. The consumer's satisfaction is a function of the closeness between the consumer's expectations and the product´s detected performance. If performance falls short of expectations, the customer is disappointed. On the contrary, if the performance of the product meets the given expectations, the customer is satisfied. If the performance exceeds the expectations, the customer is delighted. Since the tourism industry is facing strong competition, it is no longer enough to satisfy customers. In fact, customers need to be delighted by their tourism product. (Kotler 2000, 183.)

As it was mentioned earlier in this chapter, the most effective sources of information for a consumer are personal sources. It is important to keep in mind that satisfied customers will not only buy and/or use the same product/service again. They could possibly even stimulate new customers through word-of-mouth. For example, if a tourist is satisfied with a trip purchased from a travel agency, she/he will most likely recommend it further. However, if the tourist is dissatisfied, she/he will most likely change the travel agency and tell about his/her bad experience.

3.1.3 Consumer behaviour is a process

The concept of a process in which a sequence of several stages occur, has become a remarkable attribute in consumer behaviour for the last 20 years. The term "process" refers to "selecting, purchasing, using, and disposing of products" (Wilkie 1994, 17). That means that the consumer´s selection involves purchase, which in turn precedes usage and disposition. (Wilkie 1994, 17.)

Figure 8 involves a process orientation. It outlines some of the activities that make consumer behaviour. It is important to pay attention to the fact that this figure shows 28 separate activities. (Wilkie 1994, 16.)

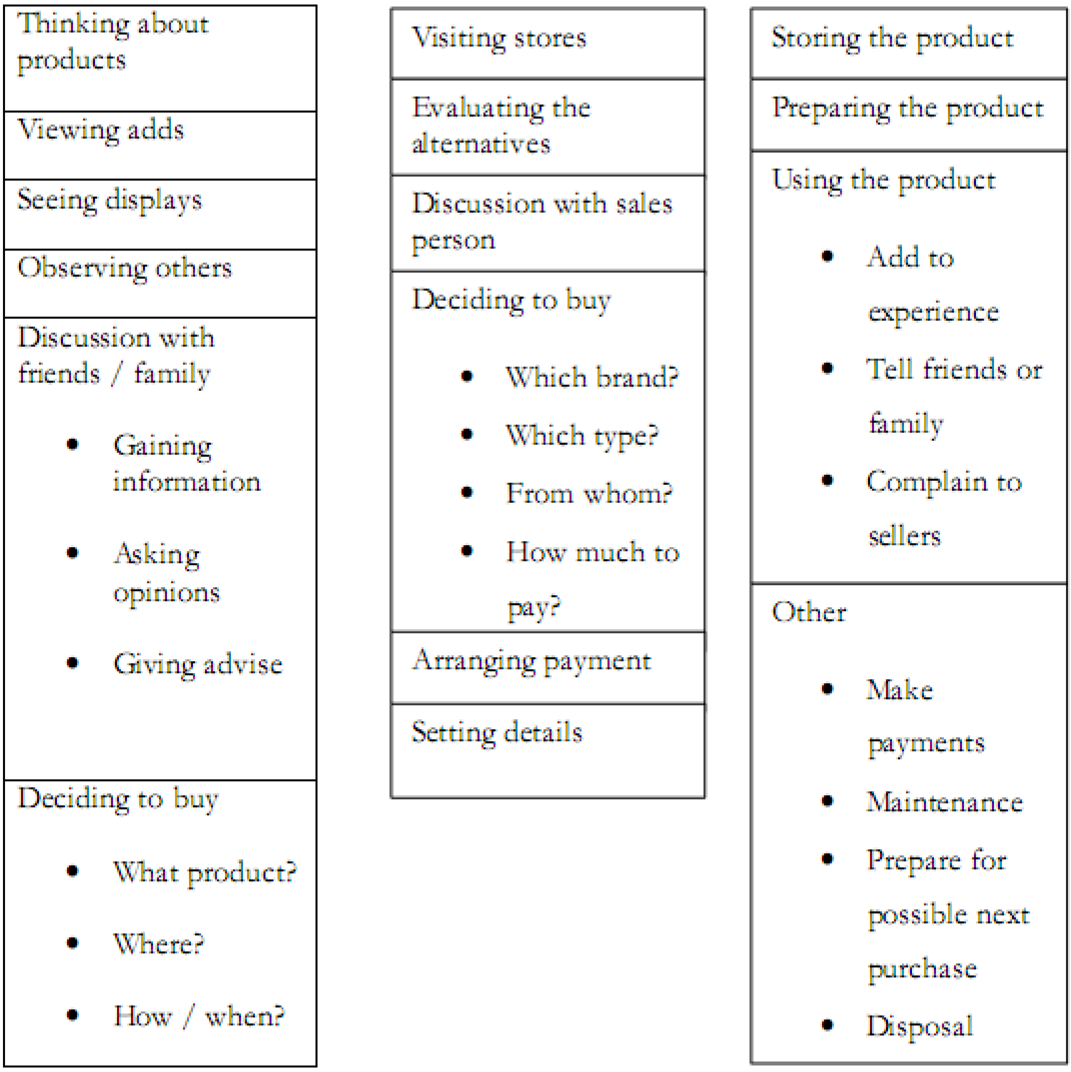


Figure 8. Activities involved in consumer behaviour (adapted from Wilkie 1994)

3.1.4 Consumer behaviour differs in timing and complexity

According to Wilkie, timing demonstrates when the decision happens and how long the whole process takes. Complexity refers to the amount of activities that are involved in decision-making and the difficulty of the decision itself. Complexity and timing are most commonly correlated. This means the more complex a decision is, the more time will usually be spent on it. (Wilkie 1994, 18.)

The inherent complexity of consumer decision

Many decisions made by consumers are usually complex and might include all the activities that are mentioned in Figure 8. If consumers had to strive making the absolute correct decision, they would have to take part in many pre-purchase activities. The most complex decisions require that the consumer measures many different alternatives and uses a high amount of different information sources. (Wilkie 1994, 18.)

Consumers try to simplify

Incentives help to simplify the decision-making process. Some of the main simplifiers aim for a "satisfactory" decision rather than the best possible solution. In this context, consumers rely often on recommendations of others and become "brand loyal" for products that are repurchased quite often. (Wilkie 1994, 18.)

Simplifying decision processes can easily lead to a conflict that occurs between the forces of desires in order to satisfy positive goals and forces for simplification. For example, being brand loyal can create certain risks. (Wilkie 1994, 18.)

3.1.5 Consumer behaviour involves different roles

The consumer behaviour process includes the performance of different functions. Each of these functions has a role of consumption associated with it. A consumer can be an "influencer", purchaser, or user. An "influencer" is a person who influences the buying decision by giving advice and opinions about the potential decision, for example a sales person. A buyer completes the transaction and the user is the one who uses the service/product in the end, but is not necessarily the buyer of the product. (Wilkie 1994, 18.)

The fact that multiple people are involved in consumer behaviour brings both opportunities and problems for marketers. For example, usually there is a need to advertise to the influencers while selling to the purchaser. In order to do this well, marketers must be capable to identify what type of people play which type of roles for specific purchases. This requires detailed understanding of how different social roles, decision-making patterns of households and the operation of "buying centres" in organizational purchases function. (Wilkie 1994, 20.)

3.1.6 Consumer behaviour is influenced by external factors

The concept of the influencer deserves a special focus due to the importance when defining consumer behaviour. Essentially, consumer behaviour adapts to its environment, meaning that consumers tend to adjust to the situation that surrounds them. Being influenced means that a consumer's decision process has been affected by outside forces. Some types of influence perform over a long time, while others work within brief episodes. (Wilkie 1994, 20.)

In the following pages, cultural, social, personal and psychological factors will be outlined further. In particular for the context of this study, these factors will be applied to the main findings of the survey conducted with Chinese travel agencies in the subsequent chapter.

Cultural factors

Cultural factors include culture, subculture and social class and are particularly important to buying behaviours. (Kotler 2000, 161.)

The most fundamental determinant of a person's behaviour and wants is *culture*. A growing child adapts a set of perceptions, values, behaviours and preferences through his/her family and other key institutions, such as school. An example can be a child growing up in China. This child is exposed to values such as the importance of family and respect for elderly people, reputation and the importance of "face", knowledge and education, hard work and efficiency as well as strong emphasis on collectivism. (Wang, Zhang & Goodfellow 2003, 180, Luo 2009.)

Subculture refers to groups of people within an entire culture, who usually share particular patterns of behaviour and values. A consumer may belong to many different subcultures. Subcultures are defined on bases such as race, sex, nationality, religion and age. (Wilkie 1994, 20.)

Members of social classes share the same values, behaviours and interests. People within one social class behave more similarly than people from two different social classes. Also, some people are noticed as occupying inferior or superior positions according to their social class. Individuals may move from one social class to another during their lifetime. The extent of this movement varies according to the strength of social satisfaction in a given society. (Kotler 2000, 161.)

Social factors

In addition to cultural factors, social factors influence a consumer's behaviour. Social factors are groups of family, reference groups, social roles and statuses. (Kotler 2000, 163.)

According to Chisnall, two generic groups are identified, namely primary and secondary groups. Primary groups refer to intimate, personal associations by which relationships are built between two or more people. These types of groups have primary influence on the personal development of an individual. They include friends, colleagues and family members. (Chisnall 1997, 156.)

Secondary groups refer to people who deliberately choose their group. These types of memberships could be a membership in a political party. However, some of these distinctions might become indefinite and it could be difficult to draw a line between a primary group and a secondary group. (Chisnall 1997, 156.)

A person's reference group consists of all groups that have direct or indirect influence on a person's behaviour and attitude. Reference groups can influence a person's behaviour in at least three different ways. Firstly, reference groups expose an individual to new behaviours and lifestyles. Secondly, they influence self-concept and attitudes. Moreover, they create pressures for conformity that might have an impact on the actual product and brand choices. (Kotler 2000, 165.)

According to Kotler, family is the most significant consumer behaviour organization in a society. Family members constitute the primary group, which is the most influential. In the consumer's life, two different types of families can be distinguished. The family of orientation consists of consumer's siblings and parents. Even if the interaction between a consumer and his/her parents are no longer strong, the influence of parents on the buyer's behaviour might be still significant (Kotler 2000, 165). In China for example, children live with their parents until the marriage. This means the parental influence on decision-making is strong. The one child policy in China has brought a new trend in purchase decision-making of the family. Less children in a family means, each child receives more attention from their parents. In today's China, a child is treated like a little emperor and is offered a better life through family patterns. (Wang et al. 2003, 180.)

The second family type is the family of procreation, namely a consumer's spouse and children. This type has more influence on consumer buyer behaviour than the family of orientation. (Kotler 2000, 167.)

A person participates in groups, for example family, clubs and organizations. The position of a person in each group can be defined in terms of roles and statuses. The role consists of activities that a person is expected to perform. Each role has a status. For example, a Supreme Court justice has more status than a sales manager, which in turn has more status than an office clerk. Marketers are aware of status symbol potential of brands and products. (Kotler 2000, 165.)

Personal factors

A consumer's decision is influenced by personal characteristics. These include occupation, age, stages in the life cycle, economic circumstances and personality. In regards to age, people buy different products in different stages of life. For example, baby food in early years, most of food in growing and mature years and special diets in later years. Also taste in clothes, furniture, and recreation are varying corresponding to different life stages. (Kotler 2000, 168.)

Psychological factors

A consumer´s buying decision is influenced by four major psychological factors, such as: motivation, perception, learning, and attitudes and beliefs. A motivated person is always ready to act. The way a person acts depends on his/her perception of the situation. A perception is the process by which an individual organizes, selects, and interprets information inputs in order to create a meaningful picture of the world. (Kotler 2000, 168.)

3.1.7 Consumer behaviour differs for different people

Consumers undertake different consumer activities and make different type of purchases in line with different preferences. Thus, it is essential to understand *why* people would engage in different types of behaviours. However, this problem is a challenge for marketers who try to predict *who* will respond positively to certain programs and *how many* possible consumers there are in the consumer market. This gives a rationale for market segmentation, which is the process by which key target groups are defined within the consumer market place. (Wilkie 1994, 22.)

4 MARKET SEGMENTATION CHINA

The purpose of this market segmentation is to help determine the feasibility of Finland's nature tourism offer to enter the Chinese tourism industry. Thus, the following market segmentation provides a detailed analysis of Chinese consumer buyer behaviour in general as well as with a perspective on tourism. Consumer buyer behaviour focuses on the decision-making process of consumers and their actions when it comes to the purchase and in turn to the use of the purchased products and services. However, the definition of consumer buyer behaviour involves topics that need to be answered, for example why consumers make specific purchases and by which factors consumers are influenced.

4.1 Geographic aspects

In order to define consumer behaviour in China, it is essential to analyze whether there is a need for the product or service that should enter the new market. A key element for market segmentation is the geographic aspect of a country, in particular for the demand of nature tourism, for which natural resources play a major role. China is the fourth largest country in the world and extends over a total area of 9 596 961 km^2. It consists of 25 provinces including Taiwan, several autonomous regions and municipalities. Furthermore, Hong Kong and Macau have to be taken into account as special administrative regions, which will be, however, for the purpose of this study, treated separately. In regards to China's climate, there are exceeding differences due to its enormous size. The climate varies from tropical temperatures in the south, for instance near its border to Vietnam, up to subarctic weather conditions near to China's northern country borders, Russia and Mongolia. China consists mainly of mountains and high plateaus. There are deserts in the West and plains, hills and deltas in the East. Despite its various differences to Finland, for instance regarding country size, population and average temperature, there are many similarities. (Central Intelligence Agency. 2010 a.)

4.2 Demographic aspects

The Chinese consumer culture differs not only regarding its vast geography, but also due to its demographic aspects. In regards to its population, China is the largest country in the world. The population of China counts approximately 1.3 billion inhabitants of which 43 % live in urban areas. There are 56 ethnic groups with a majority of Han Chinese with 91.5 % followed by 55 minor ethnic groups. The main religions are Taoism and Buddhism with a small percentage of Christians and Muslims. Regarding age distribution, 72.1 % of the total population are between 15 and 64 years old, 19.8 % are up to 14 years and the minority of 8.1 % are 65 years and older. This number is in particular important for defining the target group for Finland. (Central Intelligence Agency. 2010 a.)

4.3 Socio-economic aspects

One factor for consumer culture in China is the socio-economic segmentation. In the last two decades, the average income in China has increased dramatically. However, with this increase, the gap between rich and poor has also increased. The population in China can be subdivided into middle and upper-class wealthy, lower-middle class and working class poor. In some rural areas, monthly incomes do not exceed € 35. Respectively, there are people in urban areas who earn € 2 000 per month. However, this leads to a mixed demand for products and services. This means some people require high quality goods, while others require standardized goods at low prices. (Wang et al. 184.)

It should be mentioned, that the GDP in 2009 was $ 4 909 billion with the industry sector generating 48.6 %. The services sector contributes 40.5 % and the agriculture sector contributes 10.9 % towards the national GDP. The official unemployment rate according to estimations of 2009 is 4.3 % with a population of 2.8 % living below the poverty line. This should help to give an overview about demographic aspects by considering major economic facts. (Central Intelligence Agency. 2010 a.)

4.4 Psychographic aspects

Historical and cultural aspects as well as norms and values play a major role in Chinese lifestyles and thus influence their consumer behaviours. China's history has a strong influence on the decision-making process of Chinese. Examples of historic influences are as follows:

Confucianism is the key for living a life in harmony within a given environment and a focus on self-guidance. However, the most important aspect in Confucianism is the respectful behaviour of children towards their parents. (Luo. 2009.)

The concept of Taoism is a big part of Chinese culture, following the principle of non-action, meaning that people should cope with the natural course of certain aspects in life and not try to compete with them. Further subcultures that influence Chinese consumer behaviour are for instance Guanxi that refers to connections of individuals based on long-term relationship, loyalty, and commitment. (Luo. 2009.)

Also, collectivism is important in Chinese culture because it focuses on the needs of a group rather than on the needs of an individual. This in turn increases the motivation derived by norms and values. The need of being connected to a group has a high impact on Chinese opinions. This means, whatever a group at large thinks will be adopted in order to maintain harmony. (Geert-Hofstede. 2009, Luo. 2009.)

At last, Mianzi should be mentioned as a driving force for Chinese consumer behaviour, referring to the fact, that an individual should always keep her/his reputation and never lose "face" in front of a group. Mianzi, in particular, influences Chinese decision-making processes. The decision for a travel purchase, in the context of this study, should be well analyzed before being made to avoid the event of a decision failure. (Luo. 2009.)

Furthermore, the Chinese culture is based on high uncertainty avoidance (Geert-Hofstede. 2009). A high level of uncertainty towards consumer products leads to a high risk of changing habits and trying new products. The risk of failure is too high, thus, the consumer sticks to products she/he is used to. In particular, the older generation in China are loyal towards certain brands and products whose quality they can rely on. (Geert-Hofstede. 2009.)

4.5 Influence of Chinese culture on the purchase decision

In terms of buying processes, these above stated cultural aspects play a specific role in each of the steps towards a purchase decision. The first steps cover the process of recognising the need of a purchase. According to Confucianism and Taoism, Chinese families have deep-rooted family ties. The child in China nowadays is the centre of the family, which is reflected by the one child per family policy, a phenomenon that is still very dominant in China nowadays. (Wang et al. 2003, 179, Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg 2006, 390.)

When it comes to information gathering, collectivism plays a major role. In this context, Chinese base their decisions on security. Therefore, they gather information from reliable sources. For example, opinions from relatives/friends as well as travel agencies help provide professional knowledge and to make the right decision. (Solomon et al. 2006, 390.)

In terms of the evaluation process of alternative options and respectively purchase decisions, Mianzi and Guanxi influence Chinese consumer behaviour. The purchase of a product should express status and approval. According to Guanxi, a good relationship is based on expensive and luxurious gifts. Therefore, the evaluation of high-scale products is a time consuming process. (Luo. 2009.)

However, the younger generation in China is more open-minded concerning goods and services that express new trends in particular from foreign countries. Therefore, the intention of young Chinese to purchase a large amount of expensive brands from foreign countries is higher. They are more open for impulses of the Western culture in particular young Chinese in urban areas. Many European brands symbolise fashion and new trends for young Chinese. (Wang et al. 2003, 177, Solomon et al. 2006, 390.)

5 CHINESE CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

According to the Chinese consumer study of McKinsey from 2009, the most successful companies will be those who have the deepest understanding of the consumers and marketplace in different demographics and geographic groups. Companies are able to gain short-term competitive advantages by focusing on customers that are relatively unaffected by the downturn. In addition to that, this understanding of consumers and their return to the consumer behaviour before the downturn are critical inputs for long-term strategies of companies. The power of social and economic change in China is so strong that the global financial regression had little impact on its growth. Despite the shifts in consumer behaviour and the economic uncertainty, Chinese consumers do not seem to go through any fundamental changes in their attitudes and behaviours. (McKinsey 2009, 21.)

5.1 Chinese consumer behaviour trends

There are five consumer behaviour trends identified by McKinsey from 2005 to 2008, which were still ongoing during the compilation of the survey in 2009. These trends are steady growth in consumption, increasing sophistication, slower product trade up, continuous shift from brand to value and smarter shopping. In addition to these trends a new trend has emerged. This new trend concerns channel trade down. During the economic crisis in China, consumption decreased and lowered consumer's desire to trade up to products with higher quality. However, Chinese consumers continue to use sophistication when making purchasing decisions. Chinese have more options nowadays due to more opportunities in product distribution, such as internet sales. (McKinsey 2009, 10.)

Steady growth in consumption

China has enjoyed steep economic growth during the past few years. At the same time, in line with the economic growth, retail sales have grown from 20 % to 30 % annually for five years until the global regression. The overall rate of growth has declined since then. However, the growth of consumption seems to return since consumers resume their normal spending and shopping behaviours. In June 2009, retail sales could face a growth of 15 % year-on-year. (McKinsey 2009, 11.)

Increasing consumer sophistication

As it has been for the past several years, Chinese consumers demand products with more functional features, along with better value of money and greater variety. Moreover, Chinese consumers seek for additional functional benefits from products, as for justification for value. While consumers around the world buy chocolate only for pleasure, as many as one-third of Chinese consumers these days consume chocolate with added calcium. (McKinsey 2009, 12.)

Chinese consumers are also looking for bargains. In regards to the above mentioned example regarding chocolate consumption, the amount of people looking for better prices and value of money increased by 33 % in 2008 to 45 % in 2009. It is very likely that this is going to continue as income in China increases, competitive intensity drives to specialisation and category innovation and consumers have more access to information about products, channels and brands. (McKinsey 2009, 13.)

Slower product trade up

The first annual surveys of Chinese consumer behaviour showed that a growing number of consumers were willing to pay higher prices for better products. This trend has slowed down sharply among mass consumers. Mass consumers also seem to have scaled back their relatively modest plans to trade up. In regards to other trends, McKinsey expects that consumers resume their tendency to trade up as China emerges from the recession and consumers gain back their optimism. (McKinsey 2009, 13.)

Continuous shift from brand value

As Mc Kinsey indicates, Chinese consumers are brand driven when it comes to products on an international level. When finding a preferred brand out of stock, Chinese consumers are likely to go to another store to find it. In 2008, 63 % of consumers in China that were planning to buy a product had a list of preferred brands. However, it should be considered that brand loyalty has decreased steadily in China in recent years. Mc Kinsey´s research shows that more consumers are looking beyond brands for what they consider good value. In this connection, it is more often a matter of the lowest price. This is why more people in China are willing to take into consideration a wider variety of brands. (McKinsey 2009, 13.)

Smarter shopping

During the global financial downturn, Chinese consumers have started to shop carefully when visiting stores and while conducting research online. From 2008 to 2009, the total use of internet increased by 39 %, and the amount of consumer visiting product review websites increased by more than 50 %. In addition to price comparisons, Chinese consumers are more focused on searching out details about product attributes (McKinsey 2009, 13). Currently, older consumers become more comfortable using internet sources. This trend will continue in line with the increasing consumer sophistication. (McKinsey 2009, 14.)

Channel trade down

Due to the expansion of retail outlets as well as internet penetration, consumers are now moving away from department stores and other channels that are more expensive. McKinsey indicates that almost three out of four survey respondents reported to buy their last mobile phone of more price-competitive channels. This trend is noticeable in a wide range of products. For example, the amount of consumers who responded to use price-competitive channels when buying facial moisturizer increased from 73 % in 2008 to 88 % in 2009. (McKinsey 2009, 15.)

5.2 Decision making and brands

The Chinese consumer market is developing fast and new products that are often accepted even before their predecessors have succeeded in the markets. Advertisements on television are traditionally the most efficient way to reach consumers when a new company is entering the market. Television is present almost everywhere in China and therefore it presents an effective means to target customers in mid-sized cities, which are growing remarkable fast in terms of income and spending. (Giele 2009, 2.)

6 CHINESE TOURISM MARKET

In the following pages to come, current and future tourism trends in China will be outlined. Furthermore, the current trends of the distribution channels in the Chinese tourism market will be introduced. This chapter closes with an overview about the main characteristics of the Chinese inbound tourist in Finland.

China Tourism Trends

The Chinese tourism industry is a growing industry nowadays. Between 2004 and 2008, a growth of 12 % was measured with an outbound traffic of 45 million Chinese tourists in 2008 worldwide (China Travel Trends. 2009). This rapid growth is mainly due to the fact, that 797 outbound tour operators and more than 13 000 travel agencies in China arrange outbound vacation for Chinese citizens (All countries. 2006, MEK. 2009). According to the latest statistics of 2010, the preferred travel destinations are located within Asia. The most preferable destinations for Chinese travellers on New Year's holiday are located in Thailand, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Cambodia, the Maldives and Japan. (China Travel Trends. 2010 a.)

The World Tourism Organization predicts that China will become the fourth biggest outbound tourism market by 2015 and by 2020 the world's major source of outbound travellers with more than 110 million tourists crossing the Chinese borders annually. (Market Report China - Beijing 2009, MEK 2009.)

There are two main national holiday breaks, namely the Chinese New Year week in January/February and the first week in October as well as several bank holidays that encourage people to travel. Moreover, Hong Kong differs from the rest of China and counts holidays additional to the ones China has. Moreover, for Hong Kong inhabitants it is not required to apply for a visa in order to travel to Schengen-countries, for instance to Finland. This feature facilitates the decision-making for Northern European countries such as Finland. (MEK. 2009.)

Moreover, 56.6 % of Chinese tourists stated that they foresee vacation to European Destinations from 2009 – 2011 in spite of the economic crisis. However, 25.2 % Chinese reported that due to the economic crisis they would change their travel plans in order to economize towards more domestic short-trips rather than long distance vacations. (Market Report China - Beijing 2009.)

However, this has become a trend in China for the past two years already. Reasons for that is the flexible holiday duration. Tourists can travel within a short period, for example during 5-7 days that is simply compatible with working schedules. Furthermore, this requires a lower travel budget for the tourist. (Market Report China – Shanghai. 2009.)

In 2010, the trend of Chinese tourism behaviour will turn towards the World Expo 2010 in Shanghai. The World Expo stimulates domestic tourism on the one hand, but on the other hand it impedes outbound tourism, also to Finland. The Chinese government foresees to stem outbound tourism during the Expo 2010 in order to encourage domestic tourism as well as to be able to focus on the preparation and the success of the exposition. (Market Report China - Shanghai 2009.)

In terms of the Nordic countries, the main attractions for visitors from China are the fjords in Norway. However, there is a high demand for Chinese tourists to visit Finland as part of a Scandinavia round trip at an average length of stay between 4-6 days, depending on the season and the type of the tour. For Chinese, visiting Finland as the only Scandinavian destination is preferred during the wintertime for an average length of 6 days. However, centre of attraction remains the capital Helsinki. (MEK 2009.)

The latest nature tourism trend shows the Hainan province in Southern China, a holiday destination consisting of various islands. The province Hainan with its "ecological environment and its marine ecological tourism" serves as a flagship for China's steps towards ecotourism. Ecotourism in China has developed to become a competitive alternative for both domestic and international tourists in the last years. Thus, one of the future trends of Chinese tourism is the promotion of ecotourism. The National Tourism Administration and the Chinese province Hainan launched 2009 the year of ecotourism in China with the main subject of "walking into green tourism and experiencing ecological civilization". (CNTA 2010.)

Part of the initiative is to implement a "comprehensive, coordinated and sustainable development" and to promote products based on ecotourism aspects that fulfil the needs of ecotourism in an environmental – friendly manner. (CNTA 2010.)

Furthermore, ecotourism should help stimulate economic and social development in China. The development of new touristic attractions should decrease the impacts of the financial crisis and help to raise awareness among domestic and foreign markets and thus increase the tourism sector in China. (CNTA 2010.)

In terms of winter tourism, there are several destinations in Europe that will remain strong competitors for the Finnish nature tourism and its linked winter activities. As examples can be mentioned destinations that promote winter packages. These can be in combination of Christmas shopping and ski holidays for instance in Germany, in particular Southern Germany, Switzerland, UK and France. The Netherlands is visited mostly for Christmas shopping only. Chinese tourists who visit European destinations spend approximately € 2 474 during an average stay of one to two weeks. (Market Report China - Beijing 2009.)

Distribution Channels in the Chinese tourism market

In terms of the distribution of touristic products, the Chinese market has been facing steady growth regarding its online travel industry. In 2007, travel bookings that were made online by Chinese tourists amounted to $ 32 billion, indicating an increase of 66.4 % compared to 2006. This notable increase is mainly due to the growth of online travel agencies in China such as crtp.com with a 57 % share in online travel sales. The forecast for 2010 indicates that online travel bookings will increase up to $ 75 billion. (China Travel Trends. 2010 b.)

In 2007, 70.2 % of Chinese tourists booked their accommodation via internet and 70.7 % booked their flights online. An amount of 66.7 % of Chinese used the internet as their main source of information for tourism related products. (China Travel Trends. 2010 b.)

However, in regards to holiday packages, only 20.3 % of Chinese tourists used online travel sources in order to make bookings in 2007. Traditional travel agencies are still preferred mainly among the elderly generation, whereas predominantly young people are attracted by the online travel industry, followed by Chinese families. (China Travel Trends. 2010 b.)

One reason for the growth in online booking services is the increasing trust in online payment transactions. Improvements of financial institutions enable the secure use of credit cards for the online travel purchase. (China Travel Trends. 2010 b.)

Chinese travel agencies take a critical view at the increase in online travel distribution that causes higher credit card fees than the traditional booking process face to face. Therefore, Chinese tourists should be encouraged to gather information through call centres and to balance their travel purchases via cash transactions. (China Travel Trends. 2010 b.)

Characteristics of Chinese tourist in Finland

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 amount 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 traveller being older than 74 years. (Border Interview Survey 2009.)

The main purpose for the Chinese traveller 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 travellers 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 Chinese visitors stated to have spent overnights. Furthermore, only 1 % visited Lapland. Moreover, 20 % visited the country for daytrips only. The amount 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.)

7 METHODOLOGY

7.1 Background

A holiday destination, such as Northern Finland, has usually more than one customer. On the one hand, travel agencies need to be convinced to include the specific product/service within their product range. On the other hand, there are the customers who need to be convinced by the professional expertise of the travel agent to decide for the destination. (Kotler, Bowen & Makens 2006, 505.)

For the compilation of this survey, travel agencies were interviewed rather than customers for many reasons. Travel agencies are essential marketing intermediaries for the tourism distribution channel. Travel agencies are mostly conveniently located in cities. This feature brings the product closer to the final consumer. For example, customers have the opportunity to receive outstanding customer service in the event of booking amendments or cancellations. (Kotler et al. 2006, 502.)

Figuratively, travel agencies represent customers' opinions, desires and preferences. Travel agencies have the power, due to their convenient location, to be as close to the potential customer as possible. This helps to provide knowledge on their customers' needs. Travel agencies utilize important contacts and have the ability to convince customers by experienced knowledge and specialisation in specific products and services. (Kotler et al. 2006, 533.)

Research Objectives

The general objective of this survey is to find out whether there is demand for nature tourism in Northern Finland for the Chinese outbound tourism market in particular in Shanghai, Beijing, Nanjing, Shenzhen and Hong Kong. The survey results should reveal to what extent the Chinese travel agencies are interested in marketing Northern Finland as a nature tourism destination.

Specific objectives are to learn about the perception Chinese travel agencies have on Northern Finland. Furthermore, with the results of the survey it is aimed to identify means that will indicate whether Northern Finland with its touristic offer is attractive for Chinese tourists and if not, what impulses could help promote Northern Finland in a more attractive manner.

Since the goal is to determine the awareness of the touristic product Northern Finland, the research design is descriptive. In addition, with help of the descriptive research design it will be discovered if the Chinese travel agencies would include Northern Finland into their product catalogue.

Limitations of the study

The present study was limited to travel agencies in the catchment areas Shanghai, Beijing, Nanjing, Shenzhen and Hong Kong. This is due to the fact, that intermediaries in the tourism industry represent the desires, needs and preferences of travellers than no other element in the touristic value chain. The interviewed travel agencies are directly working with potential customers of Northern Finland on a daily basis.

Of the 59 distributed emails, 24 were incorporated into the data evaluation, as 35 travel agencies refused to cooperate for several reasons. Of these 35 travel agencies, 18 were not entitled to conduct interviews according to their management, 16 refused to cooperate due to lack of time, and one travel agency considered the request for an interview as a presumptuousness. Of the remaining 24 successful interviews, seven have their offices in Shanghai, two are located in Nanjing and Shenzhen, six are located in Beijing and seven are located in Hong Kong. Of the 24 interviewed travel agencies, 17 had Finland already included in their product range and seven do not offer Finland as a holiday destination.

However, the small number of travel agencies that could be interviewed represents only to a small extent the opinion of the huge market that the Arctic Flavours Association pursues to target. In order to gather valuable general results, potential consecutive studies may be taken into consideration to extend the number of participating interviewees.

A further deficit of the study might be the fact that the utilized questions were phrased originally in English and then translated into Mandarin. During the interview process, the given questions and answers were translated into Cantonese for the interviews in Hong Kong and then re-translated into English in order to evaluate them. With this double translation, it can be acted on the assumption of not inconsiderable losses of information and respectively falsifications.

The interviews were conducted during office hours. The participation in this assessment was voluntary and the travel agencies were provided with the questionnaire in advance via email. Despite this fact, it has to be considered that some interviewees in this study might have been less committed to cooperate than others. Thus, it may be assumed, that a lower willingness of participation in the form of less considerate answers, could falsify the data.

7.2 Research method

Definition of the population

The population of this study is the total number of travel agencies located in Beijing, Nanjing, Shenzhen, Shanghai and Hong Kong who represent the target market that was defined by the commissioning organisation the Arctic Flavours Association. The total target market includes the following number of inhabitants:

- *Beijing*: approx. 22 million inhabitants (China daily. 2010).
- *Nanjing:* approx. 7.4 million inhabitants (Nanjing. 2010).
- *Shenzhen:* approx. 8.7 million inhabitants (Shenzhen Government online. 2010).
- *Shanghai:* approx. 20 million inhabitants (People daily. 2010).
- *Hong Kong:* approx. 7 million inhabitants (Central Intelligence Agency. 2010 b).

In addition, the sample size of this project was determined by the commissioning party the Arctic Flavours Association. For the conduction of this survey, the Arctic Flavours Association requested a list of travel agencies located in the above mentioned target market from the Finnish Tourism Board. Of this list, 59 travel agencies were included into the sample. However, of this number, only 24 travel agencies participated in the survey. The participation of the survey was voluntarily.

Development of the questionnaire

The chosen instrument for the data collection constituted of questionnaires. Those covered 23 questions that were subdivided into three parts according to their categories. The interviewees were asked to answer questions of different response formats. This was due to several reasons. The unaided open-ended response format was used for seven questions. For example, for finding out about general information concerning the travel agency and for the question about the travel agents' perception of Finland's image. This helped to find out the real image and respectively the real knowledge of the travel agents without giving mind memories. (Burns & Bush 2008, 233.)

Moreover, categorical questions were used. Among them were three dual-choice questions with the options "yes" and "no" and 10 multiple-choice questions. Among these 10 multiple choice questions were six that could be answered by choosing more than one option. The remaining four had several options, but the respondents were only allowed to choose one of the given options. These types of questions enabled the respondent to answer without much effort, due to the fact that the interviews were conducted via telephone. At last, three metric response format questions were included by utilizing one-way labelled scales, in order to find out about the degree of importance and likelihood of the respondent towards a subject. The sum of the ticked options corresponded to the degree of application towards the respondents' attitude. (Burns & Bush 2008, 237; 252.)

It should be mentioned, that the interviewees were not asked for demographic features, such as questions concerning gender, age, occupation and level of income of their customers. This was due to the fact representatives of the travel agencies were interviewed as part of the tourism life chain and therefore representing their customers.

Data collection method

The chosen data collection method was person administered interviews. The surveys were distributed via email to the respective travel agencies. This enabled the respondents to get familiar with the given topic and prepared them for the forthcoming call. Then, after a period of 3-5 days, the travel agencies were called and the interviews were conducted via telephone with the help of Chinese speaking students. The data acquisition was carried out in the period of 13.4.2010 until 17.4.2010 with an average duration of five hours each day.

Data evaluation method

The chosen methodology of the data evaluation and analysis were the frequency tables of the quantitative questions with the help of SPSS. Based on the results of the frequency tables, graphics were drawn in order to demonstrate the results of the questions visually. Qualitative questions were summarized and described in text-form. A detailed list of the qualitative responses is provided in the appendices.

In order to get even further to the bottom of the results, exact tests were conducted for the quantitative questions. Hereby, the goal was to identify whether there are any correlations between different variables of the respective results. However, due to the small sample size of this survey, the necessary requirements in order to receive a significant result by interpreting the cross tabulations were not given. Therefore, in the context of this study, Monte Carlo tests were conducted. With the help of the Monte Carlo method, the evaluation of small sample sizes, such as the number of 24 respondents in this survey, will provide a convincing result.

8 RESULTS

8.1 Profile of the interviewed travel agencies

In total, 24 travel agencies were interviewed. These travel agencies were located in four different cities in mainland China and in Hong Kong. Each of those travel agencies was an international operating agency. However, there were small differences in regards to their indication about the total number of holiday destinations they offer. (Appendix 4/1, Profile of the travel agencies.)

In Nanjing, which is located to the west of Shanghai, two travel agencies were interviewed, of which both offer Finland and indicated to offer more than 100 destinations in their product range. (Appendix 4/1, Profile of the travel agencies.)

The two travel agencies that were interviewed in Shenzhen, located to the north of Hong Kong, indicated to offer Finland as well. In regards to the number of destinations, one stated to operate worldwide without an exact statement, the second travel agency mentioned to focus on Europe with approximately 20 European destinations and on six destinations in the United States. (Appendix 4/1, Profile of the travel agencies.)

In Beijing, six interviews were conducted of which four stated to offer trips to Finland. However, two of these emphasized that Finland was only part of a "Scandinavia package" and the main stop in Finland was Helsinki. Three of those who offered Finland stated to operate worldwide with approximately 50 to 100 destinations, and one designed its focus on European destinations. Of the remaining two travel agencies, one focused on Asian destinations only and one on destinations in the United States. (Appendix 4/1, Profile of the travel agencies.)

The seven interviewed travel agencies in Shanghai were internationally operating businesses with 50 to 100 destinations each and a main focus on Asian, European and American destinations. Five of seven travel agencies indicated to offer Finland as a travel destination, with four of those offering Finland as part of "Scandinavia packages" including Iceland. None of them offered trips to Northern Finland. In regards to the main travel season, one stated to offer this "Scandinavia package" all year round, another travel agency once per year in the end of June. (Appendix 4/1, Profile of the travel agencies.)

In regards to Hong Kong, seven travel agencies were interviewed of which four included Finland as a travel destination. All of the seven travel agencies operated worldwide, with 50 to 100 destinations each. (Appendix 4/1, Profile of the travel agencies.)

Figure 9 shows that of the 24 interviewed travel agents, 71 % offered Finland, which represents 17 respondents, whereas 29 %, respectively seven travel agencies did not include Finland in their product range. The list of travel agencies, which was provided by the Arctic Flavours Association, did not include any indication about the product range of the travel agencies. This information was gathered as part of the preparation before the interviews were conducted. The fact, that the majority of interviewees offer Finland is at random, since those were willing to conduct the interviews the most. (Appendix 2/1, Question 10.)

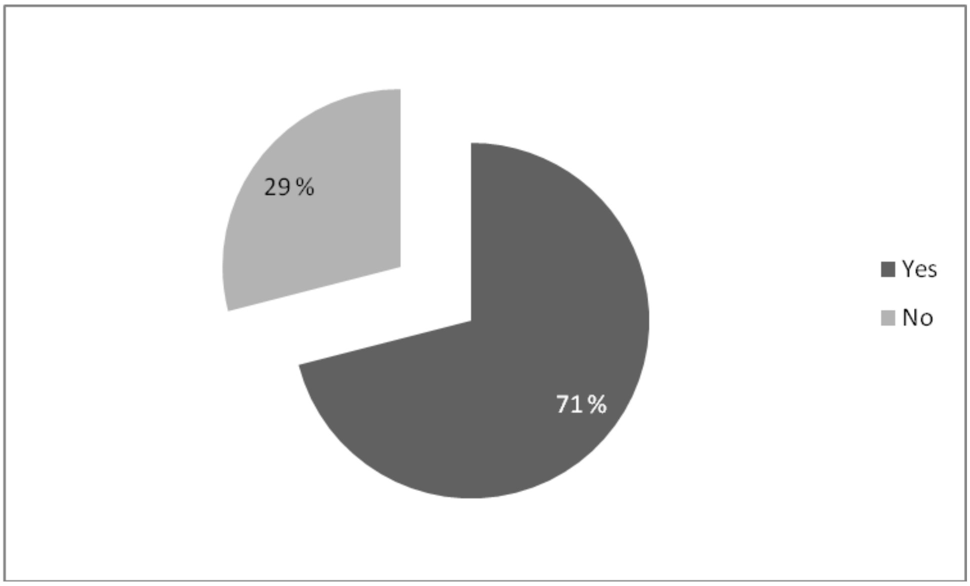


Figure 9. Travel agencies that organize trips to Finland (24 respondents)

8.2 Main findings and discussion

Reasons for travel agencies not to offer Finland

The following figure gives an overview about the reasons of the seven travel agencies not to offer Finland as a holiday destination. The question was asked in the multiple response format, meaning that the travel agencies had the opportunity to state more than one reason.

In 86 % of the cases, the respondents do not offer Finland due to a lack of knowledge about Finland to consider it as a potential holiday destination. Furthermore, 86 % of the travel agencies stated that the high price category of the destination itself was a reason not to offer Finland. This number is followed by 71 % stating that the duration of the journey to Finland is too time consuming. A percentage of 43 % indicated that the visa issuing matter constitutes an obstacle. For 14 % of the respondents Finland can simply not provide any attractive features for Chinese tourists. (Appendix 2/1, Question 11.)

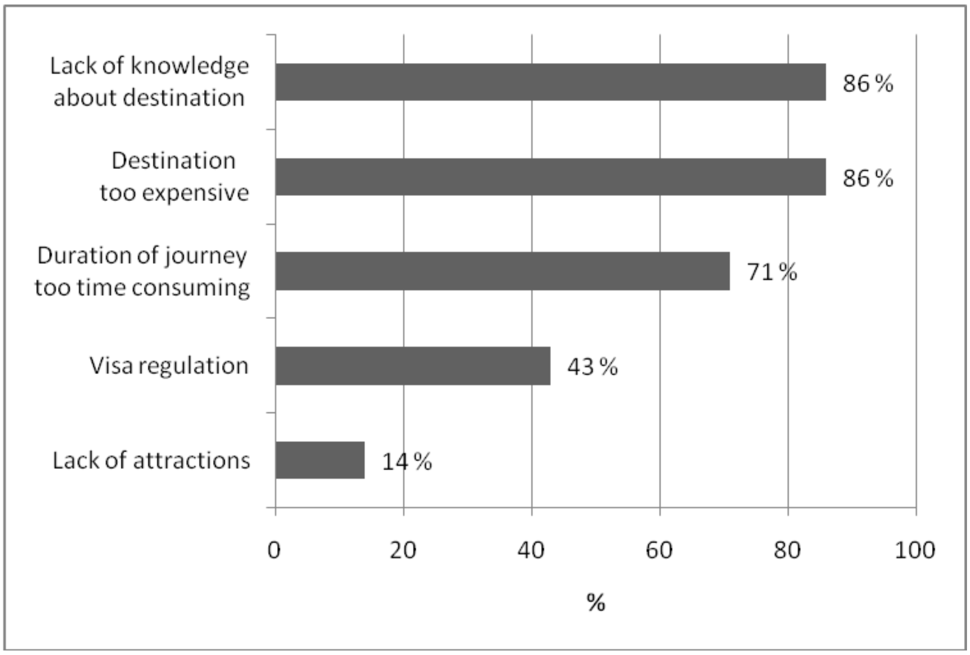


Figure 10. Reasons for not including Finland as an international travel destination (7 respondents)

The biggest competitors to Finland in terms of long distance holiday destinations

The purpose of this question was to find out where the current trend goes among Chinese tourists. This is an important factor for Northern Finland to identify their direct competitors when it comes to long distance travel purchases of the Chinese outbound tourist. Most travel agencies that were interviewed in this survey stated the following four countries that are most popular among their customers:

- *Germany:* 13 respondents
- *France:* 9 respondents
- *Switzerland* : 7 respondents
- *Austria/Italy*: 4 respondents

This result proves the statement of the market report China – Beijing from 2009, which was mentioned in chapter three. In this market report it was stated that Germany, Switzerland and France are the most popular European destinations for Chinese travellers. These countries, according to the market report China – Beijing are mostly visited as part of winter packages. It is evident that Finland has its main competitors within Europe, even though it was asked for long distance destinations in general. (Appendix 4/6, Question 12.)

Since in the question it was asked for the four most popular countries, only the four most mentioned countries are listed above. Further countries that were indicated are USA, with two respondents and Australia and other "Scandinavian countries" with one respondent each. (Appendix 4/6, Question 12.)

How does the Chinese outbound tourist travel

A percentage of 79 % of the respondents stated that the Chinese outbound tourist travels mostly within guided group tours. This statement underlines the findings in chapter six in regards to Chinese consumer behaviour. In chapter six it was stated that Chinese make their decisions according to the principles of collectivism. Collectivism has its focus on the needs of a group. The needs of being connected to a group can be based on the high number of Chinese tourists travelling in guided group tours. In a group, where other tourists and group leaders participate, the Chinese tourist feels secure, since the tourist can rely on the group leader's expertise. For the promotion of Northern Finland, this result is important, as it indicates that Chinese tourists are group oriented. Therefore, nature related activities should be offered in the form of complete tours accompanied by a tour guide. (Appendix 2/2, Question 23.)

An amount of 17 % of the travel agents indicated that Chinese travel independently, meaning that the vacation is organized individually and the vacation is spent with family/friends without participating in a guided group. A minority of 4 % indicated that tourists might travel on their own, for several purposes, such as business trips. (Appendix 2/2, Question 23.)

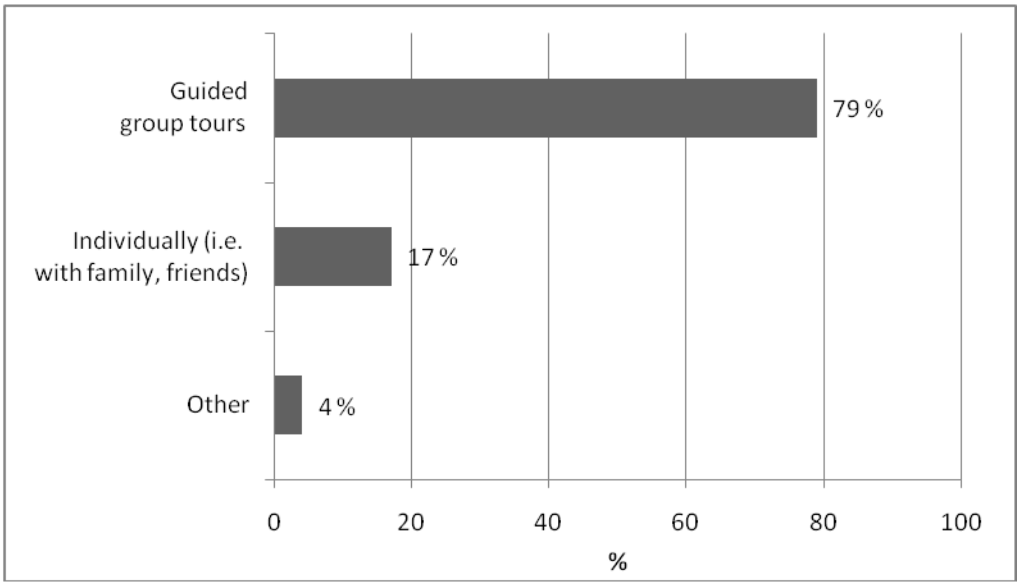


Figure 11. How does the Chinese tourist travel (24 respondents)

Average length of tour packages to European destinations

The average length of stay in European destinations is between 9-10 days. However, it should be mentioned that one response was excluded from the results, which means that of 23 responses only 22 were considered for this question. This was due to the fact that one travel agency stated "up to 10 days" as length of tour packages to European destination. This response was difficult to interpret and therefore excluded as it might have falsified the total average length of tour packages to European destinations. (Appendix 4/3, Question 5.)

The result shows furthermore that there is a slight difference in the responses of travel agencies from Hong Kong and the Northern part of China. The average length of stay of Hong Kong inhabitants is 8 days, whereas tourists from Shanghai and Beijing stay an average of 10 days in European destinations. Travel agencies located in Nanjing indicated an average of 8 days as well. However, due to the fact that only two travel agencies in Nanjing could be interviewed, this number is not sufficiently significant to draw a conclusion. (Appendix 4/3, Question 5.)

Travel budget for travel packages to European destinations

The average travel budget for European destinations was in total € 1 840 per travel package per person according to the interviewed travel agencies. However, it should be annotated that four responses were excluded from the results; meaning only 20 responses were considered. This was due to the fact that four travel agencies stated amounts in the form of "up to" and "at least". These amounts were difficult to interpret and therefore excluded as they might have falsified the total average budget of travel packages to European destinations. (Appendix 4/4, Question 6.)

In order to interpret the results, the amounts spent for travel packages were divided according to different regions in China, namely Southern China, meaning in this context Hong Kong and Shenzhen, and Northern China, covering Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing. The following average travel budgets were calculated:

- *Hong Kong:* € 2 575
- *Shanghai:* € 2 017
- *Shenzhen:* € 1 750
- *Nanjing:* € 1 525
- *Beijing:* € 1 330

This result shows, that Southern Chinese tourists meaning from the catchment area Hong Kong and Shenzhen, have an average budget to European destinations of € 2 163 per travel package per person, whereas travellers from northern parts of China pay an average price of € 1 624, which is € 539 less compared to what Chinese outbound tourists from Shenzhen and Hong Kong pay. (Appendix 4/4, Question 6.)

As of the findings of this survey, the average spending of tourists from Beijing is € 1 330. This result does not correspond to the findings of the market report China – Beijing from 2009, in which was stated that Chinese tourists spend an average of € 2 474 in European destinations, meaning € 1 144 more than the travel agencies stated in during the interviews for this survey. It may be assumed, that the travel agencies in this survey responded according to current trends, which in turn would signify an enormous decrease in the travel price for Chinese tourists from the catchment area Beijing to European destinations. In addition, due to the small sample size of five travel agencies that were asked for the average travel package price, this result may not be significant. (Market Report China - Beijing 2009; Appendix 4/4, Question 6.)

However, the overall result of this question gives an indication about the amount Chinese tourists, depending on their destination of origin, are willing to pay for an all inclusive tour package to European destinations. In addition to that, this result underlines the statement of the interviewees from the question whether there are any differences in the travel behaviour of Southern Chinese and Northern Chinese. (Appendix 2/2, Question 22.)

An amount of 87 % of the travel agents stated, that there are differences in the travel behaviour between north and south. Most respondents found that tourists from the south, meaning Hong Kong and Shenzhen, have a higher travel budget than people from the north of China. Furthermore it was stated, that inhabitants from Hong Kong seek often higher education and thus have a higher income and can afford more expensive vacation as well as long distance destinations. Further differences indicated were that citizens from Hong Kong have more holidays compared to mainland China and therefore are able to enjoy more vacation. This underlines the statement of the Finnish Tourism Board in Chapter three. (Appendix 2/2, Question 22.)

A further important fact, stated by one travel agent, is that people from Southern China are more open minded, in particular for foreign cultures and "international affairs", whereas Northern Chinese travel mostly for bargain shopping, since it is more difficult for them to shop or respectively access attractive shopping opportunities in their regions. These are important facts for understanding consumer behaviour and for potential marketing efforts regarding nature tourism related products. (Appendix 2/2, Question 22.)

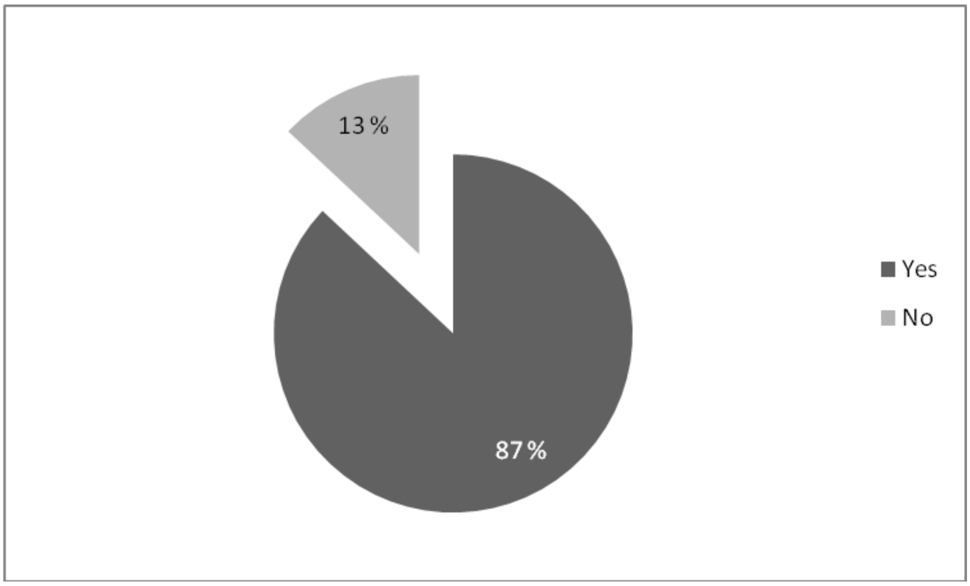


Figure 12. Difference in travel behaviour between Southern and Northern China (23 respondents)

Travel agents' image of Finland as a tourism destination

The questions regarding the image of Finland was asked in form of an open un-aided question in order to find out what picture the travel agents have in mind rather to give them options which could lead them to possible answers. The respondents could give multiple answers. Of 24 travel agents, two travel agents could not think of anything linked to Finland, whereas 22 respondents stated the following:

- *Winter:* 8 respondents
- *Nature*: 9 respondents
- *Expensive:* 8 respondents
- *Santa Clause:* 7 respondents
- *Northern Europe/snow/cold:* 5 respondents

Further statements about the image of Finland with less than three times mentioned were the capital Helsinki, the Finnish sauna, the small population of the country located in Scandinavia, the midnight sun phenomenon, the ice hotels, forests, winter sport and Finland's clean environment. (Appendix 4/5, Question 8.)

Reasons why Northern Finland could be unappealing for Chinese tourists

This question was asked to both travel agencies that offered Finland and those that did not offer Finland. This was due to the reason, that those offering Finland mostly had Helsinki in their package tours as part of a Scandinavia trip rather than Finland only. Also, the question was outlaid for the perception of their customers and thus based on assumptions. However, due to the consistence of the results, it can be assumed that the travel agents perceptions why their customers could find Northern Finland unappealing are significant.

- *Distance:* 13 respondents
- *Price:* 9 respondents
- *Visa regulation:* 6 respondents
- *Lack of Marketing:* 4 respondents

The above stated factors were the most given answers by a total respondent number of 24. It is evident, that only six travel agencies mentioned the difficulty of the visa regulation, whereas 13 stated the long distance to the destination Northern Finland could be unappealing. It could be interpreted, that even before travel agents consider the visa matter, they are already uninterested to offer Northern Finland due to its long distance. The distance problem was underlined by one travel agent, that in particular Northern Finland might be difficult to access since the next transit airport in Helsinki is located too far away from the North. Moreover, travel agents stated, that Finland does not offer anything “unique” or any “outstanding features” that is not covered by a Scandinavia roundtrip in regards to nature. Chinese tourists prefer “variety” when travelling to Europe. Also, two travel agents stated that Northern Finland would not offer enough opportunities for “shopping”. Finally, Finland’s weather was stated as a reason why it could be unappealing as a holiday destination for Chinese tourists. (Appendix 4/5, Question 21.)

Components mostly booked by Chinese tourists to European destinations

The question regarding which components Chinese tourists mostly book with a travel agency was asked in the multiple response format. Figure 13 demonstrates with a majority of 96 %, that Chinese tourists mainly book all inclusive tour packages that include all major components such as flights to the destination, accommodation, excursions and insurances. In regards to other options, there are only small differences. A percentage of 17 % of the travel agencies stated that Chinese tourists book excursions at the destinations separately. Only 8 % of the travel agents stated, that Chinese tourists book components, such as flight and accommodation separately. (Appendix 2/3, Question 3.)

It may be assumed, that the minority of the responses apply to exceptions such as tourists who travel for different purposes than for pure vacations, for instance business travellers. This result is essential for Northern Finland when it comes to promotion activities in Chinese cities. Thus, nature tourism will only be competitive in the Chinese tourism market when nature activity components are sold as part of complete packages. (Appendix 2/3, Question 3.)

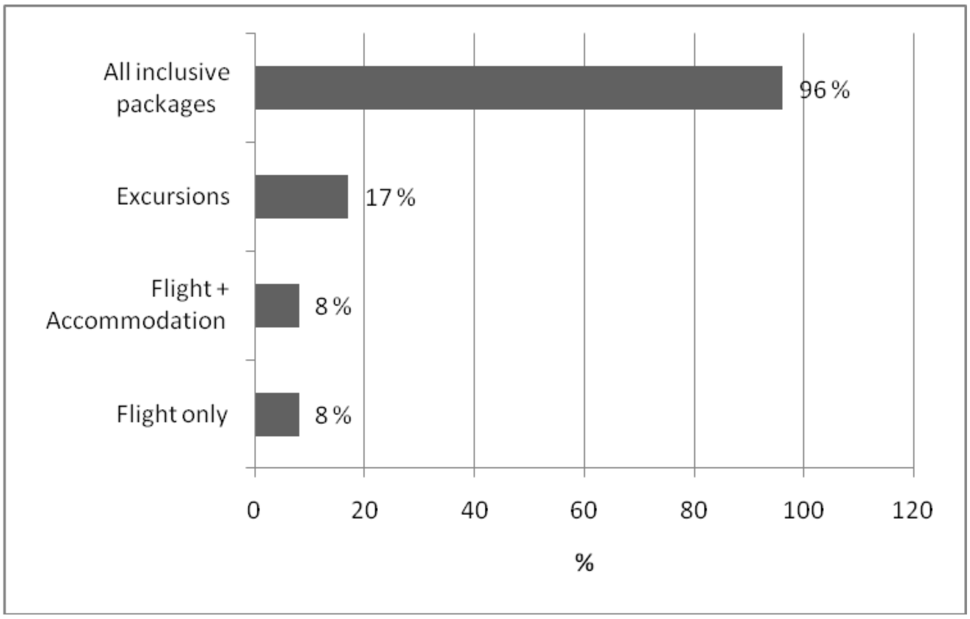


Figure 13. Components mostly booked by Chinese tourists (24 respondents)

Importance of nature related activities for the competitiveness of Chinese travel agencies

The figure below demonstrates that the majority of the 24 respondents consider nature related activities to be of little importance for their competitiveness, namely 38 %. A percentage of 29 % of the respondents see nature related activities as unimportant. The minority of the respondents consider nature activities as very important and important for their competitiveness, with 13 % as very important and 4 % as important. An amount of 17 % of the respondents see nature related activities as moderately important. (Appendix 2/3, Question 2.)

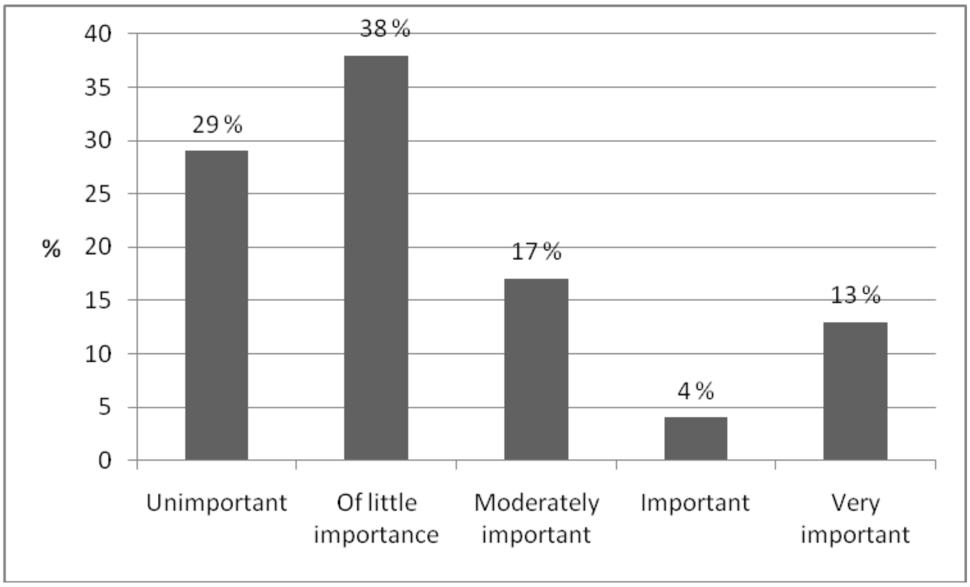


Figure 14. Importance of nature related activities for competitiveness (24 respondents)

Most important factors in decision-making of travel agencies' customers

In terms of the decision making process of Chinese tourism consumers, the respondents could give multiple answers. In 75 % of the cases, the popularity of the destination and the recommendation of travel agents are according to the respondents the main source of influence on customers. Followed by this number is the price category of the vacation with 54 %. A percentage of 46 % of the respondents indicated that for Chinese tourists the opinion of family members and friends are most influencing. In this context that could mean the exchange of travel experiences. The quality of the accommodation, for instance the hotel category and the meals that are included during the vacation play the major role according to 33 % of the respondents. This number is followed by 29 % of the travel agencies that stated information gathered from the internet would influence the decision-making of Chinese tourists the most. (Appendix 2/4, Question 7.)

This result corresponds to the findings of the chapter six about Chinese consumer culture. In this context, the influence of collectivism is underlined, since the Chinese consumer bases his/her decision on secure information, professional recommendation as well as on the quality of the product which reflects Mianzi, the avoidance of decision-failure. These findings should help Northern Finland to promote their offers based on reliable information that is represented in an authentic manner. (Appendix 2/4, Question 7.)

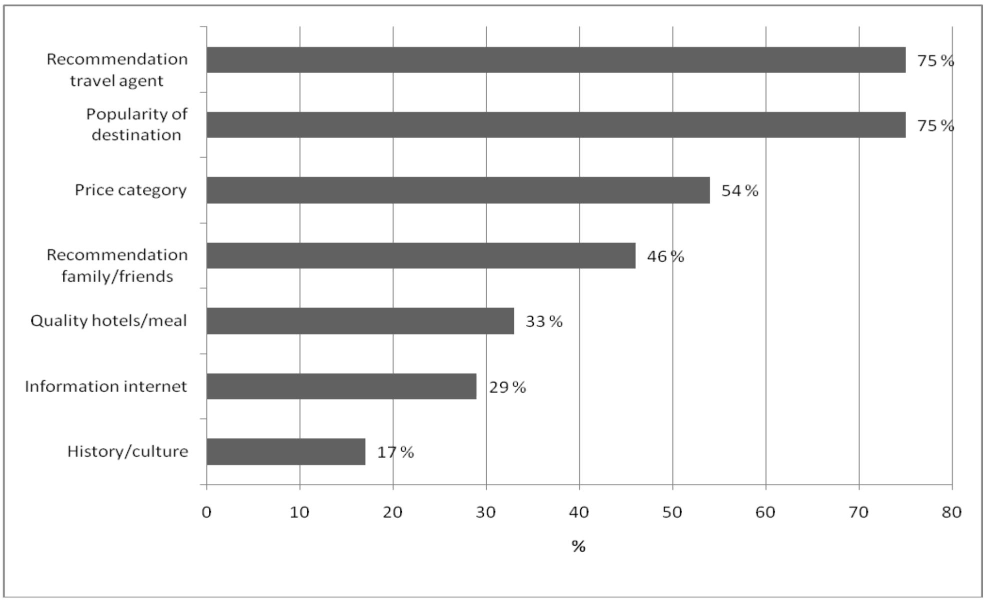


Figure 15. Most important factors for the decision making of customers (24 respondents)

Most interesting season for Chinese to visit Finland

All 24 travel agencies that were interviewed responded to this question. As the table below demonstrates, 59 % of the respondents find the summer most appealing, followed by the Finnish winter with 33 %. Autumn is an interesting season for approximately 8 %, which is important to notice, since one of the main holidays in China, is in the first week of October, the peak period in autumn. Therefore, nature tourism of Northern Finland needs to emphasize on promotion activities for its autumn offers. It should also be mentioned, that spring was stated by no respondent. (Appendix 2/5, Question 9.)

This result proves as well the image travel agents have in regards to Finland, since eight travel agencies relate Finland with winter and seven with Santa Clause. This indicates that the Finnish winter with its phenomenon "Santa Clause" might be very attractive for Chinese tourists. (Appendix 4/5, Question 8.)

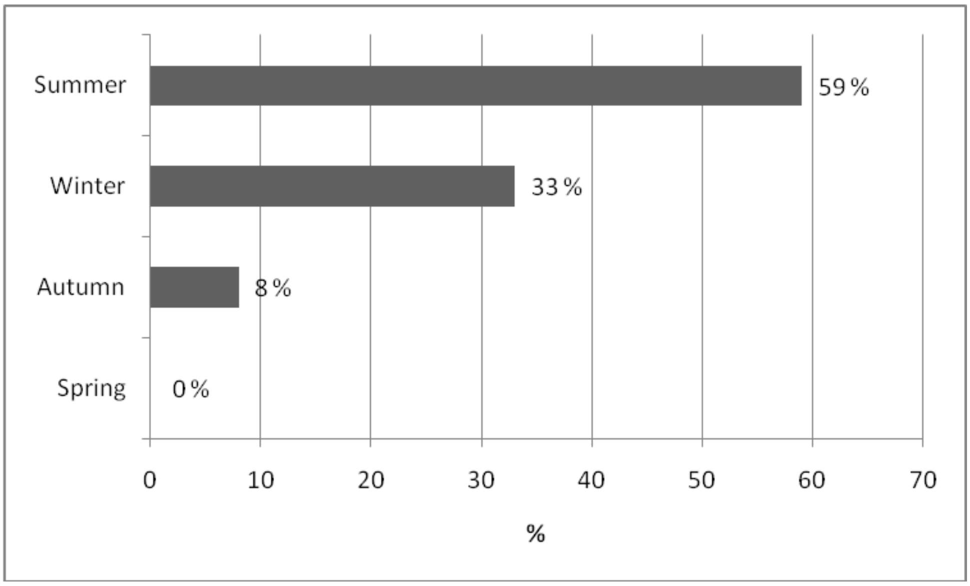


Figure 16. Most interesting seasons for Chinese tourists to visit Finland (24 respondents)

Average length of stay of Chinese tourists in Finland

Of the 17 travel agencies who stated to offer Finland trips, the majority of 71 % mentioned that Chinese spend less than four days in Finland and 24 % between 5-6 days. One reason for this short duration is that most travel agencies stated to offer Finland as part of a Scandinavia package. Thus, Finland might be a stopover only rather than an extended vacation. According to the respondents, only 6 % of Chinese tourists stay 1-2 weeks at the most. This result shows that Chinese tourists spend more time in other European destinations in general than they would in Finland. The average length of tour packages sold to European destinations is 9-10 days. However, in Finland Chinese tourists spend an average time of less than four days. This underlines the statement of the travel agencies that offer Finland, that visiting Finland is mostly part of a Scandinavia package for Chinese tourists. (Appendix 2/5, Question 14; Appendix 4/1, Profile of the travel agencies.)

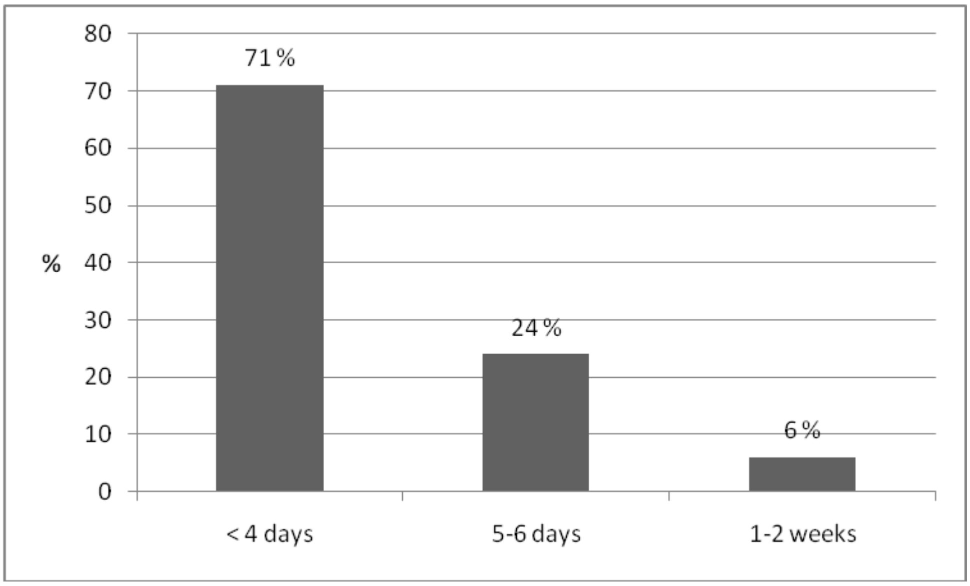


Figure 17. Average length of stay of Chinese tourists in Finland (17 respondents)

Time of the year Chinese tourists mostly visit Finland

Despite the fact, that most travel agencies relate Finland with “winter” and “Santa Clause” and almost 33 % of the travel agencies indicate that winter could be the most interesting season to visit Finland, the table below shows the opposite. (Appendix 2/5, Question 9.)

As figure 17 indicates, 53 % of the travel agents who offer Finland stated that their customers visit Finland during the summer, namely between June and August, followed by spring with 29 %. The least popular time to visit is accordingly from December to February with 6 % after the time between September and November with 12 %. (Appendix 2/6, Question 15.)

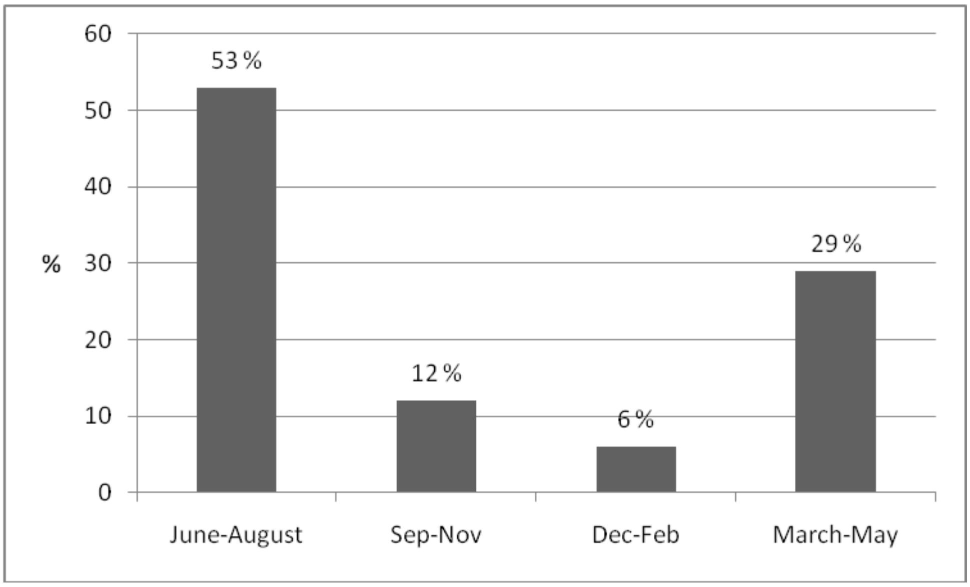


Figure 17. Time of year Chinese tourists visit Finland (17 respondents)

Main attractions for Chinese tourists in Finland

This question was asked in the multiple response format giving the respondents the option to choose several attractions. As the following table shows, the most important attraction in Finland for Chinese tourists is its unspoiled nature, with the majority of 71 % of the respondents. For 53 % of the respondents, environmental friendliness of Finland is seen as the main attractions for their customers when visiting Finland. The fact, that Finland has a different culture is an attraction for Chinese tourists for 47 % of the respondents. This number is followed by 24 % of the respondents who stated that the variety of cultural attractions and the different wildlife and nature would be main attractions for their customers. (Appendix 2/6, Question 16.)

However, in terms of outdoor activities, only 6 % of the respondents see those as a main attraction for their customers visiting Finland. One additional comment of a travel agent underlines this result. Accordingly, the priority of Chinese tourists is to spend quality time with their family/friends. Physical exercises are not part of the favourite leisure activities for Chinese tourists. However, the high response rate of 71 % of the travel agencies stating that the unspoiled nature of Finland is a main attraction is a positive factor for Northern Finland. (Appendix 2/6, Question 16.)

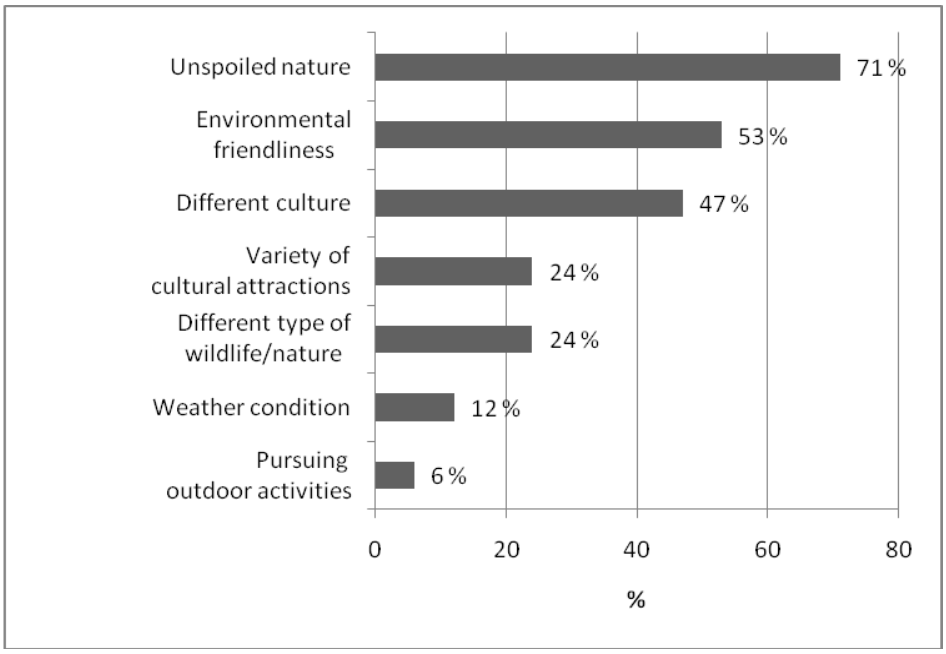


Figure 18. Main attractions of Finland for Chinese tourists (17 respondents)

Importance of nature related activities for Chinese tourists when visiting Finland

The majority of the 17 travel agents that offer Finland in their product range stated that nature related activities are unimportant for Chinese tourists when visiting Finland. Since nature related activities happen outdoors, this result proves the low response rate shown above in figure 18. (Appendix 2/7, Question 13.)

The number of 35 % stating nature related activities as unimportant is followed by 30 % and 29 % of the travel agencies that state nature related activities were either of little importance or moderately important. One travel agent, meaning 6 % states that nature related activities are very important for Chinese tourists when visiting Finland. (Appendix 2/7, Question 13.)

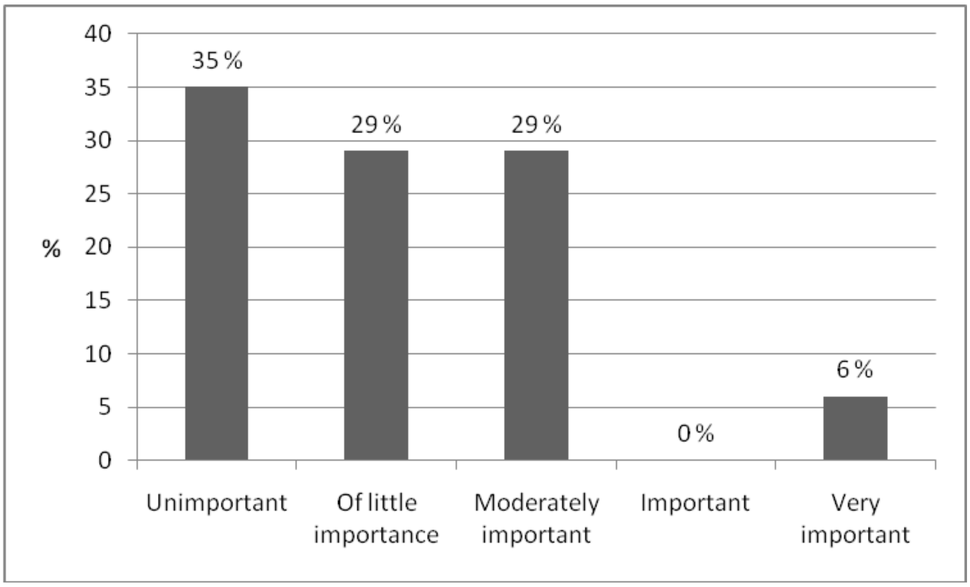


Figure 19. Importance of nature related activities for Chinese tourists in Finland (17 respondents)

Nature related activities pursued by Chinese tourists in Finland

The figure below demonstrates that the most popular nature related activities among Chinese tourists in Finland are wildlife watching and photography. These activities were stated by 80 % of the respondents. The high number of respondents for photography and wildlife watching is underlined by the following statement of one travel agent, "many people in Chine like photography, and they are willing to spend lots of money in cameras and photo taking trips". Finnish sauna is with 73 % of the respondents a further activity pursued by Chinese tourists. (Appendix 2/8, Question 17.)

In addition, the travel agents were given the option to tick "other" in order to state activities that were not listed in the question. The result shows, that 60 % stated, despite the fact that it was asked for nature related activities, sightseeing and shopping belong to the most favourite activities for Chinese. A percentage of 53 % of the respondents mentioned that Northern lights and midnight sun would be a phenomenon Chinese tourists consider as attraction. (Appendix 2/8, Question 17.)

This question constitutes one of the key results in this survey. Since the goal is to find out about how attractive Northern Finland with its nature tourism offer is for Chinese tourists. The result shows that Chinese tourists pursue none of the nature related activities that were explained as core part in this study, apart from snowmobile safaris ticked by 20 % of the respondents and husky/reindeer safaris with 33 %. (Appendix 2/8, Question 17.)

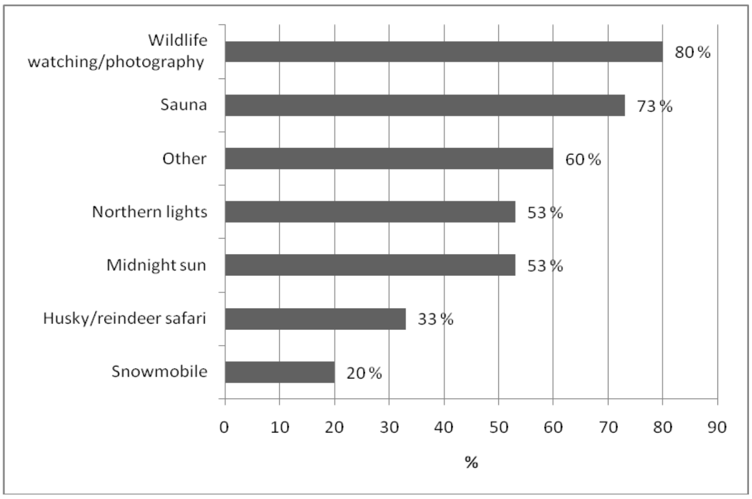


Figure 20. Nature related activities pursued by Chinese tourists in Finland (17 respondents)

Interest of travel agencies to offer Northern Finland

This question was asked to both travel agencies that offered Finland and those that did not offer Finland. According to the table below, 21 of 24 travel agencies made a statement to this question, three travel agencies abstained from answering. Hereby the clear majority of 15 travel agencies assured to be interested in Northern Finland as a travel destination for Chinese tourists. Of the 21 respondents, 6 travel agencies stated not to be interested in offering Northern Finland, representing 29 %. (Appendix 2/8, Question 18.)

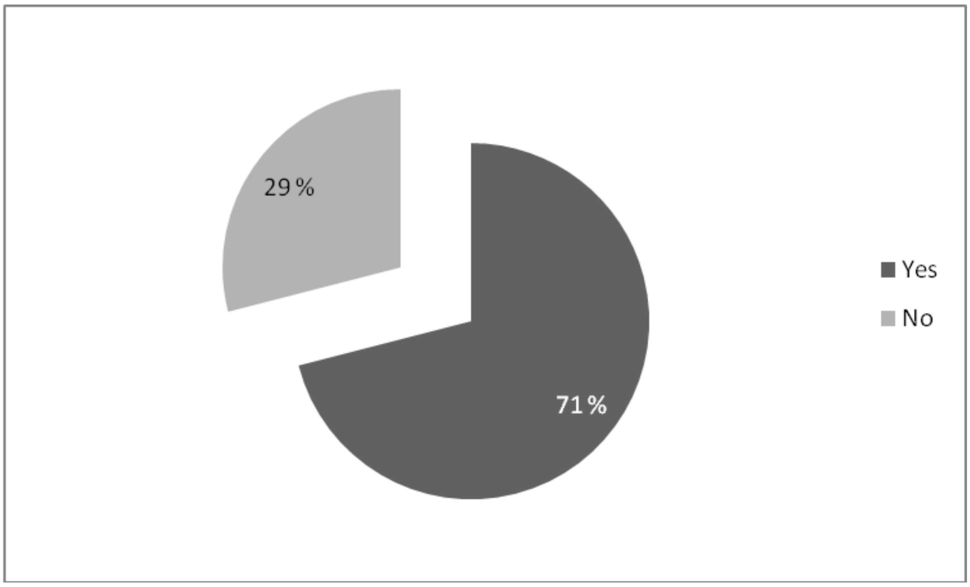


Figure 21. Interest towards Northern Finland as a travel destination (21 respondents)

In order to find out whether there is a correlation of the travel agencies that offer Finland and those who are interested in Northern Finland, a cross tabulation analysis was conducted. Hereby the Monte Carlo method was utilized due to the small sample size of 24 respondents. This method is distinctive since it allows results even if a small sample size is at hand. However, it should be taken into consideration, that even though these results are statistically correct, they only serve as a guideline. By applying the Monte Carlo method, a p-value of 0,000 was determined. This indicates a definite statistical correlation between the results of the question whether the travel agencies offer trips to Finland and the question whether travel agencies are interested to offer trips to Northern Finland. (Appendix 3/1, Question 10 & 18.)

The following figure shows clearly that 88 % of the respondents who stated to offer Finland show interest in including Northern Finland in their product range as a separate destination as well. None of the travel agencies that do not offer Finland as a holiday destination are interested in Northern Finland either. (Appendix 3/1, Question 10 & 18.)

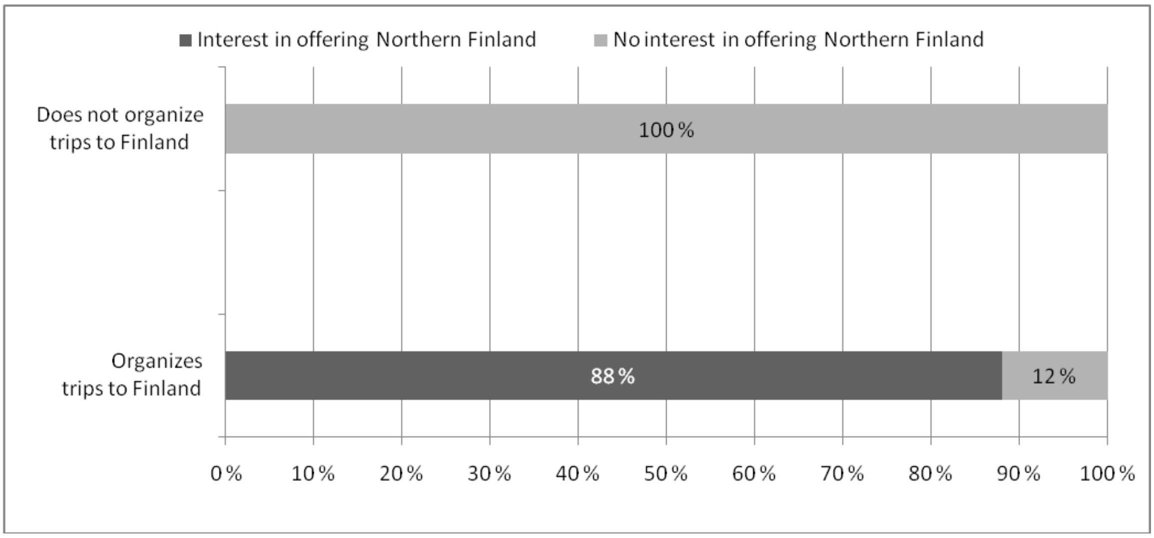


Figure 22. Correlation offering Finland and interest in Northern Finland

Incentives that could attract to offer Northern Finland

The question concerning incentives that could help make Northern Finland more attractive for Chinese travel agencies was asked in the multiple response formats. The majority of 88 % mentioned that information material about the destination Northern Finland could help to raise awareness for both the travel agencies and customers. Also seminars and workshops with presentations about the destination Northern Finland could help. (Appendix 2/9, Question 19.)

In addition, the travel agents were given the option to tick "other" in order to state activities that were not listed in the question. One travel agent stated that a decrease in the price category of Finland in general would help Northern Finland to become more attractive for Chinese tourists. (Appendix 2/9, Question 19.)

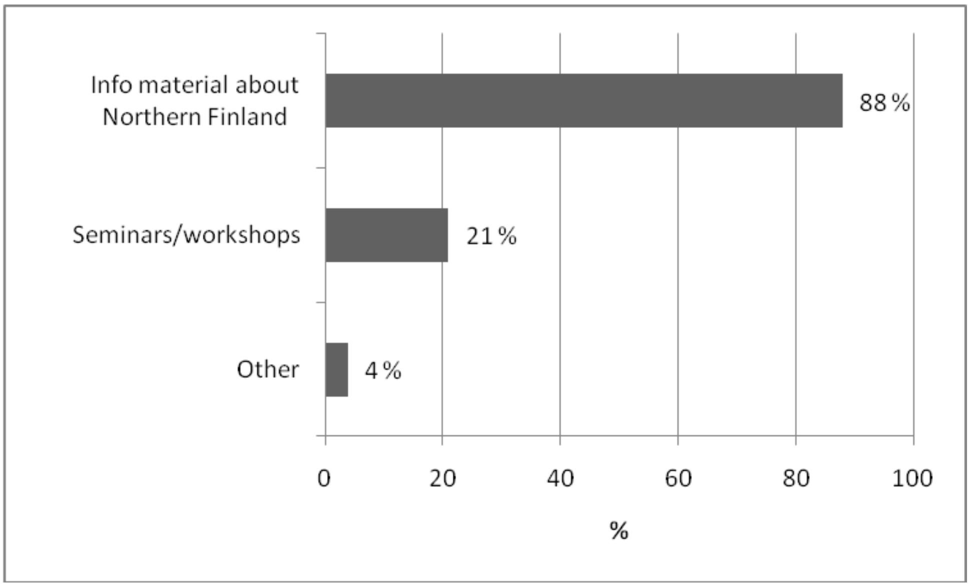


Figure 23. Incentives that could attract to offer Northern Finland (24 respondents)

Likelihood of Chinese tourists to choose Northern Finland as a travel destination

This question was addressed to the travel agencies in order to find out about the probability of Chinese tourists visiting Northern Finland if it was offered by the respective travel agencies. The result of this question should give an insight about the attitude of travel agencies towards Northern Finland as a potential travel destination. A percentage of 46 % of the travel agents stated that it is likely for Chinese tourists to choose Northern Finland. A percentage of 9 % assured that Chinese tourists would very likely choose Northern Finland as a holiday destination if it was offered. However, this number is followed by the same percentage of respondents who stated that it is neither likely nor unlikely for Chinese tourists to choose Northern Finland. This indicates that travel agencies are not able to deliberate a potential success by offering the destination. A percentage of 23 % of respondents stated that it is not likely that Chinese tourists could choose Northern Finland for their vacation. Even 13 % stated that Chinese tourists would very unlikely decide for Northern Finland. (Appendix 2/10, Question 20.)

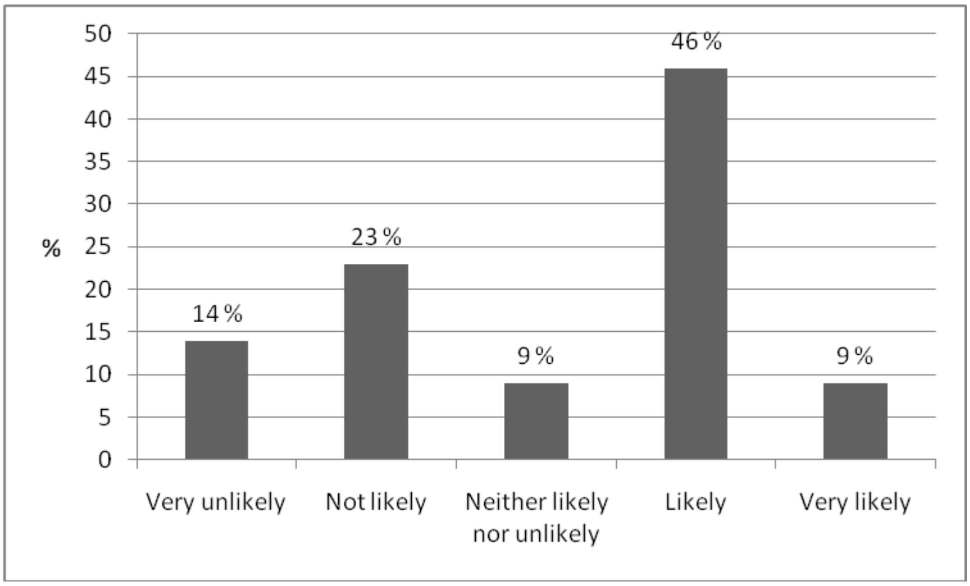


Figure 24. Likelihood to choose Northern Finland as travel destination (22 respondents)

The following figure demonstrates that those travel agencies who are interested in offering Northern Finland appear also confident towards the likelihood that Chinese tourists may decide for a vacation in Northern Finland if it was offered. However, the opinions of the travel agencies that don't show interest are divided and there is no clear tendency visible if Northern Finland could be an attractive holiday destination for Chinese tourists. (Appendix 3/2, Question 18 & 20.)

As a conclusion it may be interpreted that travel agencies that offer Finland are interested in Northern Finland also (see table 15). Furthermore these travel agencies consider Northern Finland as a travel destination for their customers as likely/very likely. (Appendix 3/2, Question 18 & 20.)

In regards to the travel agencies that do not offer Finland yet, marketing actions should emphasize on a more integral approach in order to raise awareness about the nature destination Finland at large and to get to know Finland's touristic offers. (Appendix 3/2, Question 18 & 20.)

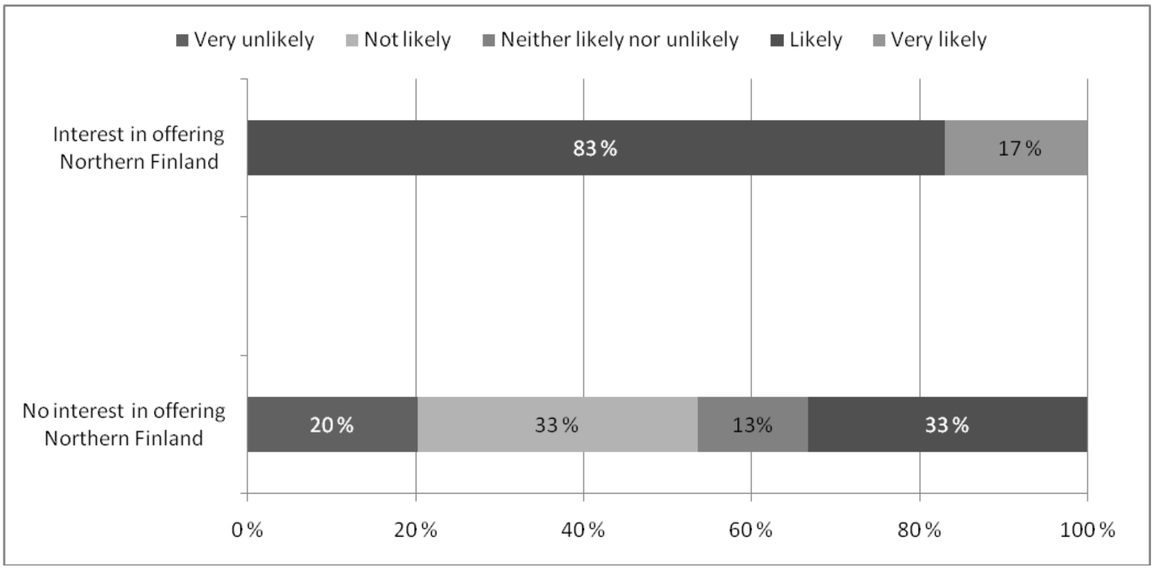


Figure 25. Interest in Northern Finland and likelihood to choose Northern Finland

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to analyze the perception of Chinese travel agencies of Northern Finland as a potential holiday destination for Chinese tourists. The main concepts of nature tourism were described as a framework for this study. The literature that was utilized in order to outline the different aspects of nature tourism showed that nature tourism is a complex type of tourism. Nature tourism involves impacts on the human and natural environment. It covers sustainable use of nature and the exploitation of personal fulfilment of its participants in a physical and emotional manner. The value of nature tourism for consumers is perceived individually and difficult to define in general terms. In addition, different nature related activities relevant for the context of this study were outlined. This showed, that Northern Finland's touristic offer emphasizes highly on nature related activities.

The trends of Chinese outbound tourism were presented in chapter three. Currently, the Southeast Asian tourism market including Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Cambodia and the Maldives belong to the most interesting destinations for Chinese outbound tourists. In terms of European destinations, Germany, Switzerland, France and UK are among the countries that are visited the most, in particular for winter holidays.

The analyzis about consumer behaviour in tourism showed that holiday-decision making differs from traditional decision-making approaches. The holiday decision-making process includes emotional choices and preferences and also situational opportunities in combination with the value that customers see in the holiday.

In terms of Chinese consumer behaviour it was seen that the decision-making of Chinese is well researched and planned. However, Chinese consumer behaviour is hard to define and influenced by many factors, with culture and history having the strongest influence on the decision-making process.

The approach of conducting interviews with Chinese travel agencies was chosen since travel agencies play an important role for the Chinese outbound tourism to Finland. Travel agencies represent the link between the tourist and the holiday destination. Furthermore, they have the ability to represent customer's needs and perceptions. Travel agents are the most important source of information for Chinese tourists before they travel. In addition, the opinions of experts, such as travel agencies are needed in order to develop the small tourism market of Northern Finland. Furthermore, the cooperation with Chinese travel agents should be intensified in order to reach potential tourists from China.

Recommendations

This study builds the fundament for further studies in the field of nature tourism in Northern Finland. A number of measures can be conveyed out of this survey and therefore it sets in this context a cornerstone for subsequent research. The findings of this study raise several aspects for marketing actions and product development.

Based on the conducted interviews the conclusion can be drawn, that Chinese travel agencies are not fully aware of what Northern Finland has to offer as a nature tourism destination for Chinese tourists. The future focus should be on Chinese travel agencies and how they perceive Northern Finland as a nature tourism destination. Hereby, Northern Finland should mainly address travel agencies in China that specifically focus on niche markets such as the nature tourism destination Northern Finland.

As part of marketing actions, Chinese travel agents should be assisted in becoming more confident for the cooperation with Northern Finland. With the help of familiarization trips, the relationship between Chinese travel agents and Northern Finland could be enhanced. In addition, familiarization trips would help Chinese travel agencies to experience Northern Finland as a holiday destination and build knowledge that can be communicated to potential tourists in China. Furthermore, information material about Northern Finland as well as seminars and workshops in China would help achieve more knowledge. For Northern Finland's future tourism industry it is essential, that the supply of information material about Northern Finland would be provided in Chinese language. This helps to increase the feeling of safety for Chinese tourists and gives Northern Finland a trustworthy image.

The long distance to Northern Finland was discovered as a major source of Northern Finland as an unappealing destination. However, the Finnish Airline Finnair offers direct flight connections from destinations in China. This feature constitutes one of the major driving forces to increase the proportion of Chinese tourists in Northern Finland. The airports in China are located in Beijing, Hong Kong and Shanghai with seven direct flights per week to Helsinki as well as from Guangzhou with 4 flights weekly to Helsinki via Hong Kong. Therefore marketing measures should highlight on joint promotion with Finnair and travel packages to Northern Finland. (Finnair.com. The direct way to Asia. 2010.)

Furthermore, the visa regulation matter creates an obstacle for Chinese travellers to consider Northern Finland as an attractive destination. The visa issuing process is not only time consuming, it poses also a costly investment.

Moreover, the Finnish Tourism Board should expand promotion actions and focus on their offices in Shanghai, Beijing, and Hong Kong. This would help to raise awareness for Northern Finland's touristic offers. This could be achieved by representing Northern Finland's touristic offer on tourism fairs and trade shows in China. Since emotional factors play a major role in Chinese tourism decision-making, it is recommended to maintain close contact in order to develop cooperation between Northern Finland and their representatives on site. A better understanding of Chinese tourist behaviour and Chinese outbound tourism are necessary in order to create effective and successful marketing strategies for touristic products and services from Northern Finland.

In regards to the cultural aspects that were outlined in the study, the understanding of the Chinese culture, history, traditions and values should be enhanced. Chinese families and individuals make their decisions based on cultural factors, recommendations of travel agencies and relatives. In this context, collective thinking, risk avoidance and Chinese group behaviour should mainly be further analysed. Furthermore, the popularity of the destination and current trends influence Chinese decision-making. In terms of product development, there should be a focus on cultural differences and how these influence the decision-making process in tourism.

Due to the large size of China, geographical differences are great within the country. The research included travel agencies from different parts in China. According to the results of the survey, there is an evident difference in the travel behaviour of Southern Chinese tourists compared to Northern Chinese tourists. In terms of the development of touristic products of Northern Finland, it is recommended to gain a better understanding of the travel behaviour, desires and motives of Chinese tourists according to their place of origin.

According to the results of the survey, the Chinese travel agents are mostly interested in Finnish summer and winter. The perceived image of Finland by Chinese travel agents is based on nature, winter and snow, in particular for Chinese from the Southern part. In addition, Chinese travel agents link Santa Clause with Finland. These factors could present important pull factors in the future. Marketing measures could highlight on these pull factors, for example by holiday packages including a visit to Santa Clause during Christmas holidays in December.

Since autumn does not belong to Chinese' favourite season to travel to Finland, this season should be promoted. The first week of October is one of the main holidays in China. With help of niche products, Northern Finland would be able to gain market share as a holiday destination during China's main holiday season. An important tool to determine marketing actions could be benchmarking other European destinations that are already established in the Chinese tourism market. Thus, important steps can be taken to increase attractiveness of Northern Finland during low seasons.

The travel agents' perceptions showed that Finnish attractions that have the most significance for Chinese are Finland's unspoiled nature and the different culture. Chinese tourists wish to experience the Finnish sauna, see Northern lights and midnight sun. The results showed also, that Chinese tourists are more passive travellers who seek for comfortable travelling and less physical exercises. The only considered nature activity are snowmobile safaris. The main focus is on sightseeing, wildlife watching, and nature photography. Furthermore, it was found out that Chinese tourist seek for shopping opportunities. For marketing actions, Northern Finland could focus on providing a variety of possibilities for Chinese visitors to purchase souvenirs.

Chinese tourists in Finland have according to the findings in the survey a higher income and can afford expensive trips to Finland. Their main focus is on spending quality time with their families. Chinese tourists are group oriented and travel therefore mostly in guided groups. Therefore, the emphasis in regards to product development should be on travel packages designed for group vacation. However, there should also be a focus in order to meet the needs of individual travellers from China, in particular the younger generation.

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QUESTIONNAIRE – ENGLISH VERSION.

Survey
for the Demand of Nature Tourism in Northern Finland for Chinese Tourists

A Study for the Arctic Flavours Association
in cooperation with the
Kajaani University of Applied Sciences / Finland

by
Hanne Torvinen & Jennifer Brosy

Kajaani Polytechnic

The European Agricultural Fund
for Rural Development:
Europe investing in rural areas

Dear Sir / Madam,

We would like to begin by thanking you for taking the time from your busy schedule to give us this interview and it is with great pleasure that we look forward to working with you throughout this study.

Our purpose is to find out whether there is demand for nature tourism in Finland for the Chinese Outbound Market.

There are **23 questions** in total that are subdivided into three parts according to each category. Question numbers 9 and 17 are provided with helpful links that you will find by simply clicking on the given options.

To help make this easier for both yourselves and for us, we would suggest that you read through each question carefully. If you need any assistance please contact us via email KBI9XJenniferB@kajak.fi or call us at +358 44 26 99 770. If it is convenient for you, we would also like to suggest that we conduct this interview by phone.

If there are specific comments that you would like to add or any important information that we forgot to touch upon, please do not hesitate to mention them to us at the end of the survey.

For further information, please visit the website of Visit Finland. The website will provide you with helpful information about the touristic offer of Northern Finland*. This information will also help guide you through questions numbers 18 – 21.

Kind Regards

Hanne Torvinen & Jennifer Brosy

* Northern Finland includes Lapland and the West Coast (Oulu and Kainuu region) of Finland

I. INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR TRAVEL AGENCY AND YOUR TARGET GROUP

1. How many international travel destinations does your travel agency offer?

2. How important are nature related activities for the competitiveness of your travel agency?

- ☐ Unimportant
- ☐ Of little importance
- ☐ Moderately important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Very important

3. What components do your customers mostly book when travelling to European Destinations?

Please choose 3 – 4 components maximum.

- ☐ All inclusive packages
- ☐ Flight + Accommodation
- ☐ Flight only
- ☐ Accommodation only
- ☐ Excursions at the destination
- ☐ Other:

4. Please indicate 3 - 4 countries that are most popular among your customers:

5. What is the average length of tour packages to European Destinations booked by your customers?

Days

6. Travel budget of your customers: How much are your customers willing to spend approximately for travel packages to European Destinations?

¥

7. What are the most important factors in the decision making of your customers?

Please choose 3 factors.

- ☐ Popularity of the Destination
- ☐ Recommendation travel agent
- ☐ Recommendation friends / relatives
- ☐ Information available from internet sources
- ☐ Price category of the destination
- ☐ Conservation of nature /destination
- ☐ Long distance to home residence
- ☐ Number / possibility of Outdoor activities
- ☐ Historical and cultural aspects
- ☐ Quality of accommodation / meals
- ☐ Other:

II. IMAGE AND EXPECTATIONS OF FINLAND

8. Your image of Finland: Please list a few things that come to mind when thinking of Finland:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

9. Based on the information given about Finnish summer, winter, spring and autumn – which season sounds most interesting for you?

Please find useful information about the Finnish season by following the link provided when clicking on the specific season.

☐ Summer	☐ Winter
☐ Spring	☐ Autumn

10. Do you organize trips to Finland?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, please continue with question 12.

If no, please answer question 11 and then continue with question 18.

11. If no, what are the reasons that your travel agency does not include Finland as an international destination?

You may choose multiple reasons.

- ☐ Lack of attractions in the destination
- ☐ Duration of journey too time consuming
- ☐ Destination / journey too expensive
- ☐ Lack of knowledge about destination
- ☐ Language / cultural differences
- ☐ Visa regulation
- ☐ Other:

12. What long distance destinations are the biggest competitors to Finland which are booked with your travel agency?

13. How important is it for your customers to offer travel packages that include nature related activities when visiting Finland?

- ☐ Unimportant
- ☐ Of little importance
- ☐ Moderately important
- ☐ Important
- ☐ Very important

14. How long do your customers usually stay in Finland?

- ☐ < 4 days
- ☐ 5 – 6 days
- ☐ 1 – 2 weeks
- ☐ 3 – 4 weeks
- ☐ 5 – 6 weeks
- ☐ more:

15. What time of the year do your customers mostly visit Finland?

- ☐ June – August
- ☐ September – November
- ☐ December – February
- ☐ March – May

16. What are the main attractions for your customers when visiting Finland?

Please choose 3 most important.

- ☐ Unspoiled nature / rich landscape
- ☐ Different type of nature / wildlife
- ☐ Different cultures and local people
- ☐ Pursuing outdoor activities
- ☐ Weather condition of destination
- ☐ Variety of cultural visitor attraction
- ☐ Environmental friendliness
- ☐ Other:

17. What nature related activities do your customers pursue when travelling to Finland?

You may choose multiple activities. Please use also the links provided for useful information.

- ☐ Cross Country Skiing / Downhill skiing
- ☐ Snowmobile safari
- ☐ Hiking
- ☐ Horseback riding
- ☐ Mountain biking
- ☐ Husky / Reindeer safari
- ☐ Canoeing and rowing
- ☐ Fishing
- ☐ Wild berry / mushroom picking in nature
- ☐ Wildlife watching / Photography
- ☐ Sauna
- ☐ Midnight Sun
- ☐ Northern Lights
- ☐ Other:

18. Are you interested in offering trips to Northern Finland?

☐ Yes ☐ No

19. What incentives are needed that could attract you to organize trips to Northern Finland?

You may give multiple answers.

☐ Familiarization trips

☐ Seminars / workshops

☐ Information material about Northern Finland

☐ Other:

20. If you think of your customers: How likely would Chinese tourists choose Northern Finland as their holiday destination?

☐ Very unlikely

☐ Not likely

☐ Neither unlikely nor likely

☐ Likely

☐ Very likely

21. Why in your opinion could Northern Finland be an unappealing holiday destination for your customers?

III. GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT CHINESE TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR

22. Travel behaviour of Chinese tourists: Is there a difference between tourists from Southern China compared to tourists from Northern China when it comes to international destinations?

☐ No

☐ Yes

If yes, please indicate the differences:

23. How does the Chinese outbound tourist travel?

☐ With guided group tours

☐ Individually (i.e. with family members/friends)

☐ Other:

Please do not hesitate to add any comments, experiences or interests in regards to Northern Finland:

Thank you very much for your time, we appreciate your help!

FREQUENCY TABLES OF QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONS.

Question 10: Do you organize trips to Finland?

Statistics

TA that organize trips to Finland

N	Valid	24
	Missing	0
Mode		,00

Travel Agencies that organize trips to Finland

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	17	70,8	70,8	70,8
	No	7	29,2	29,2	100,0
	Total	24	100,0	100,0	

Question 11: If no, what are the reasons that your travel agency does not include Finland?

Case Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
$Reasons[a]	7	100,0%	0	,0%	7	100,0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

$Reasons Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Reasons[a]	Lack of attractions	1	4,8%	14,3
	Duration of journey too time consuming	5	23,8%	71,4
	Destination too expensive	6	28,6%	85,7
	Lack of knowledgeabout destination	6	28,6%	85,7
	Visa regulation	3	14,3%	42,9
Total		21	100,0%	300,0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Question 23: How does the Chinese outbound tourist travel?

Statistics

How do Chinese tourists travel

N	Valid	24
	Missing	0
Mode		,00

How do Chinese tourists travel

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Guided group tours	19	79,1	79,1	79,1
	Individually (i.e. with family, friends)	4	16,6	16,6	16,6
	Other	1	4,3	4,3	100,0
	Total	24	100,0	100,0	

Question 22: Travel behaviour of Chinese tourists: Is there a difference between tourists from Southern China compared to tourists from Northern China when it comes to international destinations?

Statistics

Difference between Southern and Northern China

N	Valid	23
	Missing	1
Mode		,00

Difference between Southern and Northern China

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	20	83,3	87,0	87,0
	No	3	12,5	13,0	100,0
	Total	23	95,8	100,0	
Missing	System	1	4,2		
Total		24	100,0		

Question 3: What components do your customers mostly book when travelling to European destinations?

Case Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
$Components[a]	24	100,0%	0	,0%	24	100,0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

$Components Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Components[a]	All inclusive packages	23	74,2%	95,8
	Flight only	2	6,5%	8,3
	Flight + Accommodation	2	6,5%	8,3
	Excursions	4	12,9%	16,7
Total		31	100,0%	129,2%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Question 2: How important are nature related activities for the competitiveness of your travel agency?

Statistics

Importance nature activities for competitiveness

N	Valid	24
	Missing	0
Mode		1,00

Importance nature activities for competitiveness

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unimportant	7	29,2	29,2	29,2
	Of little importance	9	37,5	37,5	66,7
	Moderately important	4	16,7	16,7	83,3
	Important	1	4,2	4,2	87,5
	Very important	3	12,5	12,5	100,0
	Total	24	100,0	100,0	

Question 7: What are the most important factors in the decision making of your customers?

Case Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
$Factors[a]	24	100,0%	0	,0%	24	100,0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

$Factors Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Factors[a]	Popularity of destination	18	22,8%	75,0
	Recommendation travel agent	18	22,8%	75,0
	Recommendation friends	11	13,9%	45,8
	Information internet	7	8,9%	29,2
	Price category	13	16,5%	54,2
	History/culture	4	5,1%	16,7
	Quality hotels/meal	8	10,1%	33,3
Total		79	100,0%	329,2%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Question 9: Based on the information given about Finnish summer, winter, spring and autumn: Which season sounds most interesting for you?

Statistics

Most interesting season to visit Finland

N	Valid	24
	Missing	0
Mode		,00

Most interesting season to visit Finland

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Summer	14	58,3	58,3	58,3
	Winter	8	33,3	33,3	91,7
	Autumn	2	8,3	8,3	100,0
	Total	24	100,0	100,0	

Question 14: How long do your customers usually stay in Finland?

Statistics

Length of stay in Finland

N	Valid	17
	Missing	0
Mode		,00

Length of stay in Finland

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	< 4 days	12	70,6	70,6	70,6
	5-6 days	4	23,5	23,5	94,1
	1-2 weeks	1	5,9	5,9	100,0
	Total	17	100,0	100,0	

Question 15: What time of the year do your customers mostly visit Finland?

Statistics

Time of year Chinese tourists visit Finland

N	Valid	17
	Missing	0
Mode		,00

Time of year Chinese tourists visit Finland

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	June-August	9	52,9	52,9	52,9
	Sep-Nov	2	11,8	11,8	64,7
	Dec-Feb	1	5,9	5,9	70,6
	March-May	5	29,4	29,4	100,0
	Total	17	100,0	100,0	

Question 16: What are the main attractions for your customers when visiting Finland?

Case Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
$Attractions[a]	17	100,0%	0	,0%	17	100,0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

$Attractions Frequencies

		Responses N	Responses Percent	Percent of Cases
Attractions[a]	Unspoiled nature	12	30,0%	70,6
	Different type of wildlife/nature	4	10,0%	23,5
	Different culture	8	20,0%	47,1
	Pursuing outdoor activities	1	2,5%	5,9
	Weather condition	2	5,0%	11,8
	Variety of cultural attractions	4	10,0%	23,5
	Environmental friendliness	9	22,5%	52,9
Total		40	100,0%	235,3%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Question 13: How important is it for your customers to offer travel packages that include nature related activities when visiting Finland?

Statistics

Importance nature activities for customers

N	Valid	17
	Missing	0
Mode		,00

Importance nature activities for customers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unimportant	6	35,3	35,3	35,3
	Of little importance	5	29,4	29,4	64,7
	Moderately important	5	29,4	29,4	94,1
	Very important	1	5,9	5,9	100,0
	Total	17	100,0	100,0	

Question 17: What nature related activities do your customers pursue when visiting Finland?

Case Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
$Activities[a]	15	88,2%	2	11,8%	17	100,0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

$Activities Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Activities[a]	Snowmobile	3	5,4%	20,0
	Husky/reindeer safari	5	8,9%	33,3
	Wildlife watching/photography	12	21,4%	80,0
	Sauna	11	19,6%	73,3
	Midnight sun	8	14,3%	53,3
	Northern lights	8	14,3%	53,3
	Other	9	16,1%	60,0
Total		56	100,0%	373,3%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Question 18: Are you interested in offering trips to Northern Finland?

Statistics

Interest in offering Northern Finland

N	Valid	21
	Missing	3
Mode		,00

Interest in offering Northern Finland

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	15	62,5	71,4	71,4
	No	6	25,0	28,6	100,0
	Total	21	87,5	100,0	
Missing	System	3	12,5		
Total		24	100,0		

Question 19: What incentives are needed that could attract you to organize trips to Finland?

Case Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
$Incentives[a]	24	100,0%	0	,0%	24	100,0%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

$Incentives Frequencies

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Incentives[a]	Seminar/workshops	5	18,5%	20,8
	Info material about Northern Finland	21	77,8%	87,5
	Other	1	3,7%	4,2
Total		27	100,0%	112,5%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Question 20: How likely would Chinese tourists choose Northern Finland as a holiday destination?

Statistics

Likelihood to choose Northern Finland

N	Valid	22
	Missing	2
Mode		3,00

Likelihood to choose Northern Finland

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very unlikely	3	13,0	13,6	13,6
	Not likely	5	21,7	22,7	36,4
	Neither likely nor unlikely	2	8,7	9,1	45,5
	Likely	10	43,5	45,5	90,9
	Very likely	2	8,7	9,1	100,0
	Total	22	95,7	100,0	
Missing	System	1	4,3		
Total		23	100,0		

CROSS TABULATION QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONS

Question 10: Do you organize trips to Finland?

Question 18: Are you interested in offering trips to Northern Finland?

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Organize trips to Finland Interest in offering trips to Northern Finland	21	87,5%	3	12,5%	24	100,0%

Organize trips to Finland * Interest in offering trips to Northern Finland Crosstabulation

			Interest in offering trips to Northern Finland		
			Yes	No	Total
Do you organize trips to Finland	Yes	Count	15	2	17
		% Within organize trips to Fin-land	88,2%	11,8%	100,0%
	No	Count	0	4	4
		% within not organize trips to Finland	,0%	100,0%	100,0%
Total		Count	15	6	21
		% within trips to Finland	71,4%	28,6%	100,0%

Symmetric Measures

				Monte Carlo Sig.		
					99% Confidence Interval	
		Value	Approx. Sig.	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	,767	,000	,003[a]	,001	,004
	Cramer's V	,767	,000	,003[a]	,001	,004
N of Valid Cases		21				

a. Based on 10000 sampled tables with starting seed 334431365.

Question 18: Are you interested in offering trips to Northern Finland?

Question 20: How likely would Chinese tourists choose Northern Finland as a holiday destination?

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Interest in offering Northern Finland for travel agencies Likelihood to choose Northern Finland for Chinese tourists	21	87,5%	3	12,5%	24	100,0%

Interest in offering Northern Finland * Likelihood to choose Northern Finland Crosstabulation

			Likelihood to choose Northern Finland					Total
			Very unlikely	Not likely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Likely	Very likely	
Interest offering Northern Finland	No	Count	3	5	2	5	0	15
		% within interest offering Northern Finland	20,0%	33,3%	13,3%	33,3%	,0%	100,0%
	Yes	Count	0	0	0	5	1	6
		% within interest offering Northern Finland	,0%	,0%	,0%	83,3%	16,7%	100,0%
Total		Count	3	5	2	10	1	21
		% within interest offering Northern Finland	14,3%	23,8%	9,5%	47,6%	4,8%	100,0%

Chi-Square Tests

				Monte Carlo Sig. (2-sided)			Monte Carlo Sig. (1-sided)		
					99% Confidence Interval			99% Confidence Interval	
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Pearson Chi-Square	8,750[a]	4	,068	,068[b]	,061	,074			
Likelihood Ratio	11,264	4	,024	,042[b]	,037	,047			
Fisher's Exact Test	7,091			,071[b]	,064	,078			
Linear-by-Linear Association	6,797[c]	1	,009	,009[b]	,006	,011	,004[b]	,002	,006
N of Valid Cases	21								

a. 9 cells (90,0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is ,29.

b. Based on 10000 sampled tables with starting seed 1502173562.

c. The standardized statistic is 2,607.

COMPLETE RESULTS OF QUALITATIVE QUESTIONS

Profile of the interviewed travel agencies

Location of travel agency	Number of destinations offered	Trips to Finland offered
Beijing (6 travel agencies)		
	> 100	*yes*
	> 50	*yes (as part of Scandinavia trip)*
	> 100 worldwide	*no*
	worldwide	*yes (as part of Scandinavia trip)*
	USA, Europe, Asia	*no*
	worldwide	*yes*
Hong Kong (7 travel agencies)		
	> 50	*yes*
	Approximately 100	*yes*
	worldwide	*yes*
	worldwide	*no*
	worldwide	*no*
	worldwide	*yes (Scandinavia roundtrips)*
	worldwide	*no*
Nanjing (2 travel agencies)		
	> 100	*yes*
	> 100	*yes*
Shanghai (7 travel agencies)		
	> 50	*yes*
	> 50 (USA, Europe, Asia)	*no*
	worldwide	*yes (Scandinavia all year round)*
	< 100	*yes (Scandinavia)*
	worldwide	*yes (Scandinavia)*
	worldwide	*yes (Scandinavia)*
	worldwide	*no*
Shenzhen (2 travel agencies)		
	> 20 Europe, > 6 America	*yes*
	worldwide	*yes*

Question 4: Please indicate 3 – 4 countries that are most popular among your customers:

- Japan (16 x)
- France (11 x)
- USA (9 x)
- Australia (8 x)
- China/Germany/Italy (5 x)
- Malaysia (4 x)
- Switzerland/Indonesia/Taiwan/Thailand (3 x)
- United Kingdom/Western Europe (2 x)
- Canada Eastern/Europe/Greece/Korea (1 x)

Question 5: What is the average length of tour packages to European destinations booked by your customers? (23 respondents)

Location of travel agency	Length of stay in days
Beijing (5 respondents)	*10*
	10
	10 – 12
	8 – 10
	10
Total average Beijing:	**10**
Hong Kong (7 respondents)	*5 – 8*
	10
	*< 10**
	10 – 12
	7
	5 – 7
	5
Total average Hong Kong:	**7 – 8***
Nanjing (2 respondents)	*7 – 8*
	8 – 9
Total average Nanjing:	**8**
Shanghai (7 respondents)	*5 – 8*
	11
	10
	10
	10
	12
	11
Total average Shanghai:	**10**
Shenzhen (2 respondents)	*12*
	10
Total average Shenzhen:	**11**
Total average of all travel agencies:	**9 – 10 days***

* The travel agency that stated Chinese tourists would stay in European destinations up to 10 days was not included in the calculation due to the fact that this statement could falsify the total average. For example the length of < 10 days could mean 2 days, but also 10 days.

Question 6: Travel budget of your customers: How much are your customers willing to spend approximately for travel packages to European destinations? (24 respondents)

Location of travel agency	**Travel budget in €**
Beijing (6 respondents)	1 500
	1 000 to 1 600
	> 1 600*
	1 700
	1 000 to 1 300
	1 000
Total average Beijing:	**€ 1 330***
Hong Kong (7 respondents)	1 900 to 4 700
	2 000
	< 1 000*
	1 900
	2 300 to 2 800
	3 800
	1 900
Total average Hong Kong:	**€ 2 575***
Nanjing (2 respondents)	1 300 to 1 700
	1 550
Total average Nanjing:	**€ 1 525**
Shanghai (7 respondents)	< 1 600*
	1 300 to 1 900
	1 800
	1 800
	1 900
	3 000
	1 900 to 2 100
Total average Shanghai:	**€ 2 017**
Shenzhen (2 respondents)	1 500 to 2 000
	< 1 700*
Total average Shenzhen:	**€ 1 750***
Total average of all travel agencies:	**€ 1 840***

* The travel agencies that stated Chinese tourists would spend in European destinations up to or at least a certain amount were not included in the calculation due to the fact that these statements could falsify the total average. For example the amount of > € 1 600 could mean € 1 000, but also € 1 600.

Question 8: Your image of Finland: Please list a few things that come to mind when thinking of Finland:

- Nature (9 x)
- Winter/expensive (8 x)
- Santa Clause (7 x)
- Snow/Northern Europe/cold/small population (5 x)
- Sauna/Helsinki/clean (3 x)
- Ice hotels (2 x)
- Peaceful/skiing/forests/Midnight Sun/Scandinavia (1 x)

Question 21: Why in your opinion could Northern Finland be unappealing holiday destinations for your customers?

- Distance (13 x)
- Price category of the destination (9 x)
- Visa regulations (6 x)
- Lack of marketing (4 x)
- No unique offer/outstanding features/similar offer to the rest of Scandinavia (4 x)
- Lack of shopping opportunities (2 x)
- Accessibility/ long distance to main transit airport (1 x)
- Weather conditions in Finland (1 x)

Question 12: What long distance destinations are the biggest competitors to Finland which are booked with your travel agency?

- Germany (13 x)
- France (9 x)
- Switzerland (7 x)
- Italy/Austria (4 x)
- USA (2 x)
- Australia/Rest of Scandinavia (1 x)