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MASTER'S THESIS

Analyzing the behavior of potential Chinese consumers traveling to Finland and Lake Saimaa

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ABSTRACT

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By 2017, China has become the fifth biggest tourism input country to Finland with the biggest growth rate of tourism overnight stay compared to other countries. Finnish local destination marketing organizations (DMOs) and Finnish local service providers are facing challenges for competing other countries in China tourism market. For Finland, in order to provide better service and build its competitive advantage for Chinese consumers, the comprehensive understanding of consumers' behavior is necessary and important.

The Purpose of this research is to develop behavior analysis of Potential Chinese consumers more specifically and to study potential Chinese consumers' preference for Lake Saimaa region as a case study. This study implements multi-case study research strategy concentrated mainly on highly potential Chinese consumers willing to travel to Finland in the future. Initially, the screening questionnaire is designed elaborately to select most potential and qualified subjects among 256 respondents. Accordingly, the research conducts 22 semi-structured interviews to clarify their motivations and decision making process of international traveling consumption, and to understand their preference for Lake Saimaa region. More, the preference analysis of Lake Saimaa aims for further strategic tourism development in South Karelia province, Finland.

Research findings demonstrate that the seek for different and diverse experience as 'push' factors and the polar light, nature and Santa culture as 'push' factors motivate potential Chinese consumers travel to Finland mainly. The research shows how Chinese consumers make their international travel decisions from the process including information searching, alternative evaluation, purchase and post-purchase consequently. Also, the critical influencing factors of decision making process are studied. Furthermore, this research reveals what potential consumers truly prefer for Lake Saimaa based on the displayed images and interviews. Finally, this research suggests the most considered and important factors that destination marketing organizations and local service providers might implement for further tourism development in China market.

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Without doubt, my families are always my backup force that support my studying in Finland and love me every seconds without condition. Therefore, I would like to press my sincere and deepest appreciates to all my families.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	9
1.1 Research background	9
1.2 The goal of research and research questions	10
1.3 Delimitations	11
1.4 Research design and structure	11
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	13
2.1 The essential influencing factors on consumer behavior in tourism market.....	13
2.1.1 Social Factor	13
2.1.2 Personal Factor	14
2.1.3 Psychologic Factor	14
2.2 Tourist Motivation	15
2.3 Consumer behavior and decision making process in tourism.....	17
2.3.1 Schmoll Model	19
2.3.2 Mathieson and Wall Model	20
2.3.3 Middleton Model	21
2.3.4 Woodside and Lysonki Model.....	22
2.3.5 Woodside and King Model.....	23
2.4 Consumer Segmentation	24
3. CURRENT SITUATION OF CHINESE OUTBOUND TOURISTS TO FINLAND	29
3.1 Chinese overnight spent in Finland	29
3.2 Chinese overnight stay in Finland by seasons	31
3.3 Chinese overnight stay in Finland by regions	33
3.4 Consumption of Chinese tourists traveling to Finland	34
4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	36
4.1 Introduction	36
4.2 Aims and objectives	36
4.3 Theoretic framework	37
4.4 Research design	42
4.4.1 Research approach	42
4.4.2 Research purpose	42
4.4.3 Research strategy.....	43

4.5 Sampling.....	44
4.6 Data collection.....	46
4.7 Data analysis.....	47
4.8 Research quality	48
5. INTERVIEW ANALYSIS.....	50
5.1 Interview structure.....	50
5.2 Interview background.....	50
5.3 Empirical finding on decision making process of potential Chinese consumers	52
5.3.1 The travel motivation.....	52
5.3.2 The information searching.....	57
5.3.3 The alternative selection and comparison	62
5.3.4 Purchase.....	65
5.3.5 Behavior for traveling to Finland	67
5.3.6 Post-purchase evaluation.....	70
5.3.7 Influencing factors.....	71
5.4 Case study of preference analysis for Lake Saimaa	73
5.4.1 Background of case study.....	73
5.4.2 Empirical finding of case study	74
6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	80
6.1 Summary of empirical findings.....	80
6.2 Theoretic contribution	82
6.3 Managerial implication.....	83
6.4 Limitation	84
6.5 Further research suggestion.....	85
REFERENCES.....	86

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. ‘Push’ and ‘Pull’ Motivation Factors

Table 2. Extended Maslow model

Table 3. Summary of ‘push’ motivation for potential Chinese consumers have willing to travel to Finland

Table 4. Summary of ‘pull’ motivation for potential Chinese consumers have willing to travel to Finland

Table 5. Summary of information preference of potential Chinese consumers

Table 6. Most important criteria of alternatives evaluation used by potential Chinese consumers

Table 7. The percentage of most preferred activities in Finland by potential Chinese consumers

Table 8. Influencing factors of decision making process by potential Chinese consumers

Table 9. The image preference of Lake Saimaa by potential Chinese consumers

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Master's Thesis structure

Figure 2. Schmoll tourism purchase decision Model

Figure 3. Mathieson & Wall consumer buying behavior model in tourism

Figure 4. The stimuli-response model of buyer behavior

Figure 5. Tourist leisure destination awareness and choice model

Figure 6. Purchase- consumption system model for leisure travel behavior

Figure 7. Ranking of nights spent in Finland by countries of origin

Figure 8. Nights spent in Finland by Chinese 2010-2017

Figure 9. Nights spent in Finland by Chinese at Summer season and Winter season

Figure 10. Main source of foreign overnights stays in Finland in Summer season in 2016 and growth rate 2016/2015

Figure 11. Main source of foreign overnights stays in Finland in winter season in 2016 and growth rate 2016/2015

Figure 12. Chinese overnights distribution within Finland by main travel destination

Figure 13. Chinese overnights within Finland by four main travel destinations 2010-2017

Figure 14. Shares of total consumption of international tourism in Finland 2016

Figure 15. Theoretic Framework of Master Thesis

Figure 16. Occupation level of interviewees in this research

Figure 17. Age distribution of interviewees in this research

Figure 18. Family structure of interviewees in this research

Figure 19. Most important information channels used by potential Chinese consumers

Figure 20. Importance distribution of future information searching for potential Chinese consumers

Figure 21. Summary of where to purchase accommodation by potential Chinese consumers

Figure 22. Summary of where to purchase the transportation by potential Chinese consumers

Figure 23. Summary of when to purchase the accommodation and transportation by potential Chinese consumers

Figure 24. The most preferred time for potential Chinese consumers to visit Finland

Figure 25. The way of recommendation after traveling by potential Chinese consumers

Figure 26. Percentage of preferred time duration stay in Lake Saimaa by potential Chinese consumers

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Invitation newsletter for Screening Questionnaire

Appendix B. Screening questionnaire

Appendix C. Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Appendix D. Images for Case Study of Lake Saimaa Region

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research background

China, the most populous country in the world with around 1.404 billion people covers 9.6 million square kilometers (World population prospects, 2017). Not only the population, by 2014 China also has the world's second-largest economy by nominal gross domestic product. As with the purchasing power parity, China is in the top of the world (World economic outlook, 2017). With the economy growing stably, the life quality of Chinese citizen is becoming better especially in living standard and way of entertainment. Tourism as one of most enjoyable way of entertainment has been drawing much attention more than ever in China market. Since last decade, the average level of affluence among Chinese has increased dramatically; consequently, the international tourism is becoming more and more popular.

According to Taleb Rifai, secretary general of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), there was more than 135 million international departures in 2016 from china and this number has been increasing in double digits since 2010. Moreover, only 6 percent of Chinese people have passports now, which indicates that potential of China market is beyond our imagination (Aldama, 2017). For example, 308.1% increase arrivals to Morocco in 2016 compared to the last year (COTRI, 2017). By 2016 the total number of Chinese outbound tourists has increased to 122 million with 4.3% growth rate compared to 2015 (China tourism academy, 2017).

Finland, as one of Nordic countries with 5.5 million populations, has realized the importance of bilateral cooperation and trade with China in order to boost its own domestic economy under the uncertain international situation. Because of its reputation of snow, pureness, nature, aurora and Santa Claus and so on, it has been becoming more and more attractive destination for Chinese tourists especially for recent 5 years.

Within the whole Finland, the travel destination area can be categorized into mainly four sub-travel area, namely, the Lapland area, Lakeland area, coast& Archipelago area and Helsinki metropolitan area. As with the Chinese visitors, the percentage of each destination area are 21%, 6%, 10% and 63% respectively (Travel Trade, 2017). And for the Lakeland, the Lake Saimaa is the core and essential part of Lakeland. Compared with other destinations in Finland, the Lakeland has great potential growth for potential Chinese visitors, besides the convenient location and easy access with Helsinki and Russia, Saint Petersburg give this region great competitive advantages for tourism development (Go Saimaa, 2018).

For recently years, Lake Saimaa region have been building their brand position in China market, which they brand Lake Saimaa as purest Finland due to its competitive advantage of abundant nature resource. Hence, the key products oriented to China market has being planned and conceived. The key products and services mainly include the nature and wellbeing with clean environment and inspiring activities, the local culture and tradition experience, sports camp for younger generation, the transportation convenience to Saint Petersburg, business and technology visits (Go Saimaa, 2018).

1.2 The goal of research and research questions

From the last decade the number of Chinese tourists visiting Finland has been growing and the growth rate is relatively outstanding compared to tourists from other countries. However, based on the total tourist base from China, which is around 135 million international departures from China in 2016(China tourism academy, 2017), there is huge potential for Finland to attract more Chinese tourists in the future. So far, there are many researches have been done concerning the image analysis of destination (Souiden et al. 2017; Hernandez-Mogollon et al. 2017), branding in tourist destination (Hernandez-Mogollon et al. 2017), consumer behavior in tourism and decision making process for travel destination (Dunne, 2009). In terms of Finland tourism, the majority of research are in the direction of ecotourism, nature based tourism, environmental impact and so on. However, very little few research analyzes Finland a tourist destination from customer behavior perspective, let alone from Chinese tourists.

Therefore, the goal of this research is to fill this gap. The existing consumers who have already visited Finland is not in the scope of this research and the focus is on the potential consumers. Through the analysis of potential Chinese tourists from certain perspectives, it will help marketer understand the demands and needs of perspective tourists from China market, which will lead to consumer segment and final targeting strategy. Apart from academy, this thesis corporates with City of Lappeenranta. Therefore, along with potential consumers' decision making process, the preference analysis of Lake Saimaa is studied within this research. Hence, the research questions for this these are,

1. What are the motivations for potential Chinese consumers to visit Finland as a travel destination?
2. How the potential Chinese consumers make their traveling decision and what are the factors influencing their decision-making?
3. What are the preferences of potential Chinese consumers when they travel to Lake Saimaa region?

1.3 Delimitations

From theoretical background, the knowledge and information of tourism and consumer behavior analysis are derived from secondary data like literature, journal and website, which have limited scope and view. And some of the data and information are not as updated as in the real world. On the other hand, the figures and statistics by latest news and publication can guarantee the authenticity.

During the empirical research, only the potential tourists are considered and analyzed; and the focus is to find out what are the needs and motivation for them to visit Finland as a destination. Although, the existing consumers who have already visited Finland either the tourists or students have a real experience of Finland and have more advantages to make comparison between before and after visiting. The potential consumer and existing consumer should not be brought together.

Online questionnaire has the limitation for sample access in certain way, for example, the people with relatively old age may not surf internet very often. Also, qualitative method for analyzing the questionnaire may generate bias because of subjectivity of individuals. Because of the large population and territory in mainland China, the size of sample may have geographical limitation.

1.4 Research design and structure

This research starts with literature review and the literatures are searched from two main channels. Firstly, it is from online database, google scholar and science direct. The research is using main key concept and word to find the related secondary resource and knowledge, which are consumer behavior analysis, tourism, marketing, Finland tourism, brand positioning. The secondly is hard copy of books, which include topic like research method for business students, marketing research, essentials of marketing, tourism marketing.

Besides the online data base and books, the report and latest news are also utilized in order to understand the current environment and situation comprehensively. For example, the tourists trend and change rate from annual report of Finland statistics.

As with the research approach, the inductive approach is applied. The empirical study is operated on theoretical background and framework, which extracted from the books and referred journals. Based on the purpose of this research, exploratory is used to study the real behavior of potential consumers behind the scene, like the way they eat, live and preference. Based on Adams and Schvaneveldt (1991), the behavior and activities of traveler can be studied by exploratory research.

The strategy of this research is semi-structured interview in order to collect primary data. The mono method is suitable for this research, in which the qualitative method is adopted. Due to the time constraint, this research is cross-sectional studies to research particular phenomenon at a particular time (Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill, 2008). So it means that the consumer behavior of potential Chinese tourists visiting Finland is studied during the certain amount of time.

After the preliminary design of this research except the data collection and analysis, which will be discussed afterwards, the structure of the thesis is presented as follow.

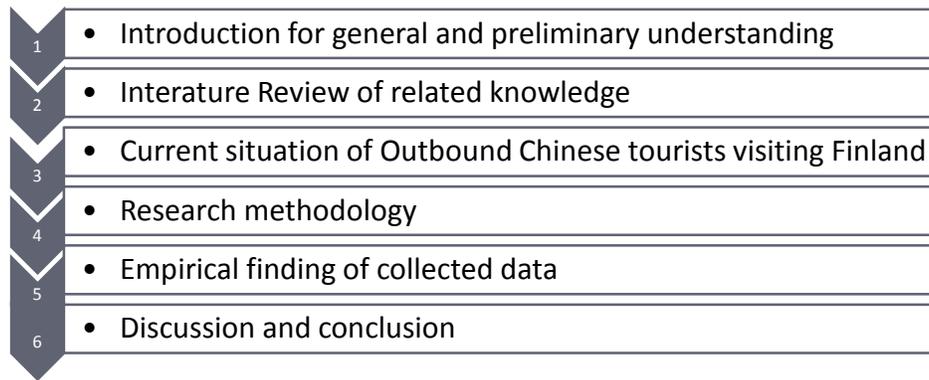


Figure 1. Master's Thesis structure

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The essential influencing factors on consumer behavior in tourism market

With the development of globalization and international travel becoming popular, tourism marketplace is becoming competitive. If a company want to be more competitive and gain more consumer share, the understanding of consumer behavior is a must. The consumer behavior can be simply presented by one question “How do consumers respond to the various marketing stimuli that a company might use”. Consumer behavior comprises “what consumers want to buy, which place/location they prefer, which amenities are important for them, how they buy and what they buy”. It is important for a company to comprehend how consumer response the market stimuli, namely, the product feature, price, and promotion/ advertising (Kotler et al., 2017). Also, nowadays the study of intentional behavior of tourist and factors that affect intentional behavior have increased. The intentional behavior mainly includes the intention of revisit and intention of recommendation after the experience. And the study indicated that the destination image has a most impact on intentional behavior (Chen and Tsai, 2007).

2.1.1 Social factor

The first factor is the social influence for consumers. Many small groups have impact on consumer behavior, such as reference group functioning as direct (face to face) or indirect points of reference in building a personal attitude and value. The reference group presents direct consumers’ new behaviors and lifestyles and affects consumers’ attitudes and self-concept. In turn, the reference group could change consumers’ product choice, brand choice and vender choice gradually. The membership group comprises primary group, such as family, friends and coworkers and secondary group with more formal but less regular interaction like professional associations. The influence becomes biggest when the product, brand or service are visible to person whom the target consumers respect (Kotler et al., 2017).

The world-of-mouth (WOM) has an incredible and huge impact on consumer behavior. For example, the advice, recommendation from trusted person turns out to be more reliable and credible than the promotion events from advertising and sales person. The buzz marketing creates or employs ‘opinion leader’ with whom the information of product, service and brand will be spread within certain communities. In addition, consumers’ mental process is changed and updated through the online social network where people share information and socialize their opinions. As a result, the buying behavior of consumers are affected dramatically by word-of-web (WOW), which includes online blog, message board, social media

and virtual world. The role and status of person affect person's behavior of most of things including buying behavior. A role is series of activities that individual is expected to do based on surrounding people and environment, such as a husband, a boss, a son etc. The status of person refers a social position given by personal background such as occupation, education and self-esteem. The family member also exerts big influence on buys' behavior (Kotler et al., 2017).

2.1.2 Personal factor

The primary factor is personal features like lifecycle etc. Personal preference and taste are changing with the age growing resulting in different product and brand choices within same individual. The family life cycle is consisted of many stages through which families will pass with time running. For example, young unmarried people have no financial pressure therefore their money is mainly put on the entertainment, the married couple without kid has discretionary income for pleasure consumption, whereas the married couple with kid will put their income on development of kid and more family issues (Mill and Morrison, 1992).

The occupation and macro-economy decide the personal income, mainly social environment and economic situation, which directly affect consumer-buying behavior. For example, the prosperity of economic situation will lead to more air travel and pleasure expenditure. In addition, personal lifestyle (personal pattern of living, how they interact with living environment), the personality and self-recognition (which are different from psychological situation and relatively consistent and lasting response to the environment) have impact on consumer behavior (Kotler et al., 2017).

2.1.3 Psychologic factor

The last but not the least factor is psychological influence, which from motivation, perception, learning and attitudes. The transformation from inside needs to motivation requires certain amount of intensity (Lumsdon, 1997). The mental intensity push people to act in order to release the tension. How the people perceive and think about its situation can affect how he or she acts. Different people within the same situation may most likely have different perception. From biologic point, people receive the stimuli through our five sense including seeing, hearing, smelling, touching and tasting through the information flow. However, the people receive, organize and interpret the information flow in various ways (Kotler et al., 2017).

According to Kotler et al. (2017), “perception is a process through which individual selects, organizes and interprets information in order to create a holistic picture of world”. From the past research, it is found out that perception is more completed than we thought. For example, the stability of perception means how long the perception is held by people, various habitual behaviors and preconception (Mill and Morrison, 1992).

The learning is the approach through consumer receive and interpret stimuli. Learning is based on past experience, which, in turn the past experience will be recalled and affect the new consumers’ behavior. A belief is a mental interpretation towards someone or something derived from knowledge, opinion and faith, on the other hand, the attitude is the person’s lasting cognitive evaluation, feeling to a given object or idea. Compared to attitude, the belief is relatively changeable. Therefore, marketers always pay attention about unfounded beliefs from consumer and consequently launch new strategic event to change the unfavorable beliefs, whereas the attitude is relatively enduring, therefore some companies are subject to lifelong consumers’ attitude from their childhood experience (Lumsdon, 1997).

2.2 Tourist motivation

“Why the people travel?” has been asked for quite long time by many researchers. Therefore, motivation is the starting point of consumer decision process and an important construct for understanding tourist behavior (Caber, Albayrak, 2016). Motivations is the inner needs for satisfaction and also subject to the psychology field mostly. The needs other than instinctive needs that satisfy hunger and thirst are more complicated. For example, the need for belonging to a community or the self-esteem (Lumsdon, 1997). Motivation is the dynamic process in consumer behavior, and the purpose of which is to bridge gap between a felt need and the decision to act (Middleton, Fyall, Morgan, 2009).

Most of researchers accept that motivation and needs are independent and interactive, therefore the hierarchical needs models from Maslow (1954) is fit to explain and analyze the motivation (Morrison, 2013; Lumsdon, 1997). Maslow need model indicates that pattern of behavior is based on a hierarchy needs. The fundamental need is physiological need that means the basics of life, for example the relief from hunger. As soon as the fundamental need is satisfied, the satisfaction will move to upper needs (the higher order needs), for example the esteem and self-achievement (Lumsdon, 1997; Maslow, 1954).

According to Morrison (2013 p. 402-403), Dann’s (1977) “push and pull model” is one of the most popular and accepted models for motivation explanation in tourism. The push factor is within the people,

namely, the internal aspect and needs, for example, the need for relax, the desire for escaping, the needs for adventure, prestige, health, social interaction (Klenosky, 2002). Push factor represents the psychological driver of behavior (Wu and Pearce, 2014).

On the other hand, the pull factor refers to marketing efforts of product and service in the destination, which attract people to visit. The pull factor is the external, situational or cognitive motivation like destination attributes and service quality (Wu and Pearce, 2014). Destination marketing organizations (DMOs) and most of tourism stakeholders have control over pull factor, however they are not capable to control how the destination images are formed in consumers ' mind. Normally, the push factor starts the process for motivating people to travel and pull factor is to make potential consumers choose which destination you will visit (Morrison, 2013).

Table 1. 'Push' and 'Pull' Motivation Factors (Adapted from Morrison 2013; Lee et al., 2002)

	Vacation destination choice	
	Internal driving force	Destination attributes
	Whether to go	Where to go
	Push Factor	Pull Factor
	Origins of tourists	

Another motivation theory is from Iso-Ahola (1989) who pointed out social-psychological model for tourism motivation. There are two main reasons for leisure tourism, which are “seeking intrinsic reward and escaping the everyday environment” (Iso-Ahola, 1989; Morrison, 2013). Similarly, Crompton (1979) identified two groups for tourism motivation, socio-psychological and cultural. The cultural group has two motivations including novelty and education. Compared to Dann’s ‘pull’ and ‘push’ model, the seven social-psychological motivations are the same with push factors and the pull factor is the cultural group (Morrison, 2013).

Moreover, Swarbrooke and Horner (1999) proposed six groups of motivation in tourism. The first one is cultural motives, like the sightseeing and new culture experience; the following one is physical motives, namely, the fitness, sunshine and physical enjoyment. The third one is emotional motives indicating nostalgia, adventure, escapism, meditation, pilgrimage, spiritual refresh, romance etc. Then it is tourist including status, exclusivity, ostentatious opportunity. The forth one is personal development for new

knowledge and skills like surfing, diving and climbing etc. The last one is personal for visiting friends or families, making new social interaction and so on (Swarbrooke and Horner, 1999; Morrison, 2013).

Table 2. Extended Maslow model (adapted from Morrison, 2013)

Needs	Motivations	desires/actions
Physiological	Relaxation	Escape, relax, relief of tension, physical and mental refresh, sun-lust
Safety	Security	Active and healthy for the future
Belonging	Love	Family togetherness, kinship enhancement, companionship
Esteem	Achievement	Status, prestige, social recognition
Self-Actualization	Be true to self	Exploration and evaluation of nature, self-identify, satisfaction of inner desires, self-discovery
Understanding	Knowledge	Cultural education and wander-lust, different cultures
Aesthetic	Appreciation of beauty	Environment, scenery and amenity

2.3 Consumer behavior and decision making process in tourism

Consumer behavior is “activities people undertake when obtaining, consuming and disposing of product and service” (Blackwell, Miniard and Engel, 2001, p.6). Therefore, the consumer behavior is to study how individuals make decisions to locate their available resources, the time, the money and the energy on the consumption-related items. As discussed by Dunne (2009, p. 43), the behavior of consumers includes “what they buy. why they buy it, when they buy it, where they buy it, how often they buy it and how often they use it”.

It is necessary to take a deep look at how the tourists consume the travel and related tourism product and service. Also the marketers need to understand the factors, which determine the behaviors of consumers in any process of tourism. All in all, the tourism is a process of service. Although there are many tangible aspect and product link and consist of some part of tourism, tourism actually is a series of experience (Dunne, 2009). Middleton (2001) said, the experiences are automatically used to form personal benefits, namely, the mental and physical recovery, the sense of well-being, culture exchange and self-satisfaction.

Decision making process of consumers, through which consumers deliberate about the service and product, is the main principle of consumer behavior (Dunne, 2009). Therefore, consumer behavior is concentrated on the mental flow that starts from the before, during and after the tourism consumption. In order to understand the mental behavior and what they think in mind, the research from psychology, sociology and anthropology are used (Loudon, Della, 1993).

Firstly, the literature view is focused on the several general models of consumer behavior and the purpose of these models is to integrate and comprehend the different points happened and involved in the buying decision/making process. And after, the literature about models that linked to tourism context is reviewed and presented (Dunne,2009).

When the research needs to explore the deep consumer behavior not in general situation but in the specific aspect (the tourism) it is necessary to take a first glance about the uniqueness and feature that tourism have. Because tourism product includes any other service product, it is highly different from other products. The tourism product is being viewed a high involvement purchase, which indicates that “consumer behavior patterns during purchase are not routinized- with each purchase situation showing different approaches and behaviors (Dunne, 2006, p. 57).

Besides the high involvement of consumer, the “long lead in time before consumption” is one of characteristics of tourism. Indeed, the impulsive travel decision exists from irrational consumers, but most of consumers need to a quite long time period before consumption to think what they want to do in future and anticipate their personal situation during the time of trip. Also, the potential tourists are likely to be influenced by other people during their decision making process (Dunne, 2006; Swarbrooke and Horner, 1999).

From the perspectives of destination or “tourism product”, another feature is being sensitive to the demand. The tourism is perceived as non-necessity purchase and it is sensitive to the price as a consequence. For example, during the recession, inflation and other economic conditions, the demand of tourism could be affected significantly. In addition, the tourism will subject to external environment that is out of control. For example, the terrorism, natural disaster and political turbulence etc. Furthermore, the seasonality is tightly linked to the tourism purchase such as, winter ski resorts, summer cottage. The last but not the least, the “shelf life” of tourism reflects the perishability. For example, if seats in an airplane are not sold, they cannot be stored in inventory for next time (Dunne, 2006, p. 57-59).

The way consumers behave can be reflected and presented by the decision making process and based on Moutinho (1987), there are three behavioral factors underpinning the tourism purchase, namely, motivation, cognition and learning. The motivation is the starter of flowing process, whereas the cognition is the psychological flowing process. Finally, the learning is leading to according changes in later behavior (Dunne, 2006).

2.3.1 Schmoll Model

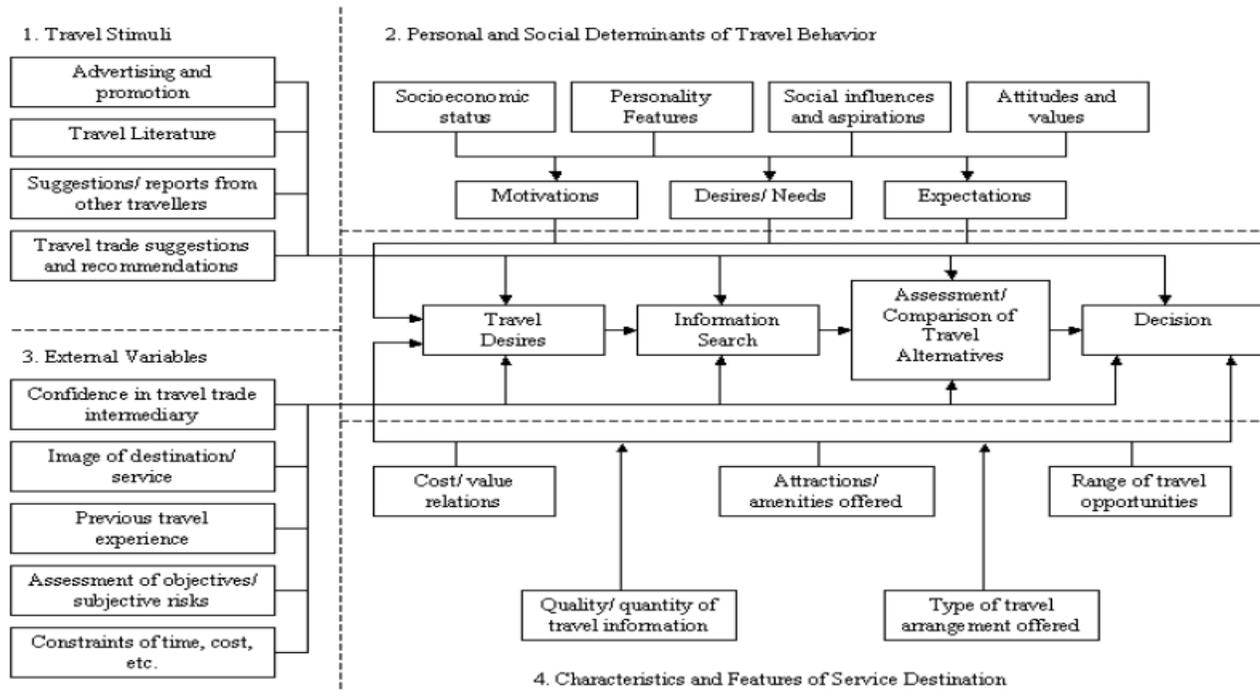


Figure 2. Schmoll tourism purchase decision Model (Schmoll, 1977)

The model of Schmoll focused on three principles. The first one is that decision making process and the final decision are affected by four sources of variables including consumer goal, travel opportunities, communication effort and intervening/ independent variables. It is possible to recognize the sources of variables and their sub-components. And the ultimate decision is a result of several comprehensive sequential stages (Schmoll, 1977; Dunne, 2006).

Schmoll model has four sets of variables, namely, travel stimuli, personal and social factors, external variables and features of destination. Travel stimuli means the initiation of the all tourism behavior, such as promotion, recommendation from others, advertising attraction, which can draw the potential consumers' attentions. In the personal and social factors, motivation, travel needs and desires are derived from personality, social value and personal attitudes. The external variables indicate the confidence of

service supplier, destination image, past travel experience, the perceived risk and objective limitation like time, cost and energy etc. (Schmoll, 1977; Dunne, 2006). In this model, we can see the various attributes and their relationship with the tourism choice process. Especially, Dunne (2006) has pointed out that Schmoll model is the only model that includes the constraints and the impacts on decision making process.

2.3.2 Mathieson and Wall Model

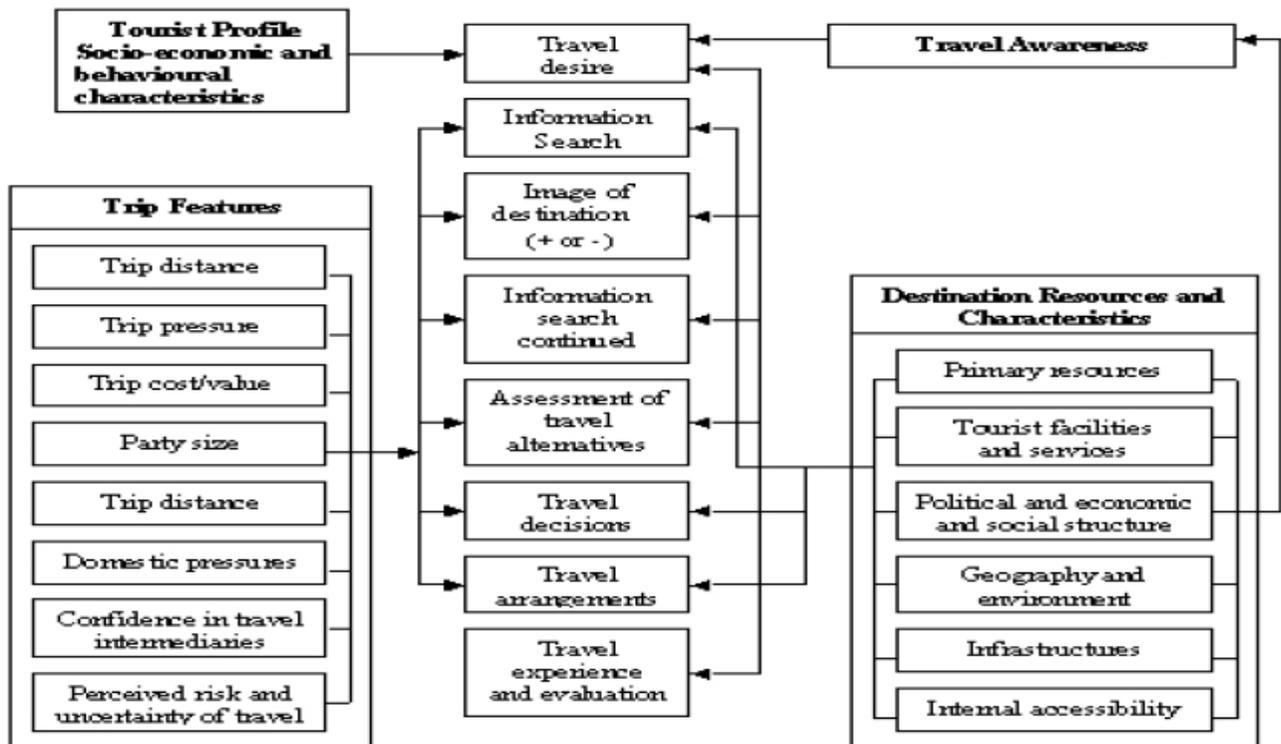


Figure 3. Mathieson & Wall consumer buying behavior Model in tourism (Mathieson and Wall, 1982; Dunne, 2009, P.61)

According to Dunne (2006, p. 62-63), the core part in this model is the behavior process of consumers including five stages. The initiation is a feeling of needs and desires to travel, then information searching is following. After the data collection and afterwards data evaluation, the decision of traveling has been made. If the decision is positive, the travel preparation will follow. The essential is travel experience where the consumers have the real experience, service and consumption. Eventually, the satisfaction of evaluation will be made.

Besides the main process, the model also demonstrates the factors, which have impact on each stage of process. The first one is tourist profile from several perspectives, like demographic (age, education),

socioeconomic (social statuses, expenditure and income etc.), psychographic (previous experience, motivation etc.). The second factor is travel awareness, for example, the recommendation from friends, the images of destination, the word of mouth. The third one is trip feature which features the trip itself, namely, the time duration, the distance, room size and perceived risk etc. And the last one is about destination including scenery, culture, attractiveness, facility, infrastructure and amenities (Dunne, 2006).

Although this model pointed out and thought about the comprehensive and dynamic impacts on the consumer decision making process (Hudson, 1999), there are some neglects like the perception, memory and information process from consumer behavior (Gilbert, 1991).

2.3.3 Middleton Model

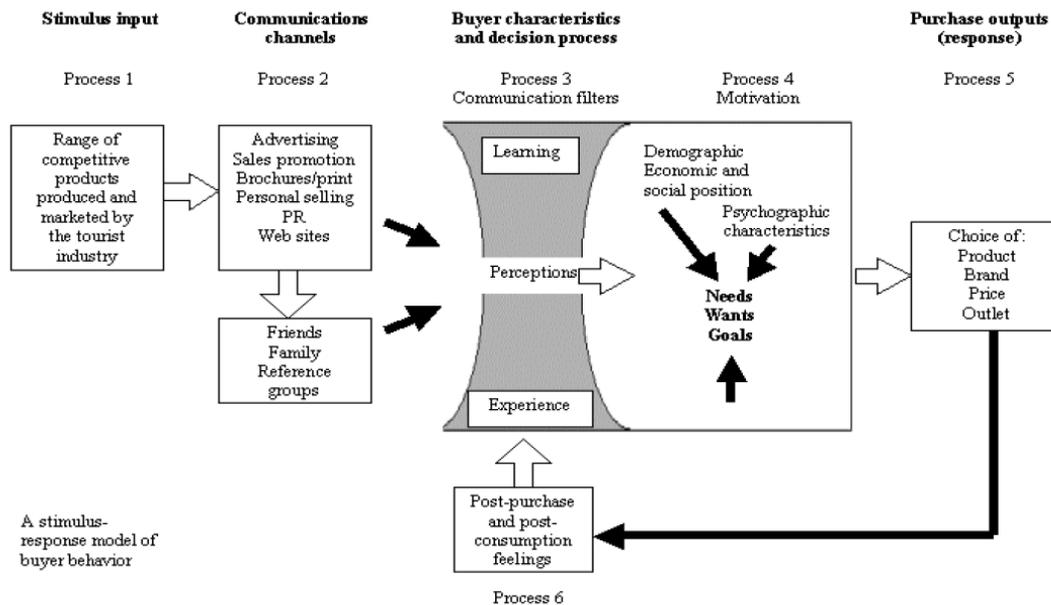


Figure 4. The stimuli-response model of buyer behavior (Middleton, 1988)

The stimuli-response model has four components. Stimuli input and communication channels initiate the stimuli for buying that are offered by marketers mostly. Consequently, the stimuli are processed and perceived by buyer characteristics. The buyer characteristic composed with demographic, economic and psychographic feature will present the personal needs, goals and demands. Combination and interaction between personal needs and perceived stimuli lead to purchase output or response (Middleton, 1988).

2.3.4 Woodside and Lysonki Model

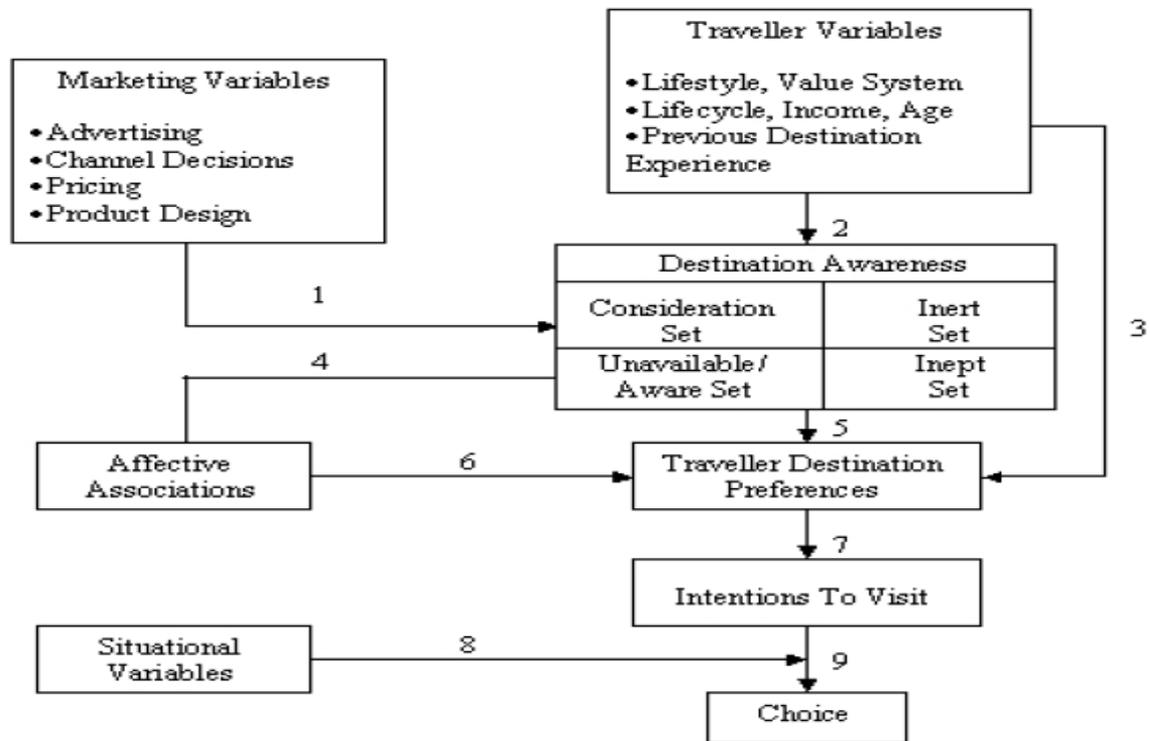


Figure 5. Tourist leisure destination awareness and choice model (Woodside and Lysonski, 1989)

This awareness and choice model displayed that before the destination preference is realized, the all destinations images (presented and offered by marketer) go through the four mental sets of consumers including consideration set, aware set, inert set and inept set.

Other than awareness, the personal features of consumers and affective association result in the destination preference together with awareness. And the last choice is based on the intention of travel(motivation), the personal preference and the situational variables, like the time limitation, the family, external environment and etc. (Woodside and Lysonski, 1989). However, the limitation of generalizability is still a question because of the size and different personalities of consumers (Hudson, 1999).

2.3.5 Woodside and King Model

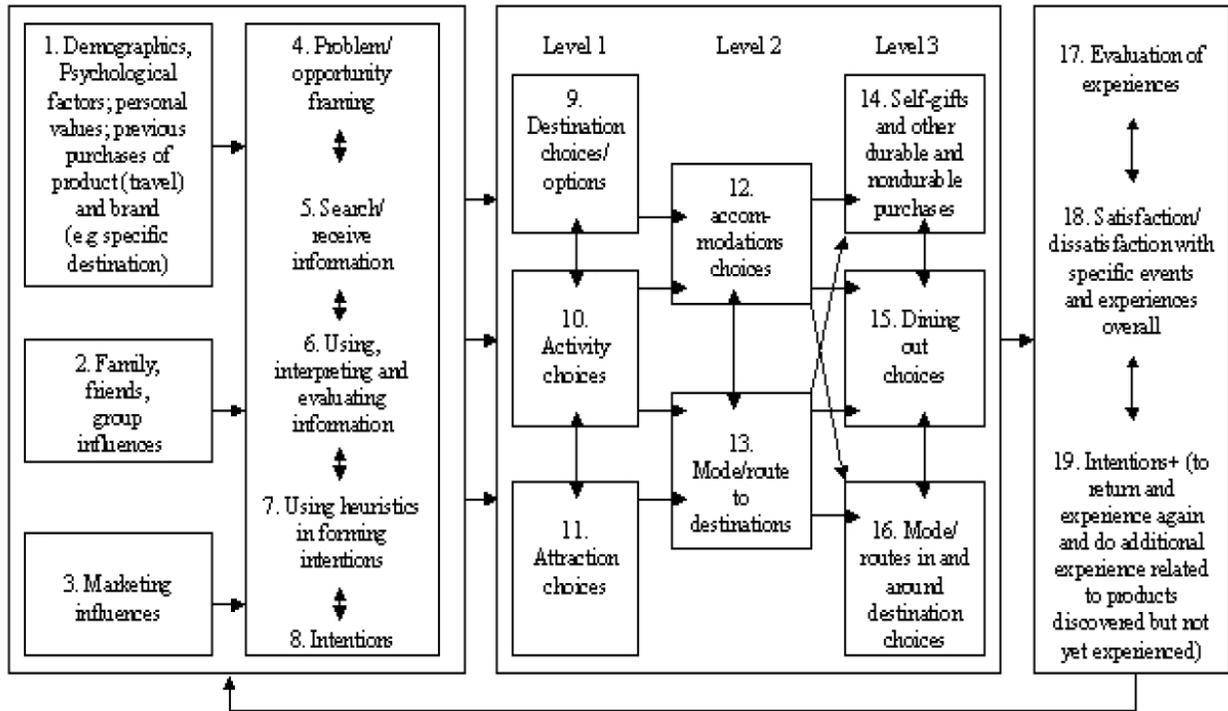


Figure 6. Purchase- consumption system model for leisure travel behavior (Woodside and King, 2001)

The purchase consumption system(PCS) model addresses “multi-decision making nature” of tourists. Previous models mostly demonstrate consumer behavior from either a single process or single tourism product. In PCS model multidimensional perspectives of consumption are presented. Besides, there are two more perspectives before the consumption and after the consumption. Especially, during the travel, the consumption activities or choices include destination choices, accommodation choices, internal and external destination transportation choices, durable and nondurable self-gifts choices, food choices. These choices or activities are interactive but not linear relation (Woodside and King, 2001; Dunne, 2006).

Before the destination choice or purchase activities, the model shows the three factors that have impact on consumer behavior process flow. The first is personal traits and experience of consumer himself/herself, then is the personal traits of people around the consumers, like friends and families. The last one is from marketer perspective, like the advertising and information channel. The consumer intention-making process is quite similar with previous models including problem/opportunity recognition,

information searching, information collection and evaluation and intention forming (Woodside and King, 2001).

After the consumption activities, PCS also points out the afterward process which is really important in consumer behavior in a long term. The first is evaluating the experience and generating mental feedbacks later both on the overall experience and specific activities. Based on the feedback (positive and negative), the consumers cycle to the starting point of whole PCS model, from where they will make new intention or they decide to come back again when the conditional attributes are suitable (Woodside and King, 2001).

2.4 Consumer Segmentation

The intention of segmentation is to direct the limited resource at the certain consumers who are likely to generate the best returns. The market segment is largely following the analysis of demands and needs of customers. The process of segmentation is to divide the all market into distinct groups based on the personal or social characteristics (Dunne, 2009). Further, the efforts of segment are centered on formulating tourist profile for a destination using secondary data (Laws, Scott and Parfitt, 2002; Hudson and Ritchie, 2002). Like what Morrison (2013) said “The most of DMOs need to thoughtfully select their target market in order to make more effective use of their resources and to generate the best return on investment”.

It is critical and important for tourism destination and service suppliers along the tourism to understand the underlying reason for tourists’ product choices and decision making mechanism (Carey and Oppenheim, 2000). The most of segmentation goal is to view and get the insight of consumers’ preference, likes and buying pattern, so that the service and product can be developed or produced in a preferred manner (Dunne, 2009). And this accurate segmentation can result in the consumers feel being comfortable and happy because the service or product they are using is in line with what they like in mind (Morgan, 1996).

The factor, like the increasing competitive environment among the destinations, the various and growing needs of consumers, and the economics scales as a result of focusing on one market has made the market segmentation very important nowadays (Verhage and Cunningham, 1981). The application of consumer segmentation is everywhere and the benefits of segmentation is obvious. In the hotel business, they differentiate the consumers between corporate, family, individual and group tour. In the airline service,

based on the different seats and service provided on the plane, there are business class, first class and economy class (Dunne, 2009).

Therefore, it is really crucial to choose the accurate and reliable factors and attributes, based on which to segment the market. The factors of consumers' segmentation are various and depends on the real circumstance. The criteria of segmentation are normally into two groups, the first group is general feature of consumers, namely, the geographic, the demographic, the socioeconomic, the psychographic and the behavioral (Dunne, 2009).

The second group is situation-specific feature, like consumer attitude, the perception and preference of consumers related to a specific product and service. Later on, the usage, purchase frequency, expenditure, perceived benefit and expectation (Weber, 1992). In addition, the trip purpose, channel of distribution, the benefit are also the accepted criteria for segmentation; furthermore, the multivariable and multilevel segmentation are practiced in the real case (Morrison, 2013; Lumsdon, 1997).

The first reasonable and primary segmentation is trip purpose. The four main trip purpose groups are pleasure/leisure trip, visiting friends and relatives(VFR) trip, business trip and other personal trips. Business trip is the biggest market for some certain destination, especially for metropolitan cities with multinational trade and economic centers. Business travel includes two types, normal business and business events (Morrison, 2013). The business events are presented by meetings, conferences, exhibitions and incentive events (Hankinson, 2005). Other personal trips are also the big market for destinations with the various purposes, such as medical treatment, educational, job seeking and legal advice (Morrison, 2013).

The geographic segmentation is to classify the consumers based on where are they from, namely, the place of residence or source of origin (Morrison, 2013). The unit of classification can be continent (The South America has the similar language preference except Brazil), country, cities, towns, even smaller regions (Dunne, 2009). And this is one of the most popular approaches to define the markets for tourism destination

The social-demographic segmentation is focusing on the measurable feature of a population, namely, their gender, age, household size, income level, race, nationality, the education, occupation and social class. For example, the household segmentation, within which, the family traveler is the most popular target. Previous studies have shown that combination of age, income level and education(social-

demographic) has a huge impact on consumer behavior and expenditure pattern. However, nowadays the attention of researcher and DMOs has moved away from demographic aspect, instead they look deeper into psychological level, such as personal belief, social value and attitude towards the world etc. (Morrison, 2013).

The psychographic segmentation is about the personality and lifestyle of consumers, such as purpose and motivation of consumers. The psychographic aspect of people is from their value and personality towards the destination, like the type of trip (Tkaczynski, Rundel-Thiele, Beaumont, 2008). In the context of tourism, the psychographic segment is related to deep motivation of traveling. The psychographic segmentation is a posterior kind of segmentation, which mean the segment is gained after the data analysis. And within the segment, people share the similar activities, attitudes, opinions, values and needs (Mill and Morrison, 1995; Silverberg, Backman, 1996).

Behavioral segmentation is concentrated on the relationship between consumer and product. Also the behavior of consumers, like the eating preference, transportation way, accommodation style. For example, the benefit, which means what kind of benefit consumers are looking for during the consumption based on their needs and expectations (Dunne, 2009). It is worthy to mention that the behavioral distinction between the repeat visitors and those who are visiting for the first time. For example, the repeat visitors to Thailand are mainly motivated because of advantages of short distance and cuisine; and the first comers are for the different culture and history (Rittichainuwat et al., 2008).

The behavior of repeat and revisiting are explained by theory of ‘variety-seeking’ and ‘familiarity-seeking’. The ‘variety-seeking’ is referring to the consumers who are most likely to change/ switch their destinations because they want something new (variety and novelty) for their travel experience. The ‘familiarity-seeking’ is presenting the kind of tourists who are most likely to prefer the ‘familiar feeling’, because of which they are willing to repeating the same destination. For the DMOs or the tourism field stakeholders, they should make strategy in order to balance the ‘familiarity’ and ‘variety’ (Morrison, 2013). In other research, this ‘familiarity’ and ‘variety’ are referred as the usage of consumers, for example, in the sector of recommendation, the marketer segment and target the consumers by their degree of usage and whether it is a repeat visit or not (Gitelson and Crompton, 1984; Lumsdon, 1997).

Also, Legohere (1998) highlighted the study of expenditure segmentation of tourists, which included in behavioral segmentation. In the economic situation, the purchasing behavior of tourists is segmented

based on variables such as the expenditure level and spending choices. Besides, factor of propensity to travel and expenditure rate are used for the expenditure segment (Wick and Schuett, 1993).

Because of the complex of market and accuracy of demand, most of tourism stakeholders and DMOs segment market through multivariable segmentation, which means combining multiple segmentation variables. For example, the two interrelated aspects such as age and life cycle are used in tourism market for consumption analysis. Moreover, in some cases the multilevel segmentation is applied. The multilevel(multistage) segmentation is to segment market in one variable firstly, then subsequently segment in deeper level through another variable (Lumsdon, 1997).

However, some of researches have pointed out that marketing segmentation is facing the paradoxical situation. On one hand, segmentation in marketing research is aimed to gain more accurate and effective consumers in order to generate the most return and profit. But on the other hand the instability and non-prediction of consumer behavior can mislead segmentation and result in inappropriate and volatile targeting (Legoharel, 1998).

Quite many researches have proposed and verified different segmentation approaches, thus how to choose and use the approached should be done strategically. Each approaches have their own advantages and limitations depending on given circumstances and environments (Gountas et al. 2000). Normally, the mix of segmentations is commonly used due to the complexity and instability of consumers. The traditional segmentation in tourism is focusing on geographic, demographic and socio-economic. Researcher (e.g. Cha et al., 1995; John and Gyimothy, 2012) have realized and pointed out that demographic and geographic segmentation bases failed to anticipate who is the potential consumers in the future. However, without the glance of consumers' behavior prediction, it is not reliable to use only these three traditional ways (Dunne, 2009). For example, people sharing the same age varies a lot related to their value, lifestyle, attitude and other factors (Morgan, 1996).

Recently, the inner aspects and psychological features have become more important for marketer to understand the underlying reason why the consumers choose one product or service over another. The value of psychographic segmentation of consumers for forecasting the foreign and domestic tourist behavior has been realized (Schott, 2002; Silverberg et al., 1996). Based on Dunne (2009), there are two tools in segmentation to shed insight on the inner perspectives of consumers. The first one is VALs (Values and lifestyles), which combines demographic features with the people's needs and demands. The second one is LOV (list of values) relating to the motivation of consumers.

The combined segmentation variables for tourism profile developing is verified and 'one size fits all' is not reliable. Different tourism stakeholders within a one destination have various consumer preference and destination marketing is complicated and multi-dimension. All in all, different stakeholders in tourism have different intentions to attract different segments (Tkaczynski, Rundel-Thiele, Beaumont, 2008).

It is useful to view the segmentation from the perspectives of marketer and suppliers as well. Tkaczynski et al. (2008) has pointed out that in order to achieve the best return on investment DMO (Destination marketing organization) should focus on the same segment of consumers whom most tourism supplier concentrate on. In the reality, the big picture of destination should be analyzed by DMO, namely, what are segment or segments used by key stakeholders (hotels, restaurant, tour operator etc.). So that the DMO can determine which segment should target for the long term profit (Tkaczynski, Rundel-Thiele, Beaumont, 2008).

In order to develop the segmentation reliable and meaningful, Kotler (1994) has come up with five conditions including measurable, sustainable, accessible, differentiable and actionable. Measurable indicates the size, the expenditure and features can be measured and compared. The substantial means the segment should be big enough to target. The accessible is to make sure the promotional channel in order to delivery right message to the targeted segments. Differentiable aims to make sure the distinctive feature and difference between each segments. And the actionable intends to operate within the limited resources and budgets (Dunne, 2009).

3. CURRENT SITUATION OF CHINESE OUTBOUND TOURISTS TO FINLAND

3.1 Chinese Over-night spent in Finland

China's outbound tourism market has rocketed since past decade. In 2016, there was totally 136.8 million departures where a citizen of mainland China crossed border, with an annually 2.7% growth rate compared to 2015. European destinations witnessed a quite good development like Finland, Norway all growing by more than 40%. (Forbes.com, 2017).

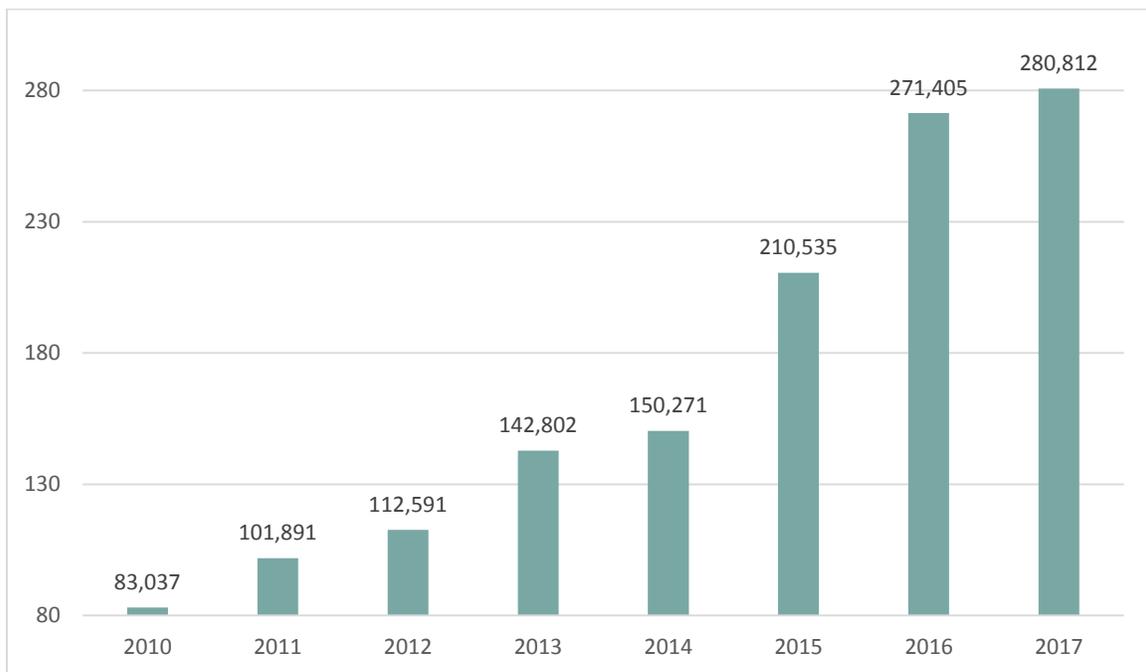
It is worth to mention that the raising issue of terrorism attack and refugee crisis have been driving away safety-conscious Chinese tourists from Spain, France and Greece with suffering double-digit percent losses (Forbes.com, 2017). However, Finland remains the safest destination globally (WEF, 2017). As a top one safest and most secure country in the world (WEF, 2017), Finland has been attracting more Chinese outbound tourists over years. Moreover, "Finland continues to be one of the most environmentally sustainable countries with one of strongest human resource and labor market, ICT readiness and efficient business environment" (WEF, 2017).

Finland is famous for many things around the world, especially the Santa Claus, the Aurora, and clean nature. "Finland is a land of countless lakes, forests, fells and archipelagos- it is one of the most extensive and unspoiled natural environment in Europe. It is also a country of contrasts, the Midnight sun in the summer and the Polar Night in the winter." (Finland Convention Bureau, 2017). In 2016 tourism's contribution to the GDP of Finland is 2,5%; and generated value by tourism is €3.9 billion (Visit Finland-corporate, 2017).

In 2016, Finland has accepted 7,7 million foreign visitors, through whom €2.5 billion were brought to Finland (Visit Finland-corporate, 2017). By 2016 China is the 5th most oversights spent in Finland, in 2016 the total overnights spent by Chinese is 271.200 with 29% annual growth rate compared to 2015. Also, the development of Chinese tourist number has been increasing with average annual growth of 16% from 2009 to 2016.

Countries of origin	Number of overnights	Change (%) 2016//15
1. Russia	697 500	-11%
2. Sweden	549 300	0%
3. Germany	540 200	-1%
4. UK	500 100	6%
5. China & Hong Kong	271 300	29%
6. France	249 900	9%
7. USA	231 500	14%
8. Japan	214 500	5%
9. Estonia	193 400	2%
10. Norway	180 900	-3%
11. Netherlands	174 500	9%
12. Switzerland	153 100	-4%
13. Italy	139 100	9%
14. Spain	125 700	18%
15. Denmark	103 900	6%

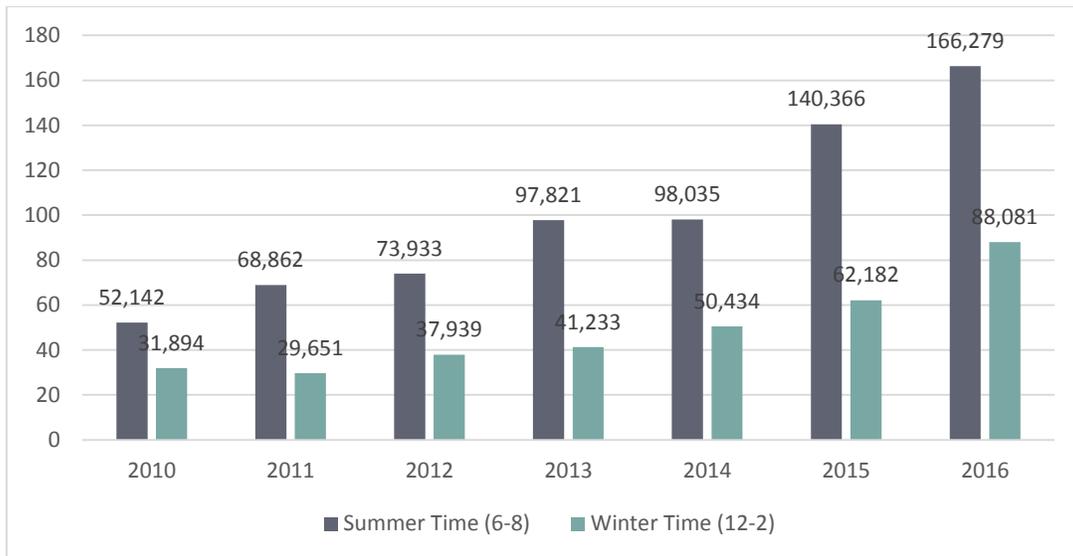
Figure 7. Ranking of nights spent in Finland by countries of origin (Visit Finland, 2017)



Unit: Thousands

Figure 8. Nights spent in Finland by Chinese 2010-2017 (Adapted from Travel trade, 2017)

3.2 Chinese overnight stay in Finland by seasons



Unit: Thousands

Figure 9. Nights spent in Finland by Chinese at Summer season and Winter season (Travel Trade, 2017)

Being different from other destinations, Finland is a land of contrast between summer season and winter season. Therefore, tourists going to Finland have different expectations and experience. For example, in summer time, the tourists can enjoy the day-lasting sunshine, cool weather, the nature with forest and lake; whereas the winter time, the tourists can experience the ‘white wonderland’, the snow, the polar light and Santa Claus with Christmas environment. And different regions in Finland have different characteristics and experiences as well.

Based on statistics from Visit Finland (2016), 2.6 million overnights in Finland are in winter time from November to April accounting for 46% of whole foreign overnights in 2016. On the other hand, 3 million overnights are belonging to summer season from May to October consisting of 54% of all foreign overnights in 2016. Because of the seasonality, the winter tourism is mainly focusing on Lapland and Helsinki (Visit Finland, 2016). For example, the winter time is harder to enjoy the nature, lake and clean water than summer time.

As with Chinese tourists, it is evident that summer time is more attractive to go Finland, nevertheless, the number of Chinese overnights in winter time has been increasing more rapid than that in summer time since recent three years. In terms of growth rate between 2016 and 2015, the Chinese tourists

increase most during both summer time and winter time among other main countries of origin with 19 % and 42% respectively (Visit Finland, 2016).

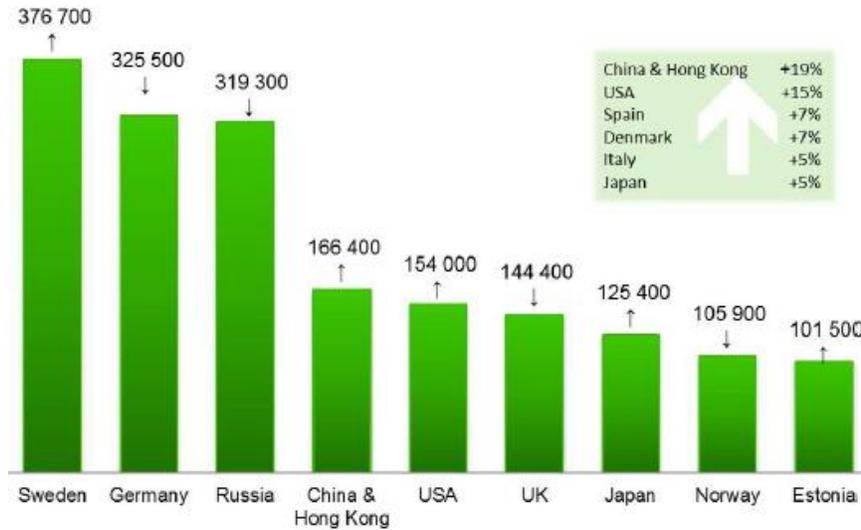


Figure 10. Main source of foreign overnights stays in Finland in Summer season in 2016 and growth rate 2016/2015 (Visit Finland, 2016)

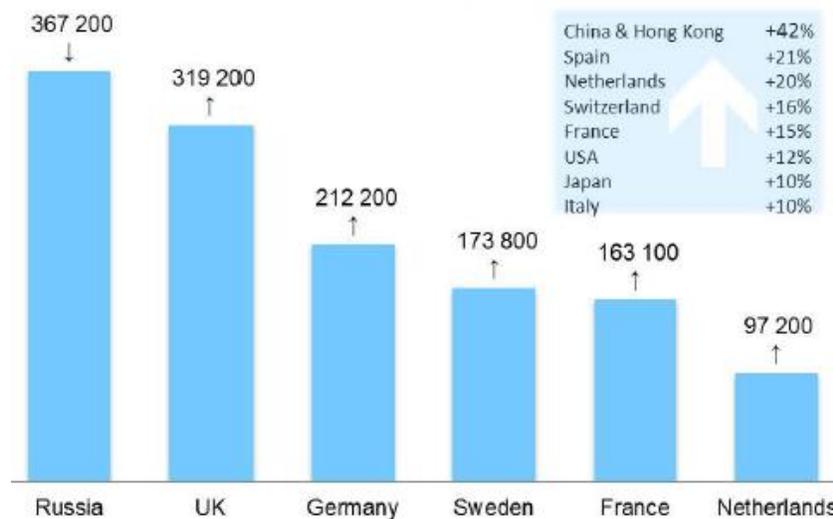


Figure 11. Main source of foreign overnights stays in Finland in winter season in 2016 and growth rate 2016/2015 (Visit Finland, 2016)

3.3 Chinese overnight stay in Finland by regions

Besides the seasonality of tourism, the different regions within Finland have different distribution of foreign tourists. In 2016, Helsinki has 2.4 million foreign overnights accounting for 42% of whole foreign overnights in Finland; also Chinese overnights is the 3rd biggest source of foreign overnights in Helsinki. The Lapland region is in the top two with 1.3 million foreign overstays accounting for 23% share of whole overnights in Finland. And Archipelago & coastal region and Lakeland area account for 19% and 16 % of total foreign overnights in Finland respectively. However, the overnights in Lapland has increased most dramatically between 2015 and 2016 with 16% growth rate (Visit Finland, 2016).

For Chinese tourists, the locations in Finland matters a lot. In 2017, the total Chinese overnights is 280.812 within Finland, in which there is 177.871 overnights in Helsinki metropolitan area accounting for 63,33% of whole Chinese overnights. The second is Lapland area, which is 60.311 Chinese overnights accounting for 21, 48% of the whole in 2017. The coast & archipelago area and Lakeland area are only consisting of 9, 69% and 5,5% respectively.

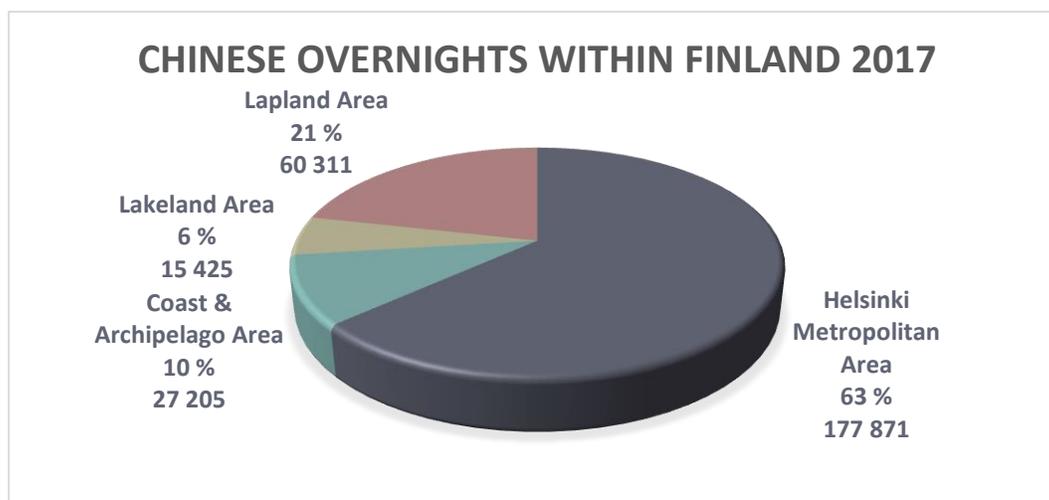
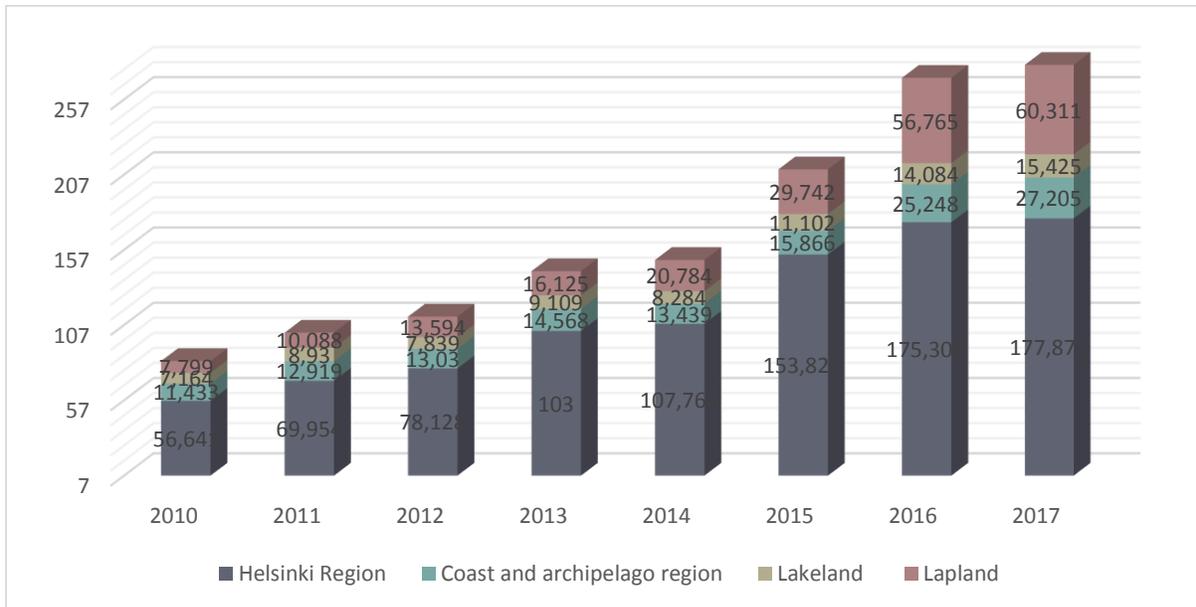


Figure 12. Chinese overnights distribution within Finland by main travel destination (Adapted from Travel trade, 2017)



Unit: Thousands

Figure 13. Chinese overnights within Finland by four main travel destinations 2010-2017 (Adapted from Travel trade, 2017)

The one of reasons of Chinese overnights in Helsinki area is the easy airline transportation. Finland is the gate between Europe and China. Given the geographical location, Finland has dominance advantage in the airline service between China and Europe. Through cooperation with Chinese airlines, Finnair, the Finnish airline, has operated direct flight to 6 Chinese cities including Chongqing, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Peking, Shanghai and Xi'an. Finnair will open the 7th route to Chinese city NanJin by summer 2018, which means there will have 38 weekly return flies between Helsinki and China cities then (Daily Finland, 2017).

3.4 Consumption of Chinese tourists traveling to Finland

In general, Chinese outbound tourism (international tourism) expenditure has tripled since 2011 (the US \$73 billion), achieving US\$261 billion in 2016. According to CLSA'S finding, the safety is most important issue for Chinese to choose outbound tourism destination, followed by travel cost and sightseeing (Clsa.com, 2017).

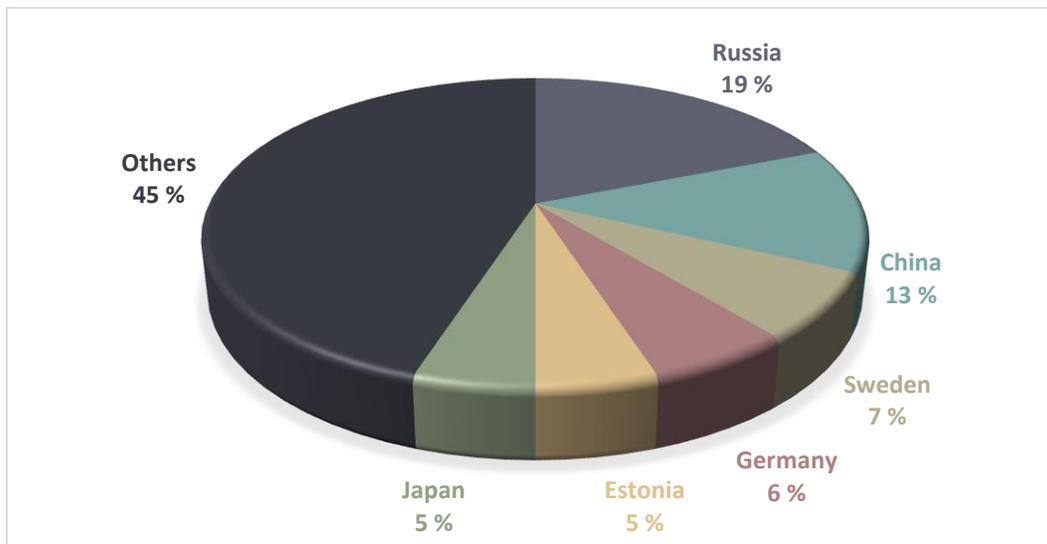


Figure 14. Shares of total consumption of international tourism in Finland 2016 (Adapted from Visit Finland, 2017)

Developing and emerging markets are becoming larger source markets of global tourism; the global middle class is estimated to grow by more three billion people between 2011 and 2031. The most of the middle class is from emerging markets, especially the China and India. Although the travel has already boomed in China, only 4 % of citizens from mainland China have passports. In fact, “since the global financial crisis, tourist expenditure from developing countries has grown faster than from advanced economies; and the trend is on track to continue” (WEF, 2017).

In 2016, the export earnings generated by international tourism amounted to €3,9 billion in Finland, which has doubled since 2000 and larger than total high tech export from Finland. The total employment in tourism related sector was around 140,000 people in 2015. In terms of spending per visit, Chinese is on the top one with 940 euro per visit in 2016 (Visit Finland-corporate, 2017). Generally, Chinese tourists spend much more money than other countries’ tourists do because the reference of Chinese is mostly focusing on gaming, cosmetics and luxury. Luxury sales to Chinese tourism are estimated to achieve 35% of global sales by 2020 (Clisa.com, 2017).

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The objective of this thesis is to analyze the consumer behavior of potential Chinese tourists traveling to Finland, namely their motivations, decision making process and the factors influencing their decision making process. Therefore, this chapter is to choose and implement the suitable methodology to conduct the research. First of all, it is necessary to review the overall research methods and approaches. Then choice of research methodology and justification of reason to choose is explained.

As presented before, the number of Chinese tourists visiting Finland has been soaring within last decade based on multiple reasons, for example, the increasing bilateral trade, convenient air transportation and changes of lifestyle among the general Chinese. Although by 2016 China is the 5th most oversights spent in Finland, with the biggest growth rate, 29% compared to 2015 amounting 271,200. The trend of strong growing is still on the track to continue (Visit Finland, 2017).

4.2 Aims and objectives

There is very limited empirical research on why Chinese tourists want to visit Finland and how they make their decision process, therefore this thesis aims to fill the knowledge gap. The overall purpose is to figure out what is consumer behavior of potential Chinese tourists visiting Finland as a destination. However, this question is too general to answer, therefore this thesis will take a deep analysis on certain aspects of consumer behavior, namely, the motivation of potential consumers, their decision making process and the influencing factors during the process. The focus of this thesis is the potential consumers with aims and awareness to visit Finland in the future.

Furthermore, due to the corporation with City of Lappeenranta, the case study of Lake Saimaa region is included in this research. The Lake Saimaa region has been developed as nature-culture oriented destination in Finland, and one of major target market is China market. Therefore, within the section of potential consumers' motivation to visit Finland, the consumers' preference analysis towards Lake Saimaa region need to be understood. Besides, as with the other stages of consumer decision making process, the preferred time duration for stay, information channel and influencing factors are included.

In order to achieve this purpose, the following questions need to be addressed.

1. What are the motivations of potential Chinese consumers to visit Finland as a travel destination?
2. How the potential Chinese consumers make their traveling decisions and what are the factors influencing their decision-making?
3. What are the preferences of potential Chinese consumers when they travel to Lake Saimaa region?

The framework will serve as an orientation for data collection and data analysis process. Then in order to solve the rest two questions, the research methodology will be reviewed and selected in this chapter. The methodology will be presented into seven sub-research sections consisting of research philosophy, research approach, research purpose, research strategy, research sampling, data collection and data analysis.

4.3 Theoretic Framework

The general goal of this research is to explore the consumer behavior of potential Chinese tourists traveling to Finland in order to make strategic market plan for attracting more Chinese tourists and better meet their expectations. The consumer behavior analysis is relatively too general to focus, hence this study mainly focuses on one aspect of consumer behavior, the travel decision making process and its influencing factors. Based on literature review, the relative models of decision making process models are identified and reviewed.

Moutinho (1987) identified three travel behavioral elements including motivation, cognition and learning. The motivation initiates the following behavioral events. Based on Schmoll Model, the main decision process comprises travel desires, information search, assessment of travel alternatives and decisions. Besides, travel stimuli (e.g. destination advertising), personal and social factors (e.g. personality and social influence), external variables (e.g. previous travel experience) and feature of service destination (e.g. attraction/amenities offered) have influencing relations with the decision making process (Schmoll, 1977).

In the Mathieson & Wall model, consumer decision making process is consisted of travel desire, information searching, image of destination, information searching continued, assessment of travel decision, travel arrangement, travel experience and evaluation consequently. In the first stage the travel desire indicates travel awareness and tourists' socio-economic and behavioral features. To some extent, the travel desire reflects the motivation and needs of tourists. Furthermore, the trip feature (e.g. the trip

distance, trip cost, confidence in travel intermediary and perceived risk) and destination resources characteristics (e.g. tourist facilities, destination environment) have impact on the whole process (Mathieson and Wall, 1982).

Middleton (1988) proposed a stimuli-response model which differs from linear decision making process model. In his model, there are four interactive elements. The first two elements are stimuli and communication channels, which intrigue the following tourist decision making process. The final two elements feature the intrigued motivations (Needs, wants and goals) through consumers' perception and sequentially consumers' purchase output (Middleton, 1988; Dunne, 2009).

There are multiple researches (Schmoll, 1977; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Middleton, 1988; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989; Woodside & King, 2001, Dunne, 2009) which have studied the tourist decision making process and purposed their corresponding models. Most stages of decision making process are common and are well accepted (Dunne, 2009). Therefore, the consumer decision making process is compromised by five stage process including (1) needs recognition, (2) information searching, (3) pre-purchase evaluation of alternatives, (4) purchase and (5) post-purchase evaluation (Dunne, 2009; Morrison, 2013; Middleton, 2009).

In this study, this first stage of needs recognition will be represented by motivation. In the respect of motivation, the 'push' and 'pull' concept is well accepted by many research studies (Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979; Oh, Uysal & Weaver, 1995). 'Push' factors are within the tourists themselves and their internal drives (Morrison, 2013). 'Push' factors are considered more likely in socio-psychological way (Dunne, 2009) for example, the desire to escape and self-relax. In the other hand, 'pull' factors are about marketing effects by marketer in order to attract people attention and encourage them to visit (Morrison, 2013), for example, attraction of destination, cultural diversity and natural environment of a destination etc.

The second stage is information searching, which means the tourists need to gain related knowledge from multiple source channels before making a decision (Moutinho, 1987). According to Shiffman and Kanuk (2000) the information searching normally begins with examining people's own memory, namely, people's past travel experience. In addition to this internal information, Dunne (2009) and Morrison (2013) said that people consult resources from other people (e.g. family, friends), destination-dominated information (e.g. websites, social media, advertising brochures). Moutinho (1987) identified that, most

tourists expect the psychological satisfaction rather than tangible economic return. Therefore, he states that tourism decision making process involves much more information search.

The third step of decision making process is evaluation of alternatives. With the respect of tourism, this step represents the choice of destination for potential Chinese consumers. Through the evaluation and selection, three choice sets exist in consumers' mind, namely, awareness set, unawareness set and evoked set (Howard, 1963). He explains that awareness set is all products or brands (destination), of which consumers aware in their mind; on the contrary, the unawareness set is which consumers not aware of. The evoked set includes all the potential choices actually consumer thinking about during their decision making process.

During the evaluation, two elements are used by potential consumers to help them identify the final choice: the selection list and the criteria they use to evaluate (Shiffman& Kanuk, 2000). The selection list is represented by evoked set consisting of a certain amount of alternatives, which consumers have already known about and consider them feasible or suitable (Dunne, 2009). The criteria are a term of product attributes which different consumers put their most importance on, in short, the dominant attributes that have impact on choice (Corey, 1996). For example, the price and value for money, accessibility and cost, hospitality of host nation and people, activities, facilities level, scenery, environment, history and culture, rest and relaxation, entertainment and shopping (Dunne, 2009; Fisher&Price, 1991; Corey, 1996). Besides, Morrison (2013) claims the importance of intangible criteria which are quite subjective, for example, consumers' perceived images of destination.

The different consumers make their final decisions according to different salience of each attributes in one destination based on consumers' own characteristics, like personality and past experience (Dunne, 2009). Generally, there are two kinds of consumer decision rules compensatory and non-compensatory (Blackwell et al., 2001).

The fourth step is purchase, which means after consumers select final choice, how they would make a purchase. The purchase decision is made up of when to purchase, where to purchase and how to purchase (Dunne, 2009). Before the final purchase is made, there are multiple sub-purchases and consequent sub-decisions, namely, when to travel, how to pay, how and where to make a booking, how long to stay, how much to spend, how to get there, which route to take what to do at the destination (Morrison, 2013,412).

Based on Dunne (2009), the purchase stage differs among different level of consumer involvement. The involvement happens in the process of information searching and destination evaluation, during which how much effort consumers have made. Engel et al. (1995) divided the purchase into three kinds based on consumer involvement, fully planned purchase, partially planned purchase and unplanned purchase (spur of moment decision).

The last stage is post purchase evaluation. Based on disconfirmation of expectation model, the three possible outcomes present during the post purchase evaluation. The first one is 'positive disconfirmation', which indicates the perceived benefits from actual experience is above the consumers' prior expectation. The 'positive disconfirmation' most likely leads to consumer satisfaction that could generate consumers' revisit and recommend to other people. The second one is 'simple confirmation', which means that the actual perceived benefits equally meets consumers' pre-purchase expectations. 'Simple confirmation' still could yield consumers' satisfaction. The last outcome, negative disconfirmation, on the contrary to 'positive disconfirmation', presents the case when performance is below consumer's expectation leading to dissatisfaction (Dunne, 2009).

During the process of consumers' decision making, there are multiple factors influencing the whole process. Woodside & Lysonski (1989) suggests that marketing variables (Advertising effort, promotion channel, price and product design), travelers' variables (lifestyle, income, age and previous travel experience), and situational variables have impact on consumers' decision making process. Middleton (1988) points out that marketing variables, people reference (family, friends and other acquaintance), previous experience, and other individual's characteristics (demographic, economic, social and psychological) affect consumers' decision making.

Furthermore, Mathieson & Wall (1982) suggests other influencing factors including trip feature and destination resource. Trip features represent the trip distance, trip cost, trip pressure (e.g. time constraint), confidence in travel intermediaries and consumers' perceived risk. Destination resource means tourist facility and service, status of destination (political, economic, social), physical feature of a destination (geography and environment), infrastructure and amenity. However, no matter how the attributes or factors are categorized they tend to remain same (Dunne, 2009).

However, not all the influencing factors mentioned above are relevant to this research. Since the all target of this study is from one country, the cultural factor seems unimportant. On the other hand, the social influence, namely, the social network, WOM, WOW, family numbers do matter in their decision making

process. Social interaction can have big influence on consumers' decision making (Dunne, 2009). Also, the personal factors including lifestyle, family life cycle, occupation, self-recognition do make difference.

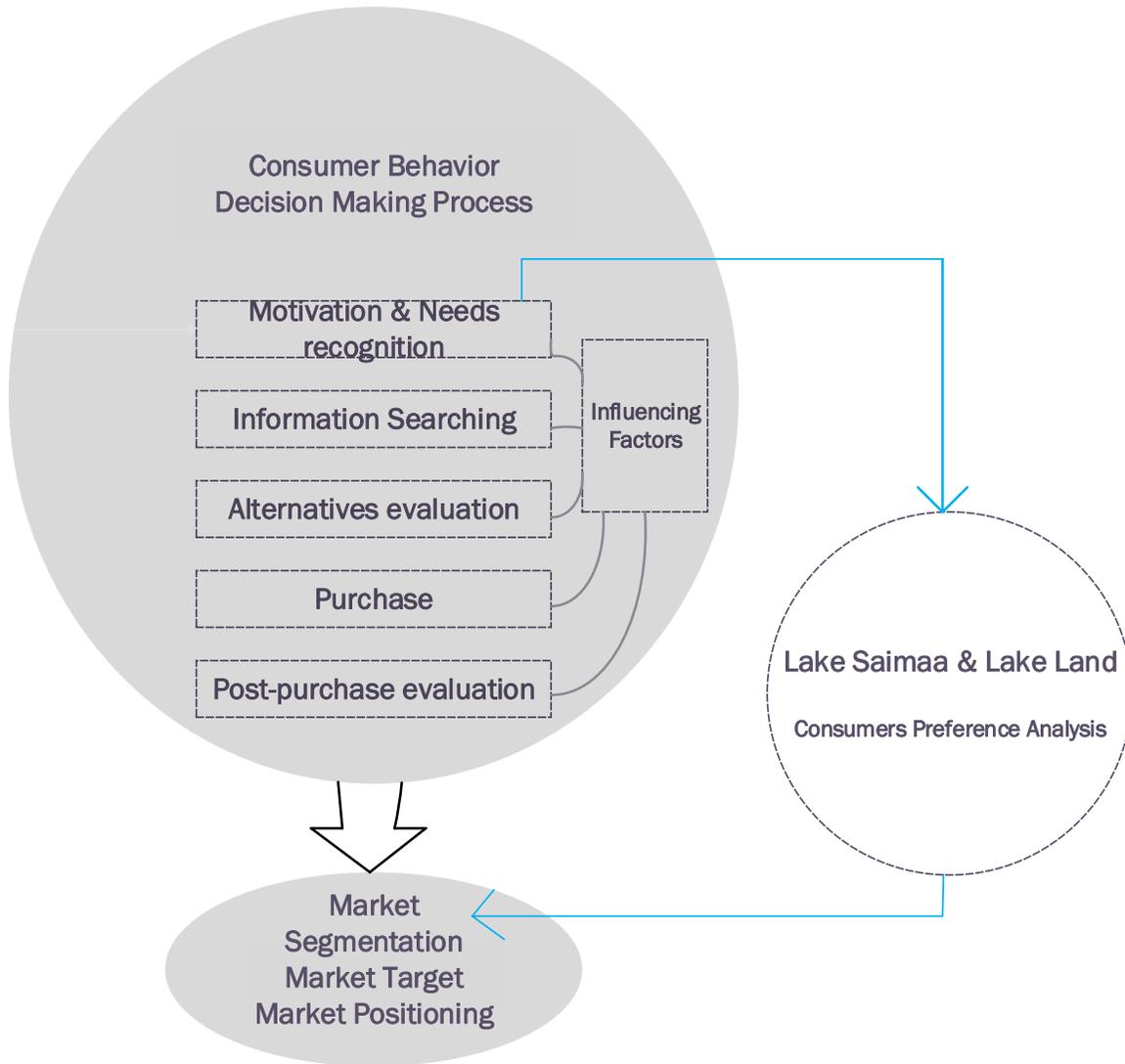


Figure 15. Theoretic Framework of Master Thesis

When starting a research study, it is essential to review the overall paradigms. The researcher's philosophies and value toward the world and nature of knowledge shape and determine the progress of research study (Hussey et al., 1997). The foundation of research study can be represented in three aspects: the ontology (what is the nature of reality), the epistemology (the relations between researcher and

knowledge) and the methodology (how should researcher find out knowledge) (Saunders et al., 2009; Dunne, 2009).

4.4 Research design

The research design is a logic sequence, through which the empirical data can be linked to original research questions and, in the end, can be linked to final conclusion (Yin, 2009). As stated by Philliber et al. (1980), a research design is a ‘blueprint’ of the whole research represented by four questions, namely, ‘what questions to study, what data are relevant, what data to collect and how to analyze the result.’

4.4.1 Research Approach

Deduction is mainly the testing theory, on the other hand, the induction is the building theory. Consequently, the emphasis of each approach is different. The deduction is more ‘scientific’, like, explaining the causal relationship between variables. Normally, deduction approach followed by highly structured way to collect quantitative data and ensure the validity of data. And it ends up with generalized conclusion by certain enough size of simples. Whereas, the induction approach is comparably different, since it focuses on the understanding of human perspective and underlying meaning through understanding qualitative data. Compared with deduction approach, data of induction is more flexible and less concern of generalization of conclusion (Saunders et al., 2009).

The aim of this research is to gain insights on why and how the potential Chinese tourists make decision to visit Finland. Therefore, this thesis is not the numeric principle nor relation between variables. Instead, the author is about to explore human phenomenon and understand beneath reasons. Based on nature of this study, the deduction approach is applied.

4.4.2 Research purpose

Before considering research strategy, it is important to look deep on the purpose of study, which include exploratory, descriptive and explanatory (Saunders et al., 2009). Based on Robson (2002), exploratory could be applied in order to help researcher understand ‘what is happening’ and interpret phenomena from new perspective. He claims that if a study is designed to find out precious nature of a problem or social phenomena, exploration could be useful and helpful.

Especially Adams and Schvaneveldt (1991) pointed out that, because of its flexibility and adaption to change, exploratory study could result in direction changing when the new data come out. More, through the process of exploration, the initial focus would be big and general. However, with the progress going, study will be more concentrated on certain subject.

The study of this research is focusing on consumer behavior of potential Chinese tourists visiting Finland. Aim of research is to gain insights on what motivates them to come to Finland and how they make decision through purchase process. Therefore, it is obvious to identify nature of this study, which can be viewed as social phenomena. And the goal is to understanding ‘what is happening’ and ‘why it happens’ behind this social phenomenon. All in all, exploratory study is employed in this research.

4.4.3 Research Strategy

Based on Kotler et al. (2017), survey is a kind of research strategy for collecting primary data by asking target sample questions on their knowledge, preference and buying behavior. Survey strategy is a common strategy in the field of business and management, which can be helpful to answer who, what, how much questions. Also, it can be applied to explore and understand what is happening. Survey can help researcher collect a relatively big amount of data from huge target population.

Generally, a formulated and standard questionnaire is assigned to each sample during a survey strategy. Moreover, the standardization could make collected data easy to be understood and compared (Yin, 2009). Nevertheless, questionnaire is not the only way for survey data collection. In addition, the structured observation and structured interview are also alternatives for survey data collection (Saunders et al., 2009).

There are two ways of survey research, the structured survey and unstructured survey. Structured survey employs formal and standard questions to all the respondents through same manner; on the other hand, the unstructured survey make questions open end and allow respondents explore their own answers. Particularly, unstructured survey can lead and guide the further interview based on respondents’ answers (Kotler et al., 2017).

Case study strategy aims to empirically investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context by multiple resources (Robson, 2002). Case study can give researcher a rich insights of context, in which the research is being conducted; also, it can be used to answer ‘why’, ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions. Therefore, case study strategy is popular in exploratory and explanatory research (Saunders et

al.,2009; Yin, 2009). Multiple data collection techniques exist in case study strategy, for example, interviews, observations, questionnaires. In order to enrich and justify the collected data, multiple sources of data or triangulation can be employed (Saunders et al., 2009; Yin, 2009).

There are four types of case study design: single-case (holistic) design, single-case (embedded) design, multiple-case (holistic) design and multiple-case (embedded) design. Single cases design is justifiable in certain research situation, like critical test of theory or longitudinal study. On the other hand, a study contains more than one case is multiple case study. Multiple-case should follow a replication rule; therefore, each case needs to be chosen carefully (Yin, 2009). Considering nature of potential consumer behavior and their diversity, multiple-case study is employed in this research. Also, the various individuals' characteristics requires a holistic perspective.

The purpose of this research is to find out why potential Chinese tourists are willing to visit Finland, how they make purchase decisions and which factors have dominant impacts on their purchase process. Given that, the main research strategy of this research should be case study with holistic multiple cases so as to explore deep understanding of this particular social phenomena. Given to research questions, mainly non-numerical data are collected to answer the questions.

The qualitative method represents certain data collection technique and data analysis process that results in non-numerical data, whereas, the quantitative method means the data collection and analysis procedures which generates numerical data (Saunders et al., 2009). A multi-method qualitative study is selected for this study, which means more than one data collection techniques and data analysis process are applied in this research to answer research questions. According to nature of this study, research questions are studied in a contemporary time frame, 'a particular phenomenon at a particular time' (Saunders et al., 2009). Hence, this research is cross-sectional study for consumer analysis of potential Chinese tourist visiting Finland.

4.5 Sampling

Holistic and multi-case study is employed in this research to answer stated questions. The unit of case study analysis is the potential Chinese consumers who have willing to travel to Finland. Obviously it is impossible to gather data from the whole population because of its size and resource constraints. Therefore, sampling is critical for this research in order to screen the most appropriate and suitable cases for data collection.

Given the research strategy implied in this research, deep understanding of consumer decision making process and motivation requires non-numeric data to answer research questions. Therefore, non-probability sampling is more justifiable, which literally means the probability of each case selected from whole population is unsure and it does not have to make statistic inference for the whole population. The non-probability sampling allows research conduct small amount of case with rich information in order to explore deep understanding of research subjects (Saunders et al., 2009).

The nature of consumer behavior and motivation relate to psychological and many other factors, which increases complexity of analysis units of research. For instance, one consumer put his or her primary value on destination distance; on the other hand, the other consumer places importance on travel cost and accessibility. Hence, diversity and variation exists among the cases. And this variation or heterogeneity is of great value in this research. Therefore, heterogeneous (maximum variation) sampling is used to select appropriate cases for this study.

The threshold of selection criteria in sampling is potential consumers. The ‘potential’ indicates that consumers have never been in Finland before and have a strong willing to travel to Finland; nevertheless, it is still not justifiable to meet the selection criteria for the cases. Although the concept of potential consumers or potential tourists is subjective and flexible, other supplementary criteria are employed to ensure the good quality of the cases. Before sampling the screening of candidate cases need to be done.

The purpose of screening process is to identify the final cases most suitable and qualified before data collection in order to make reliable and valid result of research. The screening process consists of asking people knowledge of each candidate. Therefore, the questions or criteria need to be defined beforehand (Yin, 2009). In this research, the screening survey (structured questionnaire) is defined in order to select final cases for data collection. The screening questionnaire is designed through a website, namely, www.wenjuan.com. The distribution channel of screening questionnaire is ‘WeChat’, a most efficient and well-used communication tool in mainland China. In order to make sure of quality this pre-survey, initial language is English and revised by supervisor of this research and marketing professional of city of Lappeenranta. Then the language is translated into Mandarin to make questionnaire more understandable and culture-adapted for the research subjects.

In the screening questionnaire, the questions ‘Have you ever been in Finland’, ‘Are you willing to travel to Finland’ and ‘how likely are you to visit Finland in the future’ make the bottom line of screening. In addition, the personal conditions also are taken into account to make sure the ‘potential’ of selected case.

Based on Morrison (2013) and Dunne (2009), background of consumers, namely, the education level, age, occupation status, family size and travel experience also make big difference when people decide if travel to Finland in the future. After the screening procedure, the semi-structured interviews are conducted to collect data.

4.6 Data collection

The strategy of this research is case study in qualitative approach, correspondingly the data collection and data analysis generate non-numerical data in order to analyze them qualitatively. Six resources of data are claimed by Yin (2009), in short, documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation and physical artifacts. Among them, the interview data collection technique allows researchers gather valid and reliable data to answer your research questions and meet objectives (Saunders et al, 2009).

The purpose of this research is exploratory studies in order to find out what is going on and gain the understandings behind the phenomena (Robson, 2002). More specifically, the goal of this research is to explore why potential Chinese consumers have willing to travel to Finland, and how they make their purchase decisions in the light of theoretic framework proposed in this research.

Under the exploratory study the semi-structured and unstructured interview are both suitable and reliable. Semi-structured interview is conducted along with a list of themes and questions to be covered, through which the order of questions would be various and additional questions would be improvised in order to extract deep view from interviewees. On the other hand, the unstructured interview (deep interview) allows interviewer non-directive exploration without a pre-defined questions (Saunders et al., 2009).

The semi-structured interview technique is employed in the data collection process of this research. Given the theoretic framework proposed or research proposition, a list of interview questions is defined by author and revised by professional in City of Lappeenranta and professor in the university. All the questions have theoretic base from literature review and secondary data, besides, most of questions are open ended in order to let interviewees or respondents broad their perspectives and make data rich and insightful.

The screening questionnaire take a first selection of appropriate sample and interview subject; consequently, it leads to good willingness of interviewees and response rate. Before the data collection process, related literatures are reviewed from which interview themes are derived to improve the reliability of following collected data. The initial interview guide and questions are defined in English in

order to be verified by professionals. To mitigate any bias during interviews, the screening questionnaire and interview questions are translated into Mandarin to make them more understandable and logic.

Attempting to improve the reliability and validity of the data, before interview, the pre-determined interview questions or themes are emailed to the interviewees to make sure they have enough time to prepare and think about the information that will be asked during interviews. During the interview, the orders of questions are flexible and logical. The all interviewees are from mainland China, due to resource constraints, the interview will be conducted through WeChat, a most popular social media and communication tool in mainland China. In the actual process of interview, the interviewer followed a certain set of questions derived from research literature and revised by professionals, meanwhile a conversational and open-ended manner are followed. As suggested by Yin (2009), interviewer should be naïve about each topic or question so that interviewees can provide fresh perspective or evidence, in parallel, the line of inquiry needs to be satisfied.

4.7 Data Analysis

Through the case study data, much of analysis depend on researchers own empirical thinking with interpretation and presentation of collected data (Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) suggested four data analysis strategies for case study, namely, relying on theoretic proposition, developing a case description, using both qualitative and quantitative data, examining rival explanation.

First and foremost, relying on theoretical proposition is selected in this research, which means proposition should be followed to lead case study. Proposition derived from research questions and related literatures can provide theoretic orientation leading case study analysis. In this research, the theoretic framework proposed by author based on literatures can be a proposition that helps analyze evidence in a systematic approach. The consumer behavior of potential consumers is too general to collect data and analyze consequently. Hence, two perspectives under the consumer behavior are proposed based on literatures. The one is why consumer behave in this way, in the other word, the motivation of potential Chinese consumers have willing to travel to Finland. The other one is how they make decisions of travel purchase, namely, the decision making process.

In addition, developing a case description is also utilized in this research for organizing and categorizing data. Through developing a case description, a descriptive framework can be employed to organize the

flow of collected data. Descriptive framework allow data to be collected under each topic, and the framework derives from related literature (Yin, 2009).

When research takes deep view of consumer's decision making process, it is still too broad to analyze. Therefore, a framework of decision making process is defined based on previous theories. The whole decision making process will be divided into five sub-processes or small topics in a logical pattern, including, motivation & needs recognition, information searching, alternative evaluation, purchase, post-purchase evaluation. Besides, the influencing factors during each sub-process are taken into analysis as well. Based on descriptive framework, the collected data is grouped and interpreted into small topics which are more understandable and insightful. In the end, data collected from these five sub topics answer the research questions and make marketing application.

According to Yin (2009), five analytic techniques are considered during data analysis of case study, which are pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logical models, cross-case synthesis. As stated in research strategy, this research is holistic multi-case study indicating that there more multiple cases and each case is independent.

Hence, cross-case synthesis is selected. In any situation, this technique views each case as separate and individual. Firstly, word table will present collected data from each case based on research proposition and descriptive framework. Then, additional or complementary word tale can go beyond each individual case and interpret a whole set of collected data on case by case (Yin, 2009). In the parallel, cross-case synthesis could help researcher find out the similarities and difference among each cases in order to make comparison and draw conclusion based on collected data.

4.8 Research Quality

For the construct validity, it is a challenging quality test in case study (Yin, 2009). In this research, in order to analyze the consumer behavior of potential Chinese visiting Finland in an operative approach, the theoretic framework is employed in data collection and data analysis process to make sure the operational set of measures of each case being studied. Besides multiple sources of evidence and multi-case could improve the construct validity of this study.

In terms of external validity (generalizability), the research intends to make finding generalized and applicable to other cases. The subject of this research is individual rather than organizations, therefore the generalizability is less concerned (Saunders et al., 2009). The screening survey questionnaire makes

selected samples or cases presentative and justifiable based on their answers of structured questionnaire. In addition, due to the considerable diversity of geography and psychology of Chinese potential consumers, the sampling selection process involves other critical factors of consumers which have strong impact on the probability of visiting Finland, like their occupation, education level, past travel experience and family size. All the efforts are made in order to make cases more representative, consequently, lead to a generalized finding.

The final test of this research is reliability. Attempting to make research process logic and systematic, the framework of data collection and data analysis is divided into small sub-topics. Specifically, the decision making process is being studied by six sub-categories, namely, the motivation & needs recognition, information searching, evaluating & selecting alternatives, purchase, post-purchase evaluation and finally, influencing factors through each sub-category. Also, prior to the semi-structured interview, the related research articles and books are reviewed so that most potential answers of each sub-topic are predefined by interviewer. The logic flow of interview guide and predetermined framework improves the reliability of this research.

5. INTERVIEW ANALYSIS

5.1 Interview structure

Based on the theoretic framework of this study, the original semi structured interview is conducted through six dimensions, which correspondingly are the travel motivation, the information search, alternative comparison and selection, the purchase behavior, the post purchase and influencing factors. Furthermore, given the cooperation with City of Lappeenranta, the preference analysis of Lake Saimaa is conducted in parallel.

As with the case study of Saimaa lake region, the photos display is deployed in this semi structured interview. In other words, in order to study and analyze the potential consumers more explicitly and comprehensively, the images are displayed before and during the interview. Therefore, the interviewees could perceive them directly and articulate the reasons and perspectives.

All in all, this interview comprises two main sub-structures, the decision making process of potential consumers based on theoretical framework and the case study on consumer preference analysis of Lake Saimaa region.

5.2 Interview Background

As discussed in the chapter of research methodology, before the interview the screening questionnaire is deployed in order to make research subject or interview sample reliable and valid. Therefore, the distribution channel of screening questionnaire consists of two parts. The preliminary one is derived from author's social contact in mainland China and Hong Kong for example, family, friends, colleagues and study mates. The other distribution channel is based on the E-newsletters from City of Lappeenranta to their Chinese business partners and contacts.

In total, there are 256 respondents for the screening questionnaire and 103 respondents are willing to take further semi structured interview for consumer behavior analysis. However, due to the resource constraints and the various quality and validity of each respondent, ultimately the semi-structured interview is concentrated on 22 respondents for the in-deep investigation and study. Except the screening questionnaire, the selection of interview subjects is mainly based on their occupation, education level, their travel experience, their life stage and family structure, and their awareness and likeness to travel to Finland in the future.

Education is one of most important prerequisites in international travelling (Morgan, 1996). Based on Morgan, the higher education can result in more probability to travel abroad effectively. In this study nine respondents have reached undergraduate level, the rest of thirteen are all graduate level or above. Besides the education, the occupation level of interviewees also matters. The occupation level and the social class provide potential consumers financial capability for international traveling, which is a rather expensive and resource-consuming service relatively (Morrison, 2009). The majority of interview sample have stable full-time job. In addition, five master degree students who are studying abroad are included in this study.

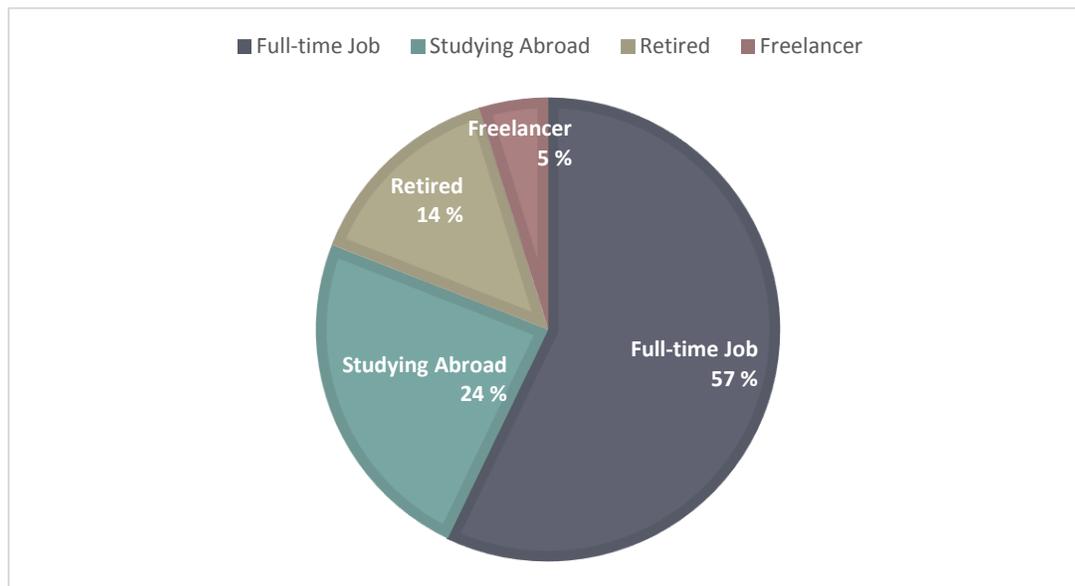


Figure 16. Occupation level of interviewees in this research

Between the total 22 interviewees, 20 of which are very likely to visit Finland in Future and the rest two are quite likely to travel to Finland. Also, the travel experience could validate and indicate the ‘potential’ of consumers to travel to Finland in future (Middleton, 2001). Therefore, the all selected respondents have sufficient international travel experience at least three to five international trips within last five years. For example, one of study samples has visited fifty countries in 6 continents, which implies the high chance to travel to Finland in the future.

The life stage and family structure of study subjects are taken into account during the interview. The life stage is reflected by the age of interview subjects. With the family structure changing, the decision making process and consuming behavior change consequently (Middleton, 2001). For example, the

young married couple could prefer the romantic environment during the trip, whereas the retired couple could appreciate the relaxed and quite place during their travels.

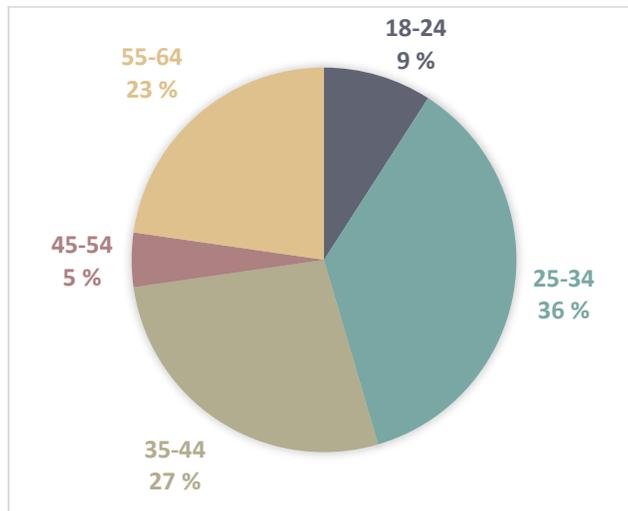


Figure 17. The age distribution of interviewees in this research

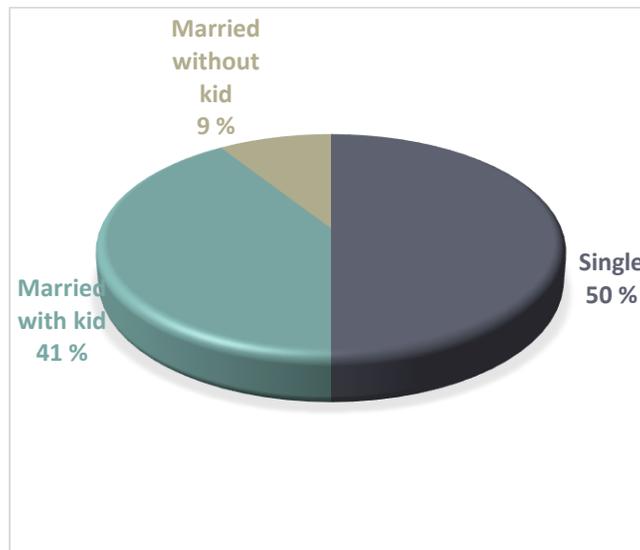


Figure 18. The family structure of interviewees in this research

5.3 Empirical finding on decision making process of potential Chinese consumers

5.3.1 The traveling motivation

Given the fact that all interviewees in this study are highly likely to travel to Finland in the future, therefore, the first question is to ask why you are willing to travel to Finland. During this question, the

interviewee could articulate why they travel abroad generally and what factors motivate them to travel to Finland in the Future. For the record, the subject in this research is the potential consumers, therefore all the interviewees have never been in Finland before.

In order to comprehend the deep reasons that motivate potential consumers travel to Finland, the interviewees are also asked what are their impressions of Finland. The impression of Finland could be presenting the pre-image of a destination and how the market perceive the pre-image due to the marketing effort (Morrison, 2013).

The analysis is starting from the ‘push’ side of the motivation for visiting Finland. Most of interviewees would love to travel to Finland because they want to experience and see something different from their living environment or from Asian circumstance, even though some of them have very limited knowledge of Finland. The profound reason intrigues them to go is the big difference. One interviewee said *“I really want to see the sun never goes down in the night and it will be a totally exciting experience in my life”*. Also *“I would love to stay in a forest around by white snow with my family in winter, and we will have fireplace inside to enjoy the feeling of nowhere in the world”*.

The desire of experiencing difference in Finland is the core factor that push them to travel. Like *“my dream is to live in a fairy tale where all the thing is white and there is northern light in the sky, then I could make sincere wishes for my life”*. The difference and specialty is presenting multiple things within Finland including the different culture, various living style, the different landform and the landscape. One interviewee explained *“I live in a limited place for my limited life, but I want to go to other countries to see how life can be so different and diverse to enrich my mind”*. And *“I am studying architecture in Belgium, and I want to the different styles of building and architecture. It will give me more knowledge and more inspiration for my life and my career”*.

Furthermore, the curiosity of unknown place and desire to learn new things play deep ‘push’ factor to motivate potential consumers to come to Finland. For instance, *“I learn different countries not only by books and internet, but also to go there in person to see and to taste through my own eyes”* and *“I desire to learn and see different things in my life and I could tell my own adventures and knowledge to my children and my friends”*.

The second most essential ‘push’ factor behind the motivation is their needs to be with nature and clean environment. For last decade, the mainland China has been suffering so much for air pollution, water

pollution and unfavorable living conditions. Hence, the clean sky and fresh-breathing forest are the deep reason for potential Chinese consumers to travel to Finland. Some interviewees said *“The nature with cleanness and the blue sky is my dream now and I know Finland has it”*, also *“The quietness of forest and the power of nature will be my best experience to purify my body and my mind”*. Beside, *“I would love to spend days to relax with my family walking along the lake and picking berries in the forest, it will be super for our family bounding and my children’s growth”*.

The third main ‘push’ factors for the interviewees is because that Finland is a Nordic country and they have a strong affection toward the Nordic. The study has found out that certain potential consumers have limited view about Finland, or in other way, Finland is not that popular in China market. However, the Nordic which is a general concept of the northern Europe is really well known in China. *“I am really into Nordic countries, the people there is really tall and blond and the society there is really wealthy and developed. Finland is a Nordic country; therefore, I am really willing to visit Finland”*.

The forth most profound reason for people to travel to Finland is about their family. One subject has thought that *“It really doesn’t matter where I travel, I just want to make my mom happy and be tighter with her. So I think Finland is really peaceful and quite, it will be perfect for me and my mom to be together and enjoy the time”*. In addition, *“I would never travel alone to Finland, I will go to Finland with my family, the snow and the magic sky wouldn’t be better to share with my family”*.

Other ‘push’ factors are not as predominant as the factors above, but still very important and worthy to take into consideration. For the retired study sample, they are relative affluent and have ample free time, for whom the visiting Finland is a way of being relax and enjoying the life. *“Now I am 50s and I have money and time, I don’t want to stay at home all day long; the travel can give me happier mood”*; *“I wish live a meaningful life after my retirement and see different world is a best way for me”*.

From other perspectives, meeting people and have a social life are the profound reason to travel abroad. *“I cannot meet so much people outside of my work and I want to talk with different people and explore how they think about the life and world”*.

Table 3. Summary of ‘push’ motivation for potential Chinese consumers have willing to travel to Finland

Percentage of Interviewees	‘push’ factor to travel to Finland
60%	Experience the difference and diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architecture and design • Culture and life style • Land form and natural environment • Local Food • Landscape and experience
54%	Breathing and refresh nature for health, relax and meditation
18%	Curiosity and exploration to unknown world
14%	Being relax and enjoy the life
14%	Being social interacted and meeting new people
9%	Family bounding

Apart from the ‘push’ factor, the ‘pull’ factor is through the perspectives of destination and its marketing effort. The first and foremost is the polar light, namely, the aurora which is the natural light display in the sky. Due to the difference of latitude, it is impossible to observe the polar light in China. Therefore, the aurora is kind of dream or fantasy in potential consumers’ minds. Some interviewees have pointed it out that *“the top of my dream list is aurora and I think it is a good luck to see it in my life”*; also *“It must be super romantic to see the polar light with my family and we could make wishes together”*.

The study has found out the marketing effort has successfully associated the polar light with Finland, even though the fact is that you could have better chance to observe and experience in other countries like Norway, Iceland and Canada. Therefore, in the China market Finland is a simple or the presentation of the polar light with a romantic and dreaming brand image.

Except the polar light, the natural environment or the ecological condition is pulling potential consumers to visit Finland. For example, *“I know that Finland is made up of thousands of lakes and its nature is preserved so well, so I want to go there and enjoy the nature”*; *“Finland is famous for its lake and forest, it will be really healthy and refreshing when I travel to Finland”*. And *“I would like to spend some time in a quiet and enjoyable nature place with less people and pretty landscape, that is the reason I want to visit Finland”*, *“I will travel with my family and we prefer the quiet nature rather than a noisy city, so Finland would be our choice”*.

The Santa Clause is another most intriguing factor to motivate people to travel to Finland. Especially, when the potential consumers have children, they are willing to travel to Finland with their kids and let their kids meet Santa Clause. For instance, *“my daughter also asks me where does the Santa Clause from, it will be so exciting and surprising for her to go to Finland and see in person”*.

As all the interview samples have good education level, therefore the Finnish design, Finnish brands and Finnish architecture interest them as well. *“I would love to study in Finland someday to learn their unique design technology and their art”*, *“during my study, I learned so much about Alvar Aalto, I can’t wait to go to Finland to enjoy and see his masterpieces”*. Also *“I really love the Nordic design and art, its simple but pretty and I want to see them by myself”*. The good education and Finnish innovation is mentioned during the interview, and the interview would love to explore how the education works and why Finland is good at innovation. So the good reputation of its education and innovation encourage consumers visit Finland as well.

In general, Finland is presenting a positive image in the China market for the moment even though the knowledge of Finland is still limited. Especially the peaceful environment, local civilization, the social order, good social welfare, stable politics, good environment and a small but highly developed country are the popular pre-image of Finland in potential Chinese travelers’ minds. And it turns out the good destination image will contribute to more visits in certain degree (Dunne, 2009).

Furthermore, the interviewees are asked about their first impressions of Finland and how they perceive Finland a country. some explained *“for me Finland is cold, is pretty and is quite”*, also *“Finland is like an elder with kind and warm personality”*; *“I think Finland is really far from China and it is like the end of the world”*. Especially multiple interviewees perceive Finland as *“the cold place with magical polar light and a place with high price”*.

Last but not least, certain interviewees have willing to travel to Finland because there is direct flight from certain Chinese cities to Helsinki, which makes the transportation easy and convenient. And the convenience of Visa application also encourages more potential Chinese to visit Finland in the future.

Table 4. Summary of ‘pull’ motivation for potential Chinese consumers have willing to travel to Finland

Percentage of Interviewees	‘pull’ factor to travel to Finland
50%	The polar light
23%	Nature environment of lake and forest, preserved ecology
23%	The Santa Clause
19%	Finnish design and brands
19%	Good impression and positive pre-image of Finland
14%	Finnish education and innovation
14%	Direct flight and ease of visa application

5.3.2 The information searching

Within this research, in order to understand the consumer behavior of information searching comprehensively, the interview questions are conducted from different dimensions. Firstly, it is the time distance of information searching, namely, how long before the travel the potential consumers start to look for the related information about the destination. Secondly, from which channel or channels they search for the information, consequently, which aspects of information about destination they pay more attention. Thirdly, if they have multiple resource channels, which they perceive is most reliable and trustworthy. Finally, from which information channel you want to receive information about Finland traveling information in the future.

As with time distance of information searching, the answers depend on how long the distance between China and destination. If the interviewees think the travel destination is far from home like Europe and America, generally the information searching process would start much earlier like half a year before the estimated departure. Nevertheless, if the destination is geographically close to China and potential consumers feel the similar or familiar to themselves, it would take less time before the trip. Like *“It is just my spur of moment, suddenly I decided to go Russia and I just started to look for information 1 week before my flight”*.

Besides, the time distance of information searching is up to some objective factors, for instance the Visa application issue and the budget. One interviewee just pointed it out that *“the earlier you buy the flight, the better price you can get, so in order to control my budget, I start to search the transportation information half a year ago”*. Besides, the time of information searching also depends on the way of traveling. For some elder or retired interviewees, you prefer to travel with a small group organized by

travel agency, therefore they search for information mainly by travel agency and the time distance is short like one to two weeks before the departure. On the contrary, if the potential consumers prefer the free self-guided trip by their own, the time distance take much longer normally from three to two months prior to their trip.

For the information channel of travel destination, the internet turns out the most popular and most convenient resource for potential consumers to look for the information. The TripAdvisor or 'www.qyer.com' is the most well-known website for the travel information. The Chinese biggest travel website 'MaFengWo.com' is being consulted when most of interviewees look for the destination information especially for the international destination. One interviewee said "*I want to see what other people comment and recommend on this destination, so I always search information on online forum*", also "*I like to know the experience of people who has visited there, so I always check the travel blogs and some forums*". It is worthy to mention that, the social media in China like 'WeChat' and 'Weibo' and travel application on cellphone are as essential as the online website. On the other hand, some interviewees perceive the travel website or blogs are exaggerated and subjective, therefore they turn to the official website of local destination to try to find more reliable and objective resources.

In addition to the internet, the friends or family who have already been in the destination are the critical information channels. For example, "*I have a friend who traveled all over the world, every time travel I would ask her about the information, recommendation, tips and strategies*", "*I share lots of common with my friends and I bet I will have a good experience if I follow her words*". "*I really talk with people I know that lives in that country, because I want to learn the destination from the view of local habitants*" mentioned by one interviewee.

Furthermore, two interviewees have explained that the travel agency is their good information resources. "*I will travel by my own not by the travel agency, but I will ask the agency about their travel route and brochures for the trip references*" told by one interviewee. If the consumers have little time and energy for the information searching and they just prefer travel through organized package by agency, the information from agency really matters.

The travel books and the books related to the destination are still utilized by certain amount of potential consumers. "*I love Lonely Planet this book, it is really comprehensive, detailed and even it advises me how to choose the airplane seat in order to have a better view*". Also, "*I love to read the culture and history of the country I am going to visit and I always read book to expand my knowledge of the*

destination”. For few interview, *“the information I am looking is kind of spoiler of a movie, I would love to just go there and let the country surprises me. So I barely search for information, only some basic things like hotel and transportation”*.

After the information channel, the study focuses on what kind of information potential consumers are more sensitive and preferable to search. The most and foremost information that most interviewees concern with is the transportation. *“The first thing I need to know is how can I go to the city center from the airport and check the timetable”*; *“I don’t want to rent a car there, so I will take public transportation. The information of transfer between different sightseeing and city center is really important for me”*.

Followed by the transportation, the sightseeing and places need to visit are needed to be known by most of interviewees. Some people concerns that *“I need to look for the information of some places I am going to visit, to make sure I know the price of entrance and make the reservation if it is necessary”*. More, some put their preference on local special food, *“I think food is a kind of reflection of culture, so I must need to know what is the traditional food”*.

Meanwhile, the information of accommodation is considered by interviewees when they looking for the information. Some answered *“I need to know the location of where I live and to make sure I live in a very convenient place”*; *“the comparison of price between different hotels are the first thing I am doing”*.

Along with the accommodation, the local culture, tradition and history are also poplar when potential consumers searching for the information about their trip. *“I would love to know what is the most special thing of this place and I am sure I will experience it”*, *“I need to know the history of this place before I go there, otherwise I will feel unsecure when I am there”*. More, *“knowing local costume and culture make me like a local people, and I appreciate the way the local people perceive their own country”*.

Table 5. Summary of information preference of potential Chinese consumers

Percentage of Interviewees	The preference of searching destination information
77%	Sightseeing place, landscape and things to do
60%	Local cuisine and special food
54%	Transportation
41%	Local culture, history, tradition and specialties
36%	Accommodation
23%	The local safety
18%	Travel route
14%	Trip experience, recommendation and strategy

14%	Local price and fare
9%	Activities to do (Festival, ceremony , show performance)
9%	Local season and climate
4%	Visa application
4%	Shopping

Since all the information channels are explicit and explained by interviewees, the deeper understanding concentrates on which information sources for the most reliable and trustworthy for the potential consumers when they are searching for the information. The study subjects need to compare the importance between the knowledge exchange through people’s mouth with other information channels, like travel website and social media.

Twelve out of twenty-two thought that the other people’ opinions are not very trustworthy and consequently they will pay less attention on others’ mouth. Some interviewees explained “*people’s perspectives are really different, and their preferences are various as well. So I need to focus on what I really like about this destination*”; “*my travel plan is always designed by myself and I don’t want others interfere with*”. Besides, some people explained “*the thoughts from my friends have certain impact on me, but not that much; because they have forgotten lots of details and they are unsure*”, “*I need to do what I really want to do during my trip and people with different views and personalities have different wants and preference*”.

On the other hand, the rest ten interviewees claim that they prefer the ideas and opinions from other people like friends, colleagues and relatives. They explained that “*I think friends are the people who share similar perspectives and I really trust my friend if they told me where should I visit and what restaurant is tasty*”. In addition, some said “*nowadays, the internet is really messy, there are many information which are not true and exaggerated, so I would rather believe the people I know*”.

Also, the online official travel information from local government is perceived highly important and validate for most of interviewees. Like “*every time I search for information of the country I am going to travel, I will go to the embassy website and check the recommendation and tips; I believe the information from there are totally true and useful*”. A few indicated that the online information from travel blogger and from big travel website, for example the TripAdvisor are worthy to consult. “*The travel route and strategy from other experienced travelers inspire me a lot and I thought I will be cool to try that*” explained by one interviewee.

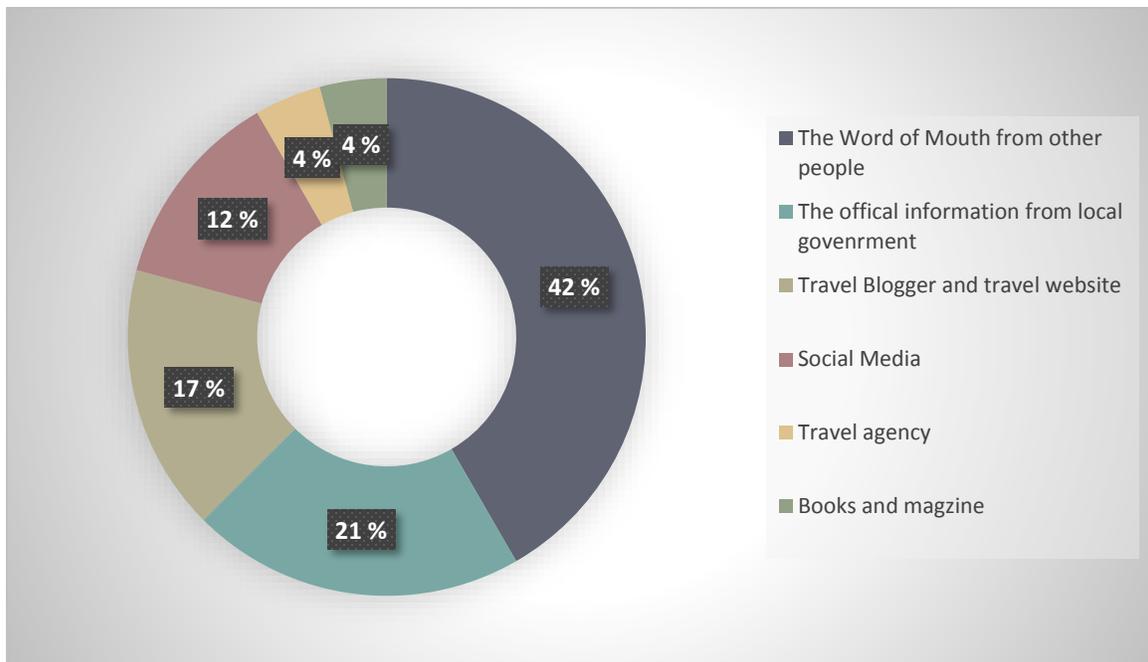


Figure 19. Most important information channels used by potential Chinese consumers

Accordingly, this study intends to understand what kind of information channel that potential consumers prefer to use and research in the future. Most of them declared that the combination between the online website and the recommendation from others could be a good solution. For instance, some explained “*I cannot rely on every single resources and each of them is partial and incomplete, so in the future I will use different channels and consider them together*”; “*I prefer the information with multiple dimensions and different perspectives*”.

Meanwhile, the official website of local place is conceived a popular resource of information in the future. For example, “*I would love to learn the destination from the views of local people, so that I can gain deeper knowledge and experience during my stay*” and “*I like to see the promotion video from official website*”. In addition, the update of the information and the convenience of searching also concern lots of interviewees when they talked about the future trend of information searching. One respondent points out that “*I use social media all the time, it would be nice if I could look for ample information from the social media, I love the convenience and easiness of the information source*”.

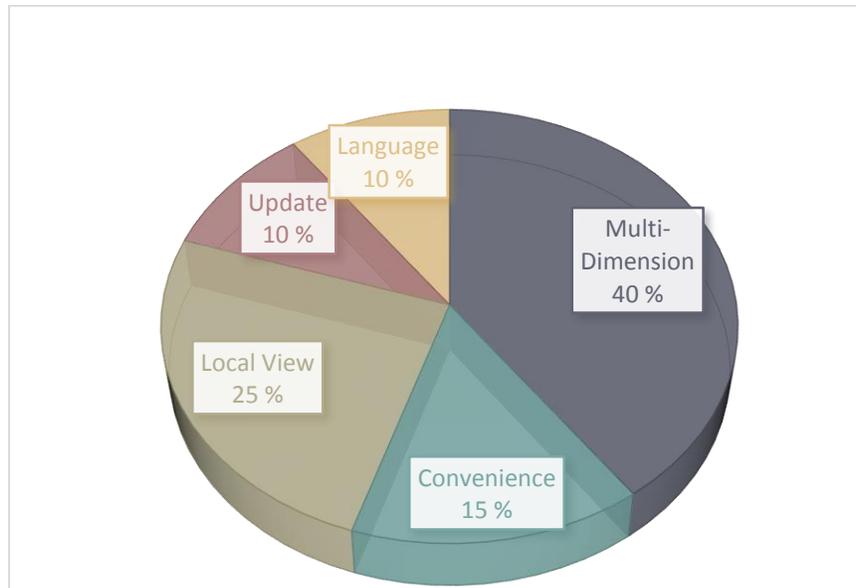


Figure 20. Importance distribution of future information searching for potential Chinese consumers

5.3.3 The alternative selection and comparison

After the information searching, the next step of decision making process is evaluation of alternatives. In the context of tourism, the alternative refers to various destinations. Based on various past experience, life styles and other factors, consumers choose their final destinations according to importance of each elements in destinations like the cost, ease of access and local friendly etc. (Dunne, 2009).

In order to study which element is considered most important during alternative selections by potential consumers willing to travel to Finland, therefore the interview question is how do you choose between different destinations. Along this question, the interviewees need to think about which country is most desirable to visit in the future.

The most considered attribute when the interviewees are selecting their final destinations is the culture, history and religion background of this this country. Certain interviewee pointed out that *“when I need to choose a country, always the local culture goes first, like the architecture and art; that is the reason why Italy is my desirable country to visit in my life”* and *“I love the music and literature, so I want to go to Russia to experience most”*.

The second criteria are the cost and cost performance, namely, is it worthy to invest such amount of money to travel to this country. For example, *“when I choose between the countries, the cost of flight tickets affects my decision”* and *“the discount of hotel price always impacts my selection of different place”*. On the other hand, for a few interviewees, the only cost has not been concerned so much, but the

value return of this cost matters. Like *“I know the international travel will be costly, and I do not mind to pay more money as long as I feel its worthy to pay”* and *“I would love to plan more travel budget if I can get unforgettable experience”*.

The following thing that affects potential consumer’s evaluation is the environment of the country. More specifically the size of the city, density of the people, the architecture style, the liveliness and the diversity etc. Such as, *“I would like to go somewhere without much crowd and give me space to explore deep”*, *“architecture of a place can throw me to a certain age, for me like a time machine and I definitely choose the country with old architecture and medieval atmosphere”*.

Nevertheless, the pre-image affects the evaluation in a certain way. During the interview, some respondents have explained that the pre-image is associated with the personal feelings and mindset. Even they have never been in one place, however through the marketing promotion, images from social media and the knowledge told by books, the pre-image has been formed unconsciously. And the pre-image really matters during the consideration between destinations.

Relatively, the pre-image derives from subjective view in socio-psychological side of consumers. As with the more objective criteria, the easiness and convenience of flight and transportation paly an essential role. For example, *“I hate to fly for a long time and have a transfer and wait for the next flight”*; *“the easiness of transportation is always important for me, and I don’t want to be tired and exhausted during my trip”*, and also *“I travel normally with my family and bad transportation will be a disaster for us”*.

Besides, the season, climate and time need to be considered necessarily during the evaluation. For the season, a few interviewees brought up that *“I do not like the cold weather and I always to choose in a warm season”*, *“the cold weather means more clothes in my luggage and high chance to get cold; so I prefer not to risk and have a relax trip in summer”*.

The pre-perceived experience controls some interviewees’ mind when they are evaluating different countries for travel. The pre-perceived experience refers to the psychological expectation prior to the real experience. Specifically, *“I mostly want to travel to United States, before I think it is really developed and there are so many entertaining activities I could experience”*, also *“The geographic difference and land form would be so different between Iceland and China and I would love to experience the difference”*. Concerning with the pre-perceived experience, the study found out the interviewees put their

most importance on the difference between China and the destination country. And the difference compromise various perspectives, like the culture, the landscape and the food etc. The quality of the difference weighs more than the quantity of the difference.

In addition, the people is an essential point when potential consumers compare and decide their trips. Firstly, if they have friends, families or contacts who are living in that country and giving consumers advice, recommendations and ideas, the chance of visiting that country will soar up and impact them mostly. Like, *“I have a best friend living in Finland and he told me lots of things about this country, and this is the reason I desire to go to Finland mostly”*. Secondly, the people who the potential consumers travel with have certain impacts. One interviewee said *“my mom is retired and growing elder, I want to be more with her. So as long as the country she likes, we definitely will go”*, *“I just gave a birth to a baby, so when I think about my destination, it must have baby friendly facilities and environment like Japan and Singapore”*. Thirdly is the local people, which means the friendliness of local people, the hospitality, the helpfulness and the quality of local people. *“the Spanish people are really kind and friend, so I want to go to Spain”*.

The safety of travel serves the must criteria when interviewees evaluate their alternatives, alongside with the local food, local sightseeing and the convenience of visa application. It is worthy to mention that two interviewees talked about the ‘spur of moment’. Like *“I just saw the photos of New Zealand and I am in the vacation, so I did not think too much just bought the flight to go there”*. However, due to the visa issues, still many countries have required visa for Chinese travelers, therefore, the easiness of visa application and the time cost for visa are determining the consumers whether to go that country or not. Some interviewees confirmed that *“I definitely will go to Maldives, because only the landing visa is needed and it is easy and saving me lots of time”*.

Table 6. Most important criteria for alternatives evaluation used by potential Chinese consumers

Percentage of interviewees	The most important criteria during alternatives evaluation
64%	The culture, history and religion
60%	The cost performance and the cost
36%	Generally environment and atmosphere of destination
36%	The pre-image of destination
36%	The easiness and convenience of flight and transportation
32%	The season, climate and time
27%	The pre-perceived difference between China and destination
27%	Having friends, families and contacts who live in destination country

23%	The family and partner who the consumers travel with
23%	The safety
18%	Local food and cuisine
18%	The landscape of destination
14%	The friendliness and hospitality of local people
14%	Easiness and convenience of visa application
9%	Reckless and spur of moment
9%	The language

5.3.4 Purchase

Following the alternative evaluation is the purchase behavior. The purchase behavior represents how the consumer make purchase after the final selection (Dunne, 2009). For the potential consumers for tourism, the purchase embodies in the transportation purchase and accommodation purchase. Accordingly, the deeper level is the time and the place of the purchase. Based on Morrison (2013), the purchase reflects when to travel, the duration of the travel, the way of travel, what to do in the destination, how to pay.

The first question goes to the where to purchase, in other words, where to buy or to book the transportation and accommodation. As with the accommodation, the most interviewees choose ‘booking.com’ to book their stay in advance. Someone has claimed that *“I like to use the third platform where I have multiple options and I can compare between them”*, and *“the rating and comments from previous tenants of each hotel are really trustworthy for me, and that is the biggest advantage from booking”*. In addition to the ‘booking.com’, certain respondents prefer the Airbnb. They explained *“when I travel, I would like to live where locals live, so that I could learn the local culture and lifestyle better”*; *“when I have a short trip, I always stay in hotel; but when I travel for relatively long time, I prefer more the Airbnb, because it is convenient and economical”*.

Besides, the official website of global hotel chain is one of popular chain for consumers to look for their accommodation, like Hilton and Marriott International. *“I am a golden member of Hilton and I always book my stay from their official website and I can get really good discount and well experience”*. On the other hand, a few choose to purchase the accommodation right after their arrivals. It is explained *“I always prefer the flexible trip schedule and that’s why I go somewhere and then find accommodation; sometimes it is about luck and most of time we can get a good place to stay even a sofa from locals”*.

As with the transportation, the third platform is the most preferable place for potential consumers to buy their fly ticket, namely, ‘Skyscanner.com’, ‘Ctrip.com’ ‘Qyer.com’ etc. *“I can compare the price of*

different price and time between each airlines and I think it is really good” explained by one interviewees. Furthermore, the convenience and the language are the reasons why consumers choose third platform to purchase their transportation. Like *“sometimes I want to check the official website of some airline, but there is no Chinese language”*. Secondly, the official website of airline is the channel where the transportation is purchase. *“I am fly member of this airline and I am accumulating my fly miles, so I can be upgraded later; that is the reason I always book my flight from the official website of that airline”*. Lastly, buying transportation from the travel agency is also considered by a few elder respondents.

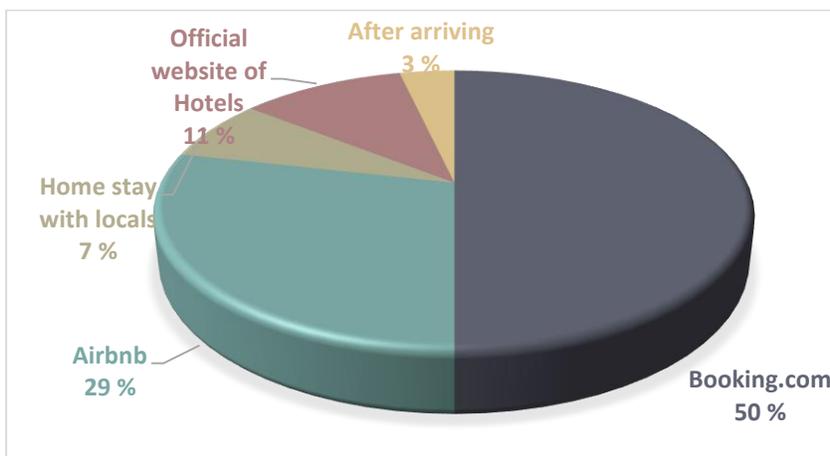


Figure 21. Summary of where to purchase accommodation by potential Chinese consumers

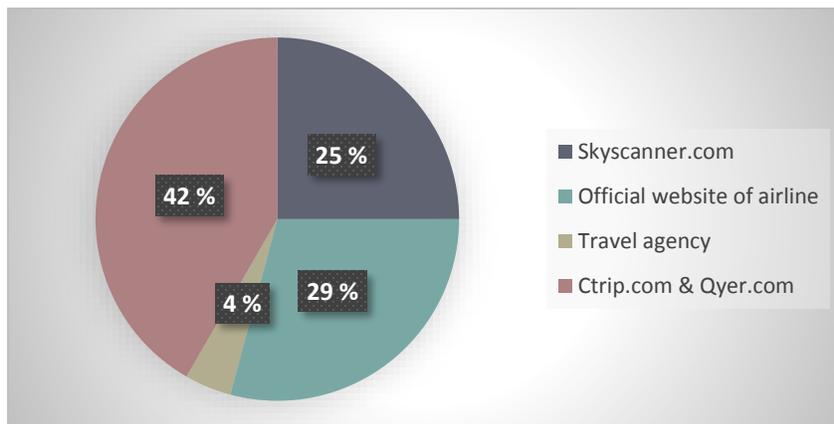


Figure 22. Summary of where to purchase the transportation by potential Chinese consumers

Alongside the where to purchase, the question of when to purchase is brought up accordingly. To be specific, when to purchase represents the time distance between the time of purchase and the time departure. Therefore, the time distance varies based on the motivations of travel, interviewees’ personalities, their past experience and so on. The one month before the departure is the most favorable

time distance for many interviewees. Nevertheless, some interviewees prefer the long consideration and have willing to take risk for the uncertainty of long time distance, the four to six months is the choice.

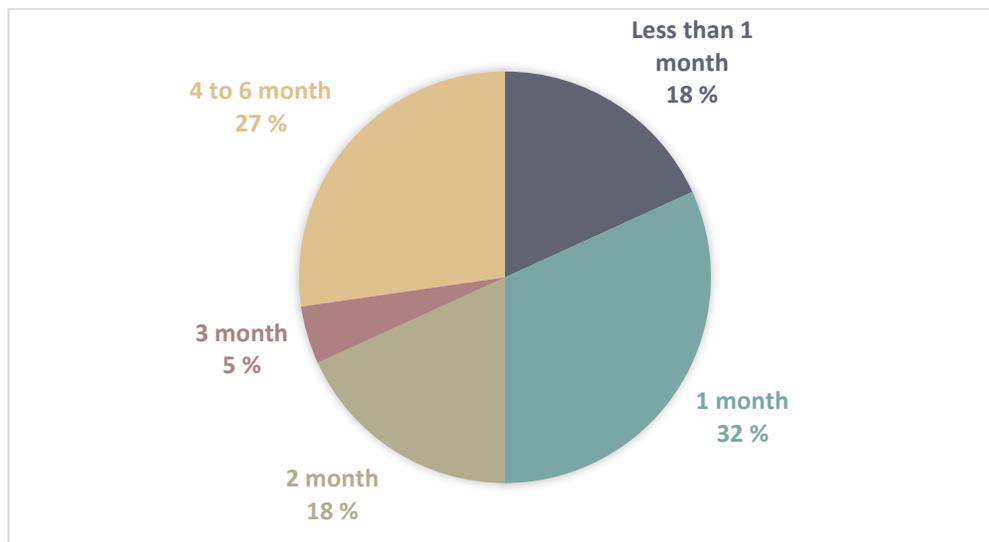


Figure 23. Summary of when to purchase the accommodation and transportation by potential Chinese consumers

Concerning with how to purchase, this study focuses on which payment method is more preferable for potential Chinese consumers when they are traveling internationally. The credit card is considered the first choice when most interviewees have international trip. They claimed like “*I have Visa card and it is convenient for me to buy things*”, “*I do not like to exchange the currency and bring much cash with me, so credit works perfectly for me*”, “*maybe I will take a little coins and cashes in case there are some places only works for cash like the street food and local bus; but mostly I will pay by my card*”. With the development of new payment method in China, the Ali Pay and WeChat payment are becoming more trending in China, therefore, some of interviewees said, it is ideal and perfect if they could purchase by Ali Pay and WeChat in another country. Moreover, because of exchange rate fluctuates and other financial factors, most of consumers will select the cheaper way between credit card and Ali Pay. The Apple Pay is mentioned in certain extent.

5.3.5 Behavior for traveling to Finland

The subjects in this study is potential consumers who are most likely to travel to Finland in the future, therefore the purchase behavior of traveling to Finland needs to be understood. The perspectives of their purchase behavior implies on when potential consumers prefer to travel to Finland, how long they prefer

to stay in Finland, their traveling style in Finland and what they are most likely to do when they are in Finland.

As with the time or season when they will visit Finland, the winter and summer are the most considered seasons. For the winter, some interviewees feel *“the winter in Nordic or in Finland will be so different and special experience for my life”*, *“the snow and the wonderland of white will encourage me to go to Finland in winter even though I do not like the cold weather”*. The study found out that the pre-images of Finland associated with polar light, reindeer and the Santa Clause are the profound reason for most of interviewees willing to travel to Finland in winter. Because as discussed before, the difference and specialty of experience are what most Chinese potential consumers desire.

For the summer time between July to August is popular as well. The reasons are like *“I like the cozy and warm weather to travel, so I prefer the summer time to visit Finland”*, *“the relaxing forest and enjoyable nature will drive me to Finland in summer”*, also *“I definitely will go to Finland with my families and I think summer is perfect for kids”*.

When talking about the duration of stay, one week to two weeks is perceived feasible and sufficient for interviewees. For example, *“If I go to Finland, probably I will travel to Sweden and Norway as well, so my trip in Finland is about five to seven days”*, *“I like the deep travel not just take picture and leave, so I will stay in Finland for two weeks for exploration and learn some local culture”*; *“I work in university, every summer vacation is too hot in China; if I travel to Finland, I would like to stay there for a long time like two weeks to chill out and enjoy the relax nature”*.

The next question is asked about in which approach the interviewees prefer to travel to Finland or their travel style in Finland. twenty out of twenty-two respondents have claimed that they will travel by their own or the flexible trip. Such as *“when I arrive in Finland, I will rent a car in the airport and drive to my planed accommodation and other places”*, *“I think self-driving in Finland will work for me, because I travel with my friends and families”*. Further, some interviewees have explained that *“I will plan everything before I go to Finland, even I will rent a house with kitchen to cook; so I will live in Finland for some weeks totally on my own and with my family”*. Meanwhile, the combination of local agency and self-planning is considered and preferred by certain consumers. For instance, *“I have limited knowledge about local regulation and tradition, it will spare me much energies and time with local guild”*.

Based on interviewees' pre-image of Finland and their travel experience, they are interviewed about what they are most likely to do in Finland consequently. The sightseeing of polar light is on the top of to-do list. Secondly is for the Santa Clause during the Christmas. Then, the enjoyment of white wonderland and snow is considered by some interviewees as well. Others are like *"I travel with my family, what I most want to do is wandering in the forest and picking up berries with my kids"*, *"I know Finland shares border with Russia, I will visit Russia for two days when visit Finland"*, more, *"I have to explore the local culture and talk with local people"*; *"I am studying architecture, so I will go to Finland to see the masterpieces of Alvar Aalto and Finnish design"*.

Table 7. The percentage of most preferred activities in Finland by potential Chinese consumers

Percentage of interviewees	Most preferred activities in Finland
59%	See the polar light
45%	Experience local life style, tradition, culture and food
41%	Visiting Santa Clause and Northern pole
23%	Enjoy the white wonderland and snow
18%	Visiting Helsinki
14%	Go to Lakeland and enjoy the nature
14%	Explore the architecture
9%	Visit Russia

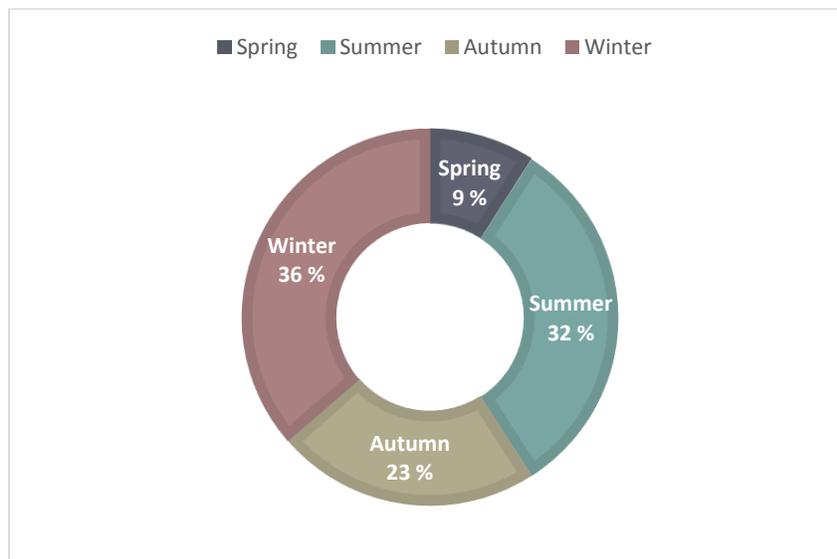


Figure 24. The most preferred time for potential Chinese consumers to visit Finland

5.3.6 Post-purchase evaluation

In spite that potential consumers have never been in Finland before, however, they have certain international travel experience before including their post purchase behaviors. Based on their experience, the study is about the probability of revisit and recommendation from consumers if the destination has met their expectations. Most of interviewees have expressed that they are likely to revisit the country which meets their expectations in the future. Such as, *“if I feel really satisfied in this country, I will bring my family together with me later to revisit this country again”*, *“I am nostalgic person, when I have special experience during my trip, I will go back there again to refresh my memory and experience the old time again”*.

On the other hand, even though the country has met the consumers' expectation, some of them would see little chance to revisit. They explained *“the world is so big and my life is limited, so I would like to go to another place where I have never been before”*, *“I always pursue the new and different experience, so I do not go back to the country I have visited even it was really good”*. Also, *“the international travel costs me much money and time, and most of them are long distance; therefore, I won't revisit”*. To certain degree, a few interviewees claims the possibility of revisit is unsure and depends on opportunities. For example, *“I can hardly tell if I will revisit there again, but if I get chance like a business trip, for sure I will go back”*.

As with the recommendation, all the interviewees have positives answers, but in different ways. The most common and practical approach is word of mouth. For instance, *“I will talk with my family and friends all the good experience during my trip and even persuade them to go there in the future”*, *“during my trip, I always make video chat or phone call to my friends, I will recommend to them if I feel good during my trip”*. Besides the personal knowledge exchange, the social media is really considered the most efficient and popular way for recommendation. One interviewee has pointed out that *“I always post photos and my feeling during my trip and all the people around me will see the photos; and I think it is my best way to recommend the destination”*.

The last but not least way of recommendation is through internet, namely, the travel blog and the travel experience shared by travel website. Some interviewees answered *“if the country I visit is so great and I like it so much, I will write my travel blog or diary to share with everyone”*, *“I love to share the good things about the world, so I always write articles about my journey, what I experience and what I thought through traveling in order to encourage more people to go other sides of the world”*.

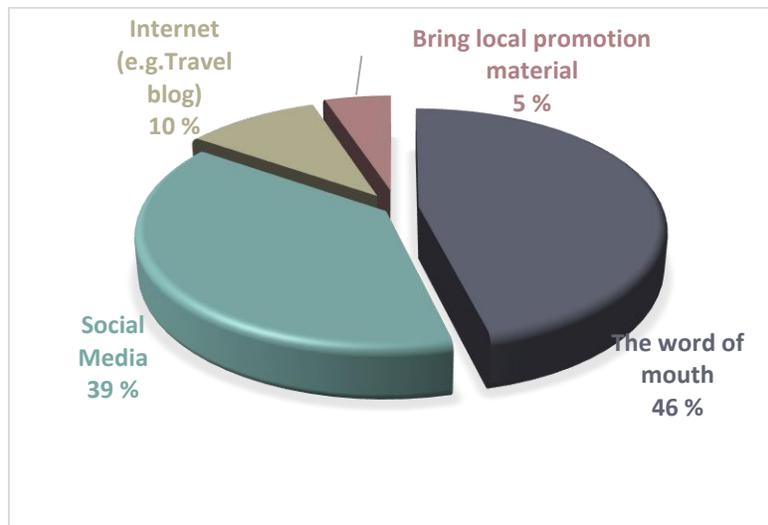


Figure 25. The way of recommendation after traveling by potential Chinese consumers

5.3.7 Influencing Factors

Through the whole process of consumers' decision making, there are certain factors which have impact and influence their decision making. Based on Woodside and Lysonski (1989), the influencing factors consists of the marketing variable, travelers' variables and situational variables. Moreover, the people reference, previous experience and travels' characteristics have strong connection with their decision making process.

For this study, the influencing factor of consumers' decision making process is concentrated on the trip feature and destination resource. The trip feature literally refers to the trip distance, trip cost, trip environment and consumers' perceived risk; destination resource presents the tourist service and infrastructure, situation of the destination, physical feature of a destination and the amenity (Mathieson & Wall, 1982).

In order to understand the influencing factors from the perspective of destination, the interview question goes to which factors do you think it is the most important when you make decision for your trip. The most considered factor through most of interviewees is the people of destination. Firstly, it is the friendliness of local people. Like *“during my trip, my favorite thing to do is learn local culture by talking with local habitants; the most important thing during the trip is the locals”*, *“the unexpected loss or some accidents happen all the time during the international trip, the most important thing for me is that local people can help me and provide me some guide to some places”*.

Secondly is the people from local service, for example, the restaurant, the shop assistant and accommodation receptionist. Some interviewees have explained *“if the quality of service or the attitude of service people is not welcoming, it will suck my whole feeling for the destination, so the quality of service people is the most important factor for me”*. Thirdly, it is the generally people environment of the destination, *“I really appreciate the space and feeling of quiet during travel; and I will never go to place full of tourists and other people, so the most thing for me is not so crowded and I have my own space”*. The last but not least is the travel partners or the people potential consumers travel with. *“If I travel with funny people with lots of humor and knowledge, I will love my trip; and I always try to find good partners I can travel with”*.

Besides the people factor, the following most influencing thing is about the safety of destination. Some explanations are *“I think the social order and stability is most important thing for me, because I always travel with my family and the feeling of security is on the top of others”*, and *“the worst thing happens during my trip is I got stolen or robbed, and preventing from it is the most thing for me”*.

The third most critical factor for the trip feature is the convenience of transportation. It means the convenience between each sightseeing, the accuracy of transportation information and the transfer of the flights. For example, *“the most important thing for me the on time flight, I really do not want my flight being missed or delayed, because it will cause enormous inconvenience for me”*.

Other factors like the locally culture environment, the condition of accommodation and being cheated are also contemplated by certain interviewees. They claimed *“during the travel, it is inevitable to get some tired, so I need good rest during night. the most thing is to make sure the accommodation could provide an enjoyable and relax sleep and rest”*, *“the environment of the city is really important, like the cleanness of streets and the fresh air, is kind of must during my travel”*. Meanwhile, the risk of getting sick, the weather and climate, shopping and payment method, and the flexibility affects their quality of trip and their further decision making process as well.

Table 8. Influencing factors of decision making process by potential Chinese consumers

Percentage of interviewees	The most important factor during their decision of destinations from the view of trip feature and destination resource
86%	The people of destination <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local habitants• Service providers• General people environment• Travel partners
59%	The safety of destination
41%	The convenience of destination <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Convenience between each sightseeing• Accuracy of public transportation• On time of flight
27%	Local environment
23%	The condition of accommodation
23%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The weather and climate• The shopping and payment convenience• Flexibility of time schedule
18%	Risk of being sick

5.4 Case study of preference analysis for Lake Saimaa

5.4.1 Background of case study

As mentioned, this thesis corporates with City of Lappeenranta. For recently years, Lake Saimaa region has been building its market awareness and brand position in China. Lake Saimaa has been branded as purest Finland due to its competitive advantage of nature resource, like the forest and lake. Hence, the key products oriented to China market has being planned and conceived. The key products and services mainly include the nature and wellbeing with clean environment and inspiring activities, the local culture and tradition experience, sports camp for younger generation, the transportation convenience to Saint Petersburg, business and technology visits (GoSaimaa, 2018).

Therefore, apart from potential consumers' decision making process, the preference analysis of Lake Saimaa is studied within this research. Before the semi-structured interview of consumers' decision making process, the designed images along with interview guide are sent and previewed by all the interviewees, so that they have sufficient time to think and comprehend. The designed images consist of thirty-six individual images, each of that presents the products or services provided by Saimaa region and Finland. The designed images are provided by City of Lappeenranta. As discussed before, the

interview subjects in this case study are the same with those of decision making process, which are selected from screening questionnaire with high probability and willingness to travel to Finland in the future.

To study what the potential consumers prefer and their perspectives of these images, during the semi-structured interview, all the interviewees are required to pick three to five their most preferable images and explain the reason behind it. Besides, the awareness of Lake Saimaa and the preferred time duration of stay in Lake Saimaa region for potential consumers in the future are studied for deeper understand.

5.4.2 Empirical finding of case study

The empirical finding of case study will highlight the most preferred activities of potential Chinese consumers traveling to Lake Saimaa region, also will study deeper the motivations and reasons behind the preferred activities. After the interview, it turns out that polar light is the most preferred image among the interviewees. Some of interviewees explained *“I never saw aurora before, therefore it is the most appealing image for me and if I go to Lake Saimaa, I wish the most the see polar light with wonderful forest and lake”*, *“the polar light is really beautiful and it is one of the specialties of Finland”* and also *“even the weather is cold and dark then, I still want to see the aurora during my Finland trip”*. Due to the marketing and promotion efforts, the study shows that a certain amount of consumers misled by the marketing message, as they think polar light only happens in Finland and they could see aurora by high chance. However, fortunately some of interviewees have acknowledged the fact *“I know the polar light can be seen only by certain chance and luck, but it is still my favorite image”*.

Following the polar light, the Finnish cuisine and local food are preferred by most of interviewees. They said *“Local food is a reflection of culture and how the local people live their live, so I love this image”*, *“I am always tired and exhausted physically during my travel and the delicious cuisine can provide me happy feeling”*, *“different places have different tastes and special ingredient, so I want to try the difference”*. To be short, the local food is perceived and appreciated as culture, communication, specialty and way of entertainment and enjoyment by potential consumers.

Given the image of Finnish cuisine, the images of local food ingredients, namely, the berries and mushrooms have triggered interviewees' interest. The reasons are like, *“I love the organic food from nature, it should be really good for health and body”*, *“I travel with my family and it will be nice we spend time together for picking the berries in the forest and taste them”*, *“the good ingredients seem for*

me are unpolluted and healthy, and I am really interested". On the other hand, the poison of wrong mushroom and other unknown ingredients concern for some interviewees, *"I do not have much knowledge about the types of mushrooms and how to tell which is poisonous, so I would love just to buy in the market"*. The local fresh food ingredients are related to healthy life style and being good for kids by interviewees and these are the reasons why interviewees select the image.

Without doubt, the Santa Clause is one of most recognized icons of Finland around the world and it applies to China market as well. The activity or image of riding house on the snow attracts much attention among the interviewees. They explained *"I have ridden house before but never in the snow and with such environment, it will be a completely different experience for me"*, *"the combination between house and snow is really creative activities"*, *"it will quite cold to walk through the forest and enjoy the white wonderland by feet, I think riding on the house will be perfect"*. Nevertheless, the factor of safety concerns some interviewees. For example, *"this ridding image looks really interesting for me but I need to consider the precaution in case I fall down"*.

The castle hotel is selected by many interviewees and is considered a wonderful place for rest and relax during the travel. Like *"the architecture of the castle hotel looks really historical and medieval for me"*, *"if I stay inside, I must feel like I live in an old time and it will be a splendid experience"*, *"I can feel the foundation of time there and the passing of history"*. Moreover, one interviewee has pointed it out that *"the image displays the summer time of castle hotel, compared to summer, I would like to experience it in winter time; Imagining the castle is isolated by white wonderland how magical it that"*. Therefore, the impression of old times and the historical architecture style underlies the reason why interviewees select this image. Further, the deeper needs for potential consumers is looking for the different feeling and experiences.

Six out of twenty interviewees have claimed that the forest jogging image is one of their favorite activities, which they would like to experience in Lake Saimaa. They explained *"the pollution in China is really bad recently and I don't see any opportunity to exercise myself in such a good environment in China"*, *"running in the forest with fresh air and clean breath make me feel so enjoyable and relax, and that is what I really want in my life"*, *"the forest can keep me away from the cities' noise and I can be myself around nature and clean my mind"*. Also some have brought up that *"the forest and land in Finland is preserved really well and have not be polluted and exacted so much, and it is so different from the nature in China"*, *"during my trip I always worried about there are no good place for exercise body"*

and I don't like to go to gym, so the forest and nature can be my perfect place to sweat hardly". So we can see from the interviewees that the easy exercise like running and hiking with the forest and nature can be a good outdoor experience for potential consumers, as in Chinese market, consumers associate forest and nature with health, relax and high quality of life.

In addition, the same amount of interviewees has shown their interests in the polar day, which means the sun would barely go down through the whole day or just a few hours of dark time. The reasons are like *"the polar day is an extreme natural phenomenon in the northern region of planet during the summer time, and I have no chance to experience it in China"*, *"it will feel so special there is bright sunshine during the night time and I want to feel that"*. However, some interviewees expressed their concern about the polar day, like, *"I cannot sleep in a bright environment and I think it will affect my quality of rest"*, *"I do hope the accommodation we stay can provide the good quality of curtain to block the sunshine during the night; but except my sleeping time, the sunshine in night seems so special for me in a positive way"*.

Five interviewees considered the image of riding a boat and fishing in Lake Saimaa is the thing they most want to do during the summer time. They said, *"normally, I really busy and occupied for my work, so during my trip I prefer most the relax way, the fishing is the best option for me to relax and be calm"*, *"Finland is good for its fish quality, so after the fishing I could cook and enjoy the fish as well"*, *"same like running in the forest, fishing in a beautiful lake with good view can enhance my mindset and reflex myself"*. It turns out that fishing and boating in lake can offer potential consumers privacy, quiet and calm mood and time to relax and enjoy.

The image of fishing and boating have a good psychological connection with the image of summer scenery. Because the fishing and other outdoor activities heavily depends on their circumstance and environment, which are represented by the summer scenery. The image of summer scenery gives the interviewees the impression of calm, pleasant and enjoyable environment, further it makes interviewees associate with other images. For instance, *"the summer landscape in Lake Saimaa looks impressive for me and I would like to go there and fish in the lake with my friend or alone"*, *"The forest is so green and it would nice I could walk through it and pick berries"*, *"given the summer nature around Lake Saimaa, I will camp in the forest or by the lake to immerse myself totally in the nature"*. Furthermore, the image of picnic and grill along the lake is mentioned alongside with summer landscape, as explained by one interviewees that *"the nature is so beautiful that I can do everything with it"*.

The transportation convenience is viewed as one of competitive advantages for Lake Saimaa, especially to Russia Saint Petersburg. One reason is that the destination image of Saint Petersburg is positive for China market and it attracts plenty of Chinese tourists every year. Interviewees said *“if the transportation is convenient for me to travel from Lake Saimaa to Saint Petersburg, for sure I will go there and visit this city”* and *“I know Saint Petersburg from middle school, the culture, the music, the opera, the literature and the amazing orthodox church make me fall in love with this city, and if I have chance to go there with ease access, it will be perfect for my trip”*. This study indicates the trend that potential consumers are willing visiting Saint Petersburg if there are no visa requirement with easy access.

As with the images of winter activities, like the ice fishing, cross-country skiing and watching ice hockey game, the interviewees select them because of their personal preference, the different experience and the snow environment. Like, *“I think the ice-fishing is so Nordic and I have never done before, so I am going to do that at least once in my life to experience”*, *“the ice hockey is not so popular in China and I am not a good fan of it, but it is good to taste new things when you are in different countries”*, *“personally I like winter sports like skiing, but in China there are no such good white landscape for skier, so I want to do in Finland”*.

The last but not least is the image of shopping, Finnish brand and design. Most interviewees select the image because of the cultural representation, local popular trend and personal background. They have pointed it out that *“through the local design of art, the architecture and furniture, I can see its historical traits, their preference and their culture”*, *“the Finnish brand can tell what is the most popular and trendy in Finland and maybe I can introduce to China”*, *“I study architecture, so I am really sensitive to the design and style, and I need to learn”*. However, some interviewees have opposite perspectives toward shopping in Finland, *“when I travel to Finland, the enjoying nature is the only important thing for me, I do not waste my time for shopping, however, the display of local art and design are still interesting for me even though I would not probably buy them”*.

The impression and pre-image of Finland have affected what potential want to expect during their visit in Finland. For the moment, the pre-image in Finland for potential consumer in China market are around super nature, relaxing and enjoyable summer activities, snow activities and white wonderland in winter, improving quality of life, family bounding and Nordic specialty. Therefore, the images of shopping, leathers, Finnish brand are less considered by most of interviewees.

Table 9. The image preference of Lake Saimaa by potential Chinese consumers

Percentage of Interviewees	Most preferred image in Lake Saimaa
77%	Polar light
54%	Finnish cuisine and local food
32%	Visiting Santa Clause
32%	Riding house on the snow
32%	Castle hotel
27%	Polar day
27%	Jogging and hiking in the forest
23%	Boating and fishing in the lake
23%	Summer scenery
23%	Visiting Saint-Petersburg
23%	Wild animals
22%	Cross-country ski
18%	Ice fishing
18%	Shopping, Finnish design and brand
18%	Local food ingredient (mushroom and berries)
18%	Experience Sauna
14%	Imatra dam
14%	Outdoor Picnic and grilling
9%	Watching ice-hocking game
5%	Swimming in the lake
5%	Savonlinna opera
5%	Wooden cottage
5%	Leather

After the preference analysis of Lake Saimaa, the preferred time duration of stay and the awareness of Lake Saimaa are studied within the semi-structured interview consequently. As with the time duration, most of interviewees prefer the three-day stay in Lake Saimaa region based on their impressions and perspectives of previous displayed images and interviewer's introductions through interview. For example, some interviewees have claimed that *"I feel like there are many activities I can do given the images, so I prefer three days to experience"*, *"because firstly I will land in Helsinki airport anyway, so as long as the transportation between the Helsinki airport and Lake Saimaa is ease and convenient, three days is good for me"*. Also some interviewee explained from different points *"if I travel to Finland first time by myself, I don't think I will go to Lake Saimaa; however, if I travel to Finland second time with my family, very likely, I will go there with my family together"*. Therefore, this study has indicated that

the transportation convenience, the time cost from airport to Lake Saimaa and the people potential consumers travel with decide the likelihood and willingness of visiting Lake land and Lake Saimaa.

On the other hand, a few interviewees have claimed that they do not consider to go to Lake Saimaa when they travel to Finland in the future. They explained, *“even there are only two and half hours to go there from airport, the round way will cost me five hours in total, so I still feel inconvenience for me and the time cost is too much for me”*, *“I afraid if I go there, it will affect my following trip schedule in case something happens”*. In spite that some interviewees are less likely to travel to Lake Saimaa, they have come up with some ideas or solution to cope with the problem. For instance, *“I heard that there is an airport around Lake Saimaa, so if we can fly to Lake Saimaa directly, it will be much more attractive”*, and *“the activities can be developed more, so the potential consumers can really enjoy the Lake land when they are with their families together especially”*.

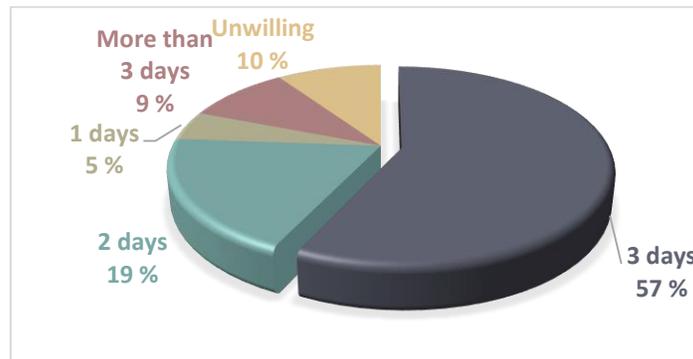


Figure 26. Percentage of preferred time duration stay in Lake Saimaa by potential Chinese consumers

The last but not least is concerning with the awareness of Lake Saimaa and Lake Land among the interviewees, only six interviewees have claimed that they have already known the Lake Saimaa before. Furthermore, the resources of information vary, which includes the personal job regarding Finland and tourism, the ITB, the world largest tourism trade fair, hold in Shanghai 2017, Finnair, the Finnish airline promotion campaign hold in Chongqing, China, the blogs from travel website, student exchanges from China to Lappeenranta University of Technology and also by word of mouth through friends and other people. On the other hand, the rest of interviewees have little knowledge about Lake Saimaa and Lake Land in Finland. Even though, the number of out-coming Chinese tourists to Finland has rocketed for last five years; the popularity of visiting Finland still has great much potential to develop and exact in the future.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of empirical findings

The purpose of this research is to develop behavior analysis of Chinese potential consumer who have high willing traveling to Finland and Lake Saimaa region particularly. Since the behavior analysis is too general to concentrate, this research puts focus on the decision-making process and its influencing factors. As with the Lake Saimaa region, the study is conducted under the corporation with City of Lappeenranta. And the aim is to understand what factors or activities that attracts potential Chinese consumers most and the reasons behind it.

To achieve the purposes of this research, the literature review of related and critical knowledge has been done firstly. Then the research method is comprehensively designed and revised by academic professor and the marketing director of City of Lappeenranta. Essentially, the semi-structured interview is conducted for data collection and analyzed qualitatively consequently.

Derived from past knowledge of decision making process, the framework of this research consists of six consequent stages, namely, the motivation of potential Chinese consumers, the information searching, alternative comparison & selection, purchase, post purchase and influencing factors. For the case study of Lake Saimaa, the preference analysis is conducted within semi-structured interview under the consumers' motivation stage. Within the study of preference analysis, thirty-six images are displayed, from which the interviewees are required to choose their most preferred ones and explain their perspectives.

The first stage of decision making process is consumers' motivation, namely, the 'push' and 'pull' factors. For Chinese consumers who are willing to travel to Finland, the main 'push' factor is to seek for the experience of difference and diversity, which includes the culture & life style, land form& natural environment, local cuisine, landscape& experience and architecture& design respectively. On the other hand, the 'pull' factor that encourage potential Chinese consumers to come to Finland, are the polar light, nature environment of lake and forest and the Santa Clause hierarchically.

Secondly is the information searching, concerning with which this research has centered on the information searching channel and the information preference by potential consumers. The most popular information searching channel is through internet, namely, the travel website like 'www.qyer.com' and 'www.mafengwo.cn' and official website of local government. Compared to internet, the 'word of

mouth' still plays a very important role through personal relations and conversational information exchange. With the information itself, the information and knowledge on sightseeing place, things to do in the destination, local cuisine and transportation are most sensitive for potential consumers. When comes to the future trend of information searching, the multidimensionality and convenience are the key points considered by potential consumers.

The third stage is alternative comparison& selection. When potential Chinese consumers need to decide to travel this country rather than others, the most important criteria perceived by them are studied. Hence, it turns out that the culture, history and religion of travel destination are most critical, followed by the cost performance, cost performance, general environment, pre-image and easy access of transportation.

As with the fourth stage, the purchase, research focus on six sub-purchase dimensions, namely, the purchase of transportation, the purchase of accommodation, the time of transportation and accommodation purchase, the preferred time of traveling to Finland, the time duration of stay, the travel method or style, and purchase payment. Firstly, the booking is the most common way for Chinese potential consumers to book their accommodation. Secondly, for the transportation, the third platform, like sky scanner and Ctrip.com, is widely used in China market. Thirdly, one month or four to six months before the actual departure are the most preferred time points when potential consumers starts to book and purchase their accommodation and transportation. Fourthly, winter is considered the best time to travel to Finland, however the difference between winter time and summer time is relatively slight. Nevertheless, the spring and autumn are not very popular time to visit Finland apparently. Fifthly, one week to two weeks is the viewed as sufficient time duration within Finland. Sixthly, the favorite travel style for potential Chinese consumers coming to Finland is traveling on their own by self-driving with families. Furthermore, in order to learn the local culture and tradition, living with local people or Airbnb is highly appreciated.

The next stage is post-purchase, through which the study indicates the high relation between the loyalty of consumers and satisfaction feeling of the destination. In other words, if the destination meets the consumers' expectation, the revisit and recommendation will bel highly considered by consumers afterwards.

The last stage within consumers' decision making process is the influencing factors. In this research, the influencing factors are analyzed from the side of destinations, in short, the destination feature. The most important factor for potential consumers during their decision of destinations is the people factor, namely,

the friendliness of local residence, the quality of service providers, general people environment and travel partners. Alongside the people factor, the safety of destination and the convenience of access also do have impact on their decision making.

The preference analysis of Lake Saimaa is conducted within semi-structured interview in parallel with consumers' decision making process. Among the thirty-six images, it turns out the polar night, Finnish cuisine, visiting Santa Clause, riding house on the snow and castle hotel are the mostly liked five images by interviewees. And the main reason behind is derived from the inside desire to experience and try the 'difference' and new things from different countries. Furthermore, this main reason has confirmed and validate the finding from motivation stage, namely, the 'push' factor, which is from the socio-psychological perspective of consumers. The 'difference', which potential Chinese consumers feel desired to experience when they are in Lake Saimaa, consists of two sub-difference respectively. The first 'difference' is natural or geographic difference, for example the polar light in winter time and middle summer day without sun going down. This 'difference' is not much with destination's marketing efforts rather than the resource advantage from itself. On the other hand, second 'difference' is cultural and historical, for instance, the Santa Clause fairytale and local special cuisine. The cultural difference is more related to people factors, which are found out the one of most important influencing factors within the consumers' decision making process.

Moreover, the convenience of transportation and easiness of access are the determining factors, which affect the probability and willingness for potential consumers to decide whether visit Lake Saimaa or not during their stay in Finland or transfer in Helsinki. Given the transportation condition of Lake Saimaa region, namely, the distance, the transportation time and transportation method, the duration of three days in Lake Saimaa is found to be most preferable and feasible for potential Chinese consumers.

6.2 Theoretic contribution

The theoretic framework of this research is derived from four academic knowledge area, namely, the theory of consumer behavior analysis, theory of consumers' motivation, theoretical model of consumers' decision making process and theory of consumers' segmentation. Therefore, this research has combined different theoretic models and extracted different elements from these models, in order to build the framework of this study. This research has discovered and found how the four theories above can be implemented and deployed to the tourism field based on previous literature and related knowledge.

This research has brought up and introduced a systematic method for potential consumer's analysis from decision making process perspective, which particularly deployed to Chinese outbound tourist traveling to Finland. Furthermore, given the corporation with City of Lappeenranta, the consumer preference has been analyzed in parallel with consumer motivation theory. Hence, the empirical combination of preference analysis and motivation offers the new light for further consumer behavior analysis development. In fact, the knowledge and academic research concerning Lake Saimaa region in China market is scarce. Therefore, the consumer preference for Lake Saimaa destination is another important contribution from this search.

6.3 Managerial implication

This research has demonstrated a systematic process on how Chinese consumers make their decision of international travel. Further, given the research background, specifically, the highly potential Chinese consumers travel to Finland, the aim and orientation of this research is precise and centered. The empirical finding of this research provides insights to destination marketing organization (DMO) and local service providers for Chinese consumer behavioral analysis. Consequently, the destination marketing organization (DMO) and local service provider can shape and develop their competitive advantage in China market. Furthermore, based on the consumers' motivation and their preference, the DMO can make consumer segmentation for long term strategic development.

For the consumers' motivation, the 'push' factor of seeking different experience indicates that local destination needs to differentiate itself from other destination in order to build attractive pre-image in China market. Meanwhile, the 'pull' factor of local specialty and resource means that local destination need to enhance its strength and highlight in its marketing communication. For Finland, the strength are the Aurora and Santa Clause; for Lake Saimaa region, the strength lays on the enjoyment of forest, lake and sunshine during summer time.

For the information searching, the popular Chinese travel websites and official website of local destination are the main resource channel for Chinese consumers to search for information. Therefore, destination marketing organization and local service providers could put more efforts on main resource channels to distribute information and communicate with China market. Besides, the language of information, multiple dimensions of information and update of information should be considered carefully. Also, based on consumer preference, the content of information and its perspectives need to be adjusted to meet their preference.

For the purchase behavior, accommodation purchase is critical to local service providers. The accommodation purchase indicates where to purchase, when to purchase and what kind of purchase consumers prefer. As with the transportation purchase, the destination marketing organization should comprehend when consumers buy the transportation, which transportation way is more convenient for consumers. Accordingly, the transportation time and transportation method should be consistent with consumers' preference. Moreover, payment method and traveling style of potential consumers could help local service providers provide better service to Chinese consumers and develop its competitive and brand image furthermore. As a result of good service and consumers experience, the loyalty of consumers is developed, which means the high chance of revisit and positive information exchange through word of mouth (WOM).

For the influencing factor of decision making, the people matters mostly. It reflects the most critical message, which needs to be understood by destination marketing organization and local service providers. As with the preference analysis of Lake Saimaa, the marketing segmentation can be developed based on cross segmentation variables. For example, the middle age family traveler who lives in big cities in China can particularly be targeted. Because living in big cities indicates the capability of affluence and the lack of fresh nature resource. Besides, the variables of flight convenience from China to Helsinki for consumer and consumer's family structure can be used to segment China market.

Furthermore, as a whole systematic process of consumer's decision making, it sheds light on how to develop special and new services particularly for Chinese tourists from different aspects, namely, the accommodation, the restaurant, the outdoor-experiencing activities and the transportation service.

6.4 Limitation

Qualitative method of this research provides the comprehensive understanding and deep analysis of consumers, nevertheless, compared to quantitative research method it cannot be statistically validated. Hence, the generalization of empirical finding may be a limitation. On the other hand, the pre-screening questionnaire to evaluate and choose the most appropriate and potential study subjects can be viewed a mitigation for this limitation. Also, this research intends to make study subjects as representative as possible by selecting final interviewees from different locations in China, different social background and different life stages. However, due to the Chinese population and dramatically geographic diversity, the representativeness of this research is limited.

The language is another limitation for this research. Because research subjects concentrate on Chinese consumers, therefore, all the interviews were conducted in Mandarin. The original research methodology was designed and revised in English, which were translated to Mandarin in order to make interviewees more understandable. After the data is collected, the transcripts were translated back to English for further analysis. The cultural difference and some small misinterpretation between languages might be a limitation.

6.5 Further research suggestion

From academic perspective, this research only concentrates on the consumer motivation theory, consumer decision making process and market segmentation. However, within the field of consumer behavior analysis, there are various theoretic models to analyze consumer in tourism industry. For example, after the decision making process, the market segmentation, market target and market positioning can be developed accordingly. From the destination side, the destination image and brand awareness of Finland or Lake Saimaa region in China market should be researched further.

From research strategy perspective, further quantitative method can be implied for consumer decision making process, in order to support empirical finding of this research statistically. Through quantitative method, the higher amount and more diverse characteristics of research subjects could make research finding more representative and generalizable. Also, further managerial research is needed to develop consumer behavior analysis for some particular Chinese regions or cities, so that the potential consumers can be targeted and positioned more precisely and efficiently.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Invitation newsletter for Screening Questionnaire

您好，我们现在正在做一份关于潜在中国出境旅游(芬兰)消费者行为的调研。因此我们邀请您参加本次问卷调查。本次问卷一共由十个单选题组成，耗时两分钟。根据您的回答和意愿，您可以选择是否接受进一步的中文采访。

由于时间原因，本次问卷将在二月初进行，截止日期为2月12日。数据收集采用匿名的方式。您可以通过复制以下链接或者微信扫一扫的方式来开始本次问卷调查。

Hello, we are conducting a survey on consumer behavior analysis of potential outbound (travel to Finland) Chinese tourists. We are inviting you to participate this survey questionnaire. This survey consists of ten single-choice questions and it will cost you around two minutes. Based on your answers and willingness, you could choose whether to be interviewed (in Mandarin) furthermore.

Due to the time constraint, this survey will be conducted during the beginning of February and the deadline is 12th of February. All the data is collected anonymously. You can start the survey either by copying the link below or scan the barcode using WeChat.

问卷链接：<https://www.wenjuan.in/s/q6B3U3G/>

Questionnaire link: <https://www.wenjuan.in/s/q6B3U3G/>

问卷二维码:

Barcode of questionnaire for WeChat

Appendix B. Screening questionnaire

潜在中国出境旅游（芬兰）消费者行为调查

Potential outbound (travel to Finland) Chinese tourists' survey

感谢您参加本次问卷调查。这份调查为潜在中国出境旅游（芬兰）消费者行为研究做前期铺垫和调研对象筛选。目的在于了解您是否有意愿来芬兰旅游以及您到芬兰旅游的可能性。数据收集采用匿名的方式。

Thank you for participating this survey. This survey aims to prepare for further consumer behavior analysis of potential outbound (travel to Finland) Chinese tourists and screen the study subjects. The purpose of this questionnaire is to understand whether you are willing to travel to Finland and its probability. All the data will be collected anonymously.

0. 您曾今来过芬兰吗？

Have you ever been in Finland?

- 有/Yes
- 没有/No

1. 您的性别:

Your Gender

- 男性/Male
- 女性/Female

2. 您的年龄:

Your Age

- 18 到 24 岁/18-24
- 25 到 34 岁/25-34
- 35 到 44 岁/35-44
- 45 到 54 岁/45-54
- 55 到 64 岁/55-64
- 65 岁以上/65+

3. 您的学历:

Your Highest Education Level

- 高中及以下/Senior High School and below
- 大学专科/College
- 大学本科/Undergraduate
- 硕士研究生及以上/Graduate and above

4. 您的职业:

Your Occupation Status

- 学生/Student
- 自由职业/Self-employed / Freelancer
- 全职工作/Full-Time employed
- 兼职工作/Part-Time employed
- 失业/Unemployed
- 退休/Retirement

5. 您的家庭情况:

Your Family size

- 单身/Single
- 已婚没有子女/Married without children
- 已婚有子女/Married with children
- 离异/Divorce

6. 您出境旅行(不包括台湾, 香港和澳门地区)的频率:

How often do you have international trip (exclude Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao) generally?

- 从不 /Never
- 一年一次/Once a year
- 一年两次/ Twice a year
- 一年多次/Multiple times a year

7. 您是否愿意来芬兰旅游?

Are you willing to travel to Finland in the future?

- 愿意/Yes
- 不愿意/No

8. 您未来来芬兰旅游的可能性:

How likely are you to visit Finland in the future?

- 非常有可能/Very likely
- 有可能/Quite likely
- 不太可能/Not very likely
- 完全不可能/Not at all likely

9. 您是否愿意接受语音采访关于潜在中国出境旅游(芬兰)消费者的消费行为模式调研?

Are you willing to take interview for further consumer behavior analysis?

- 愿意/Yes
- 不愿意/No

10. 如果您愿意, 您的联系方式(微信号/邮件)以及您理想的采访时间:

if you are willing to take interview, your contact and your preferred time

Appendix C. Semi-Structured Interview Guide

Semi-structured Interview Guide

采访提纲

Travel History / 旅游经验

- How many countries you have been before? / 您曾经去过多少个国家？
- What are these countries? / 他们都是哪些国家？
- Which country best met your expectations and how? / 在您之前去的国家里面，您最喜欢哪个国家？为什么它是您最喜欢的国家？

Motivations / 旅行动机

- Why you are willing to travel to Finland? 您愿意来芬兰旅游的动机(原因)是什么？
- What are your first impressions of Finland and where have you heard about Finland? 您对芬兰的印象是什么？您以前从什么信息渠道听到有关芬兰的信息？
- Have you heard about Lake Saimaa in Finland? And from where you have heard about it? 目前您都知道芬兰的哪些地方(景点,城市等)？您听说过芬兰的赛马湖吗？如果听到过，您是从什么渠道了解到的？
- What is your favorite image/ picture that you would like to enjoy most during your trip and why? (我会在采访之前给您展示几张芬兰赛马湖的图片) 哪一张图片您最期待在您旅游时出现？为什么？

Information Search / 旅行信息

- Did you look for any information to help your destination decision? / 一般在旅行之前，您会提前多长时间来查找，准备和规划您的行程？
- Where/Which channel did you look for the information? Where else? / 您会通过哪些信息途径来查找关于旅行目的地的信息？您会搜集和查找关于目的地的哪些方面的信息(例如 历史文化景点，美食，交通，人文等等)？
- Importance of each source of information? (Influence of information source on decision making) 您认为哪个信息渠道的可信度(采纳度)最高？为什么？
- From which channel you are willing to search for information in the future? / 您将来希望通过什么信息渠道来搜集和了解关于芬兰旅游的信息资讯？

Alternative comparison and selection / 旅行目的地的选择

- What other countries you would love to travel in the future? / 您未来最想去的国家是哪一个？为什么？
- How do you choose between different destinations? What are the deciding factors and evaluative criteria? / 您是如何在不同旅行国之间选择的？什么因素会直接影响您的选择？

Purchase / 旅行行为模式

- Who, where and when (how long before the trip) you book/reserve for your accommodation and flight? / 您一般在哪里预定或者购买您旅行的住宿和交通？一般会在出发前多久开始进行预定或者购买？
- During what time you are most likely to travel to Finland and how long you prefer to stay in Finland? / 如果您来芬兰的话，您最想在什么时间来？而且您预期想在芬兰境内旅行多长时间？您更偏向于什么样的旅行方式？

- what you would like to do in Finland based on your pre-perception of Finland? /根据您对芬兰的印象和了解，您来芬兰的话，您最想去哪里和最想做什么事情？
- Which payment approach you are likely to use during your trip? /您在出境旅游中，您理想的支付方式是什么？
- If you transfer in Helsinki, are you willing to stay overnight in Lakeland (Lake Saimaa) based on the images displayed before? /如果您只是在芬兰首都赫尔辛基转机(转机时间不定)，您是否愿意前往芬兰著名旅游地赛马湖进行体验和游玩？如果愿意，您愿意停留多长时间？

Post-Purchase

- If the destination meets your expectation are you willing to revisit and recommend to other people? /在您出境旅游中，如果目的国(例如芬兰)满足了您的预期，您会再次前往芬兰旅行并且把它推荐给别人吗？

Influencing factors

- Which factors do you think it is most important during your trip? /在您出境旅行过程中，什么因素会导致您旅行体验下降？

Appendix D. Images for Case Study of Lake Saimaa Region



品尝芬兰美食



冰钓



夏景



北极光



伊马特拉湍流



秋景



圣诞老人



森林漫步



自然湖中游泳



购物, 芬兰品牌和设计



冰球比赛



城堡酒店 (Valtionhotelli)



骑马



参观圣彼得堡 (距离伊马特拉200公里)



食材



Savonlinna 城堡音乐节



公园健身房



洗浴中心泳池



皮革



极光



野外烧烤



木制度假别墅



越野滑雪



山地自行车骑行



塞马湖划船、钓鱼



森林或湖畔徒步



高尔夫球



采野生浆果和蘑菇



食材



桑拿



野生动物



购物，芬兰品牌和设计