

# **The Consumer Behaviour of Chinese Outbound Tourists and their Reasons for Choosing the Czech Republic as a Target Destination**

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**Praktická část**

**Analyzujte chování čínských turistů vyjíždějících do zahraničí.**

**Identifikujte klíčové faktory podmiňující výběr České republiky jako cílové destinace.**

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## **ABSTRAKT**

Čína zažívá v posledních desetiletích nebývalý ekonomický rozmach. Jedním z produktů současného vývoje je také obrovský nárůst čínských turistů vyjíždějících do zahraničí. Cílem této práce je zjistit a popsat typické rysy spotřebního chování čínských turistů v zahraničí a na základě zjištěných údajů určit důvody, které vedou čínské turisty k návštěvě České republiky. V teoretické části jsou vymezeny základní pojmy související s tématem. Praktická část je založena na aktuálních průzkumech čínského výjezdního cestovního ruchu a osobních rozhovorech s čínskými tour-operátory, specializujícími se na evropské destinace. Práce obsahuje aktuální data týkající se čínských turistů v zahraničí, ale také analýzu příčin jejich spotřebního chování v zahraničí. Dále jsou představeny důvody pro výběr České republiky jako cílové destinace, podobně jako možné příčiny nezájmu čínských turistů o Českou republiku. V závěru práce jsou uvedena doporučení na zvýšení atraktivity České republiky pro čínské turisty.

Klíčová slova: cestovní ruch, Čína, čínský výjezdní cestovní ruch, čínský turista, spotřební chování

## **ABSTRACT**

In last few decades, China has been experiencing an enormous economic boom. One of the products of current development is a massive growth of Chinese outbound tourism. The aim of this work is to detect and describe typical features of consumer behaviour of Chinese outbound tourists. On the basis of these findings, the reasons of Chinese tourists for visiting the Czech Republic are defined. The theoretical part describes basic concepts concerning the topic. The practical part is based on current studies on Chinese outbound tourism and on personal interviews with Chinese tour-operators specialized in outbound travels. It contains current data regarding Chinese outbound tourists as well as analysis of the causation of their consumer behaviour abroad. The work furthermore introduces motives for choosing the Czech Republic as a target destination and possible reasons of disinterest of Chinese tourists in the Czech Republic. The final part of the work contains recommendations for increasing the attractiveness of the Czech Republic for Chinese tourists.

Keywords: tourism, China, Chinese outbound tourism, Chinese traveler, consumer behaviour

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## INTRODUCTION

China is becoming rich. Hand in hand with increasing Chinese economy also the number of Chinese people who can afford to travel grows. Until recently, Chinese tourists were traveling mostly within the country but latest trend shows that outbound tourism is on the increase. China is now the third biggest source of international travelers worldwide<sup>[Tse, Tony S. M. and Wolfgang G. Arlt. 2011.]</sup> The amount of money spent by Chinese tourists on international travel is constantly rising as well. It is natural that this phenomenon has attracted the attention of many tourism related service providers all over the world.

The competition among world destinations trying to get their share of the Chinese market is enormous. More and more new destinations were granted approved destination status (ADS) by Chinese government which now allows Chinese tourists to travel almost in any country in the world. However, there is still considerable lack of knowledge of Chinese consumer behaviour related to tourism. Chinese tourism market is still in its infancy, therefore very specific and different from other mature tourism markets. It is vital to search in the mindset of Chinese travelers and to understand their motivation to travel. Only the one, who is aware of the unique nature of Chinese outbound tourists' behaviour, and is flexible enough to modify the offer of tourism products, can win the competition. The aim of the work is to provide a deeper insight to the difficult Chinese tourism market and at the same time offer the clues leading to rise of competitiveness of the Czech Republic as a tourism destination.

Initial part of the paper provides background knowledge regarding the topic. First of all, the tourism in general is defined. The chapter follows with a characterization of consumer behaviour with special focus on the consumer behaviour in tourism. Subsequent part is devoted to a brief overview of Chinese country profile and Chinese economy. The chapter is concluded by a definition of Chinese tourism with a detailed description of the Chinese outbound tourism.

Although Chinese market is very diverse and therefore hard to characterize in general, there are some features that Chinese travelers have in common. The second part of the work aims to define the common features in consumer behaviour of Chinese outbound travelers. It also includes up-to-date statistic data regarding Chinese outbound tourism.

The Czech Republic has recently experienced a huge increase in the amount of incoming Chinese tourists as well. But comparing to other European countries as Germany, France or Italy, it seems to be less attractive for Chinese visitors than aforementioned

countries. Although China is only one of the sources of incoming tourists in the Czech Republic, it is one of the fastest growing and most potential sources. Therefore it is worth concerning the ways how to satisfy this promising market. The third part of the work focuses on strong and weak points of the Czech Republic as a target destination and offers recommendation for increasing the attractiveness of the Czech Republic for Chinese tourists.

## **I. THEORY**

## 1 TOURISM

According to World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), tourism can be defined as “a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes”.

[World Tourism Organization, d] To satisfy visitors’ needs, a great number of related products and services must be generated. A China’s tourism specialist Wolfgang Arlt states that tourism can be seen as a mix of six basic components: accommodation, transportation, sightseeing, catering, shopping and entertainment. [Arlt 2011a, 21] Due to multiple impacts of tourism on economies, local people at the destinations and tourists themselves, tourism became an important player in socio-economic progress. It is necessary to apply a broader approach to the tourism management and evaluation. [World Tourism Organization, d]

There are three basic forms of tourism – domestic, inbound and outbound tourism. Domestic tourism covers tourism activities of residents within the country, inbound tourism comprises of non-resident activities in the country and outbound tourism includes activities of residents outside the country. These three basic forms can be combined and form other additional types called internal, national and international tourism. Internal tourism comprises activities of residents and non-residents within one country. National tourism is focused only on activities of residents of one country performed in the country and abroad. And international tourism includes activities of residents outside the country and activities of non-residents within the country. [World Tourism Organization, d]

Modern concept of tourism started 60 years ago after the world started to recover from the World War II. Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries. As said by UNWTO, international tourist arrivals have shown constant growth from 25 million in 1950 to the 980 million in the 2011 and it is expected that it will reach 1 billion in 2012.

[World Tourism Organization, c] Although the global tourism was negatively affected by the financial crises in 2008 and 2009 when tourists’ arrivals and expenditure fell down, in 2010 it experienced strong recovery worldwide by generating 693 billion euro in export earnings.

[World Tourism Organization, e] The positive development in 2010 was reached mainly due to the exceptional performances in international tourism of newly emerging markets, namely Brazil, Russia, India and China, for which the world invented the abbreviation BRIC countries. [Arlt 2011a, 6] It is estimated that current tourism contribution to economic activity worldwide is around 5%. [World Tourism Organization, e]

Together with the fast growth of tourism, the variety and competition among destinations have risen as well. In 1950 the top 15 countries made 88% of all international arrivals whereas in 2010 they got only 55% which reflects a significant increase of new destinations, especially from developing countries. For many of them, tourism became a number one economic sector as for income sources because the expansion of tourism has brought new job opportunities not only in the tourism industry but also in other related industries like constructions or telecommunications. <sup>[World Tourism Organization, e]</sup>

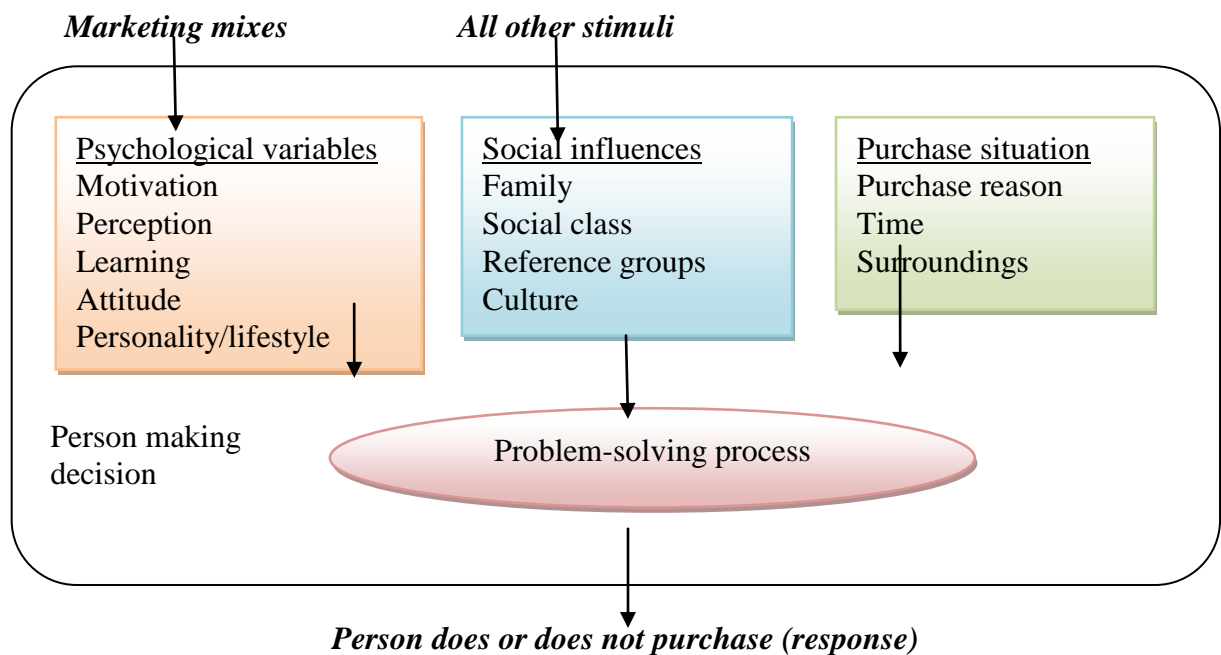
Tourism market is still evolving. New trends are constantly emerging. To stay competitive, tourism stakeholders are trying to identify and analyze these trends. Thus they can make better informed decisions and develop up-to-date tourism policies, promotions and final products. <sup>[World Tourism Organization, c]</sup>

## 2 CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

“Consumer behaviour can be defined as the study of the processes involved when people select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy needs and desires.” [De Mooij 2011, 20] The definition of a Netherland cross-cultural communication specialist Marieke de Mooij implies that consumer behaviour encompasses the whole process of consumer behaviour before, during and after the purchase. [De Mooij 2011, 21]

Knowing why and how people purchase goods, understanding their needs and motivations is an important predisposition for successful marketers. When they know what their customers require, what are the main factors influencing buyer’s decisions and subsequent buying behaviour, they can more likely meet customer’s needs and thus beat the competition. [Hudson 2000, 22]

There are several aspects that influence consumer behaviour. The following chart serves as a model of consumer behaviour showing the basic factors that have a significant impact on the buyer’s decision. It implies that the most important impacts come from the individual psychological variables of a consumer, the social surrounding and the current situation in which the purchase occurs. [Perreault and McCarthy 2002, 158]



**Figure 1: Model of Buyer Behaviour**

Source: Data adapted from Perreault, William D. and Jr. E. Jerome McCarthy 2002, 158.



Consumer behaviour is sometimes viewed as a subject for psychology at the individual level and sociology at the group level. <sup>[De Mooij 2011, 21]</sup> On the individual level, marketers are especially interested psychological variables in consumer's motivation, perception, learning, attitude and personality (or lifestyle).

**Motivation** comes from person's needs and wants. Consumers are motivated to buy products to satisfy their own needs. **Perception** basically determines what the buyer sees and feels when exposed to the wide range of stimuli persuading him/her to buy a particular product. How the buyer gathers, interprets and retains the information about a product varies greatly. A direct or mediated experience with the product brings the consumer to a **learning process** that sets probable reactions. If the consumer is satisfied with the product, the learning process reinforces and there is a big chance that a similar response occurs at the similar situation next time. **Attitude** can be described as a consumer's approach to a product, either positive or negative. Trying to change the consumer's attitude is very hard therefore marketers make efforts to identify existing attitudes of potential purchasers towards the product and then work with them. In the aspiration to recognize how **personality** influences a customer's behaviour, the marketers came to a conclusion that it is more useful to focus on the consumer's **lifestyle** rather than the individual personality traits. Recognizing the everyday stereotype of daily activities helps marketers to plan more targeted marketing strategies. <sup>[Perreault and McCarthy 2002, 158 - 165]</sup>

On the group level, marketing specialists study how society influences consumer behaviour. They are aware of the fact that the buying process is affected by relations with other people. Being part of a **family**, consumers share many attitudes, values and spending patterns with other family members. They also distribute buying tasks among each other and discuss opinions on products. Such a family consideration may sometimes suppress an individual preference. There are other groups that can have even stronger impact on consumer's decision. A **reference group** represents an attitude towards particular product that the consumer wants to follow. In attempt to be accepted by the reference group, the consumer chooses products or brands that are visible and demonstrate the values shared with the reference group. Many marketers especially focus on **opinion leaders** - people whose opinion on a product is accepted by others as a recommendation of opinion leaders, either positive or negative, usually has a great impact on a large number of their followers. The consumers' behaviour is formed also by the **social class** to which they belong. Nearly every society has some kind of social class hierarchy where people are grouped according

to their income, occupation, education or family history. Marketing specialists take into consideration the fact, that different classes have different values, beliefs and attitudes. Above the all aforementioned factors, there stand national **cultures** that vary greatly and to understand cultural differences is a key predisposition for a successful international business. [Perreault and McCarthy 2002, 167 - 171]

All the mentioned variables generate a base for a usual consumer pattern that may be however altered by a concrete purchasing situation. A reason why a customer buys particular product can strongly affect buying decision. A consumer normally buying cheap goods of low quality can decide to buy an expensive hi-quality product when purchasing e. g. a present for a friend. Other important factor is the time when the purchase is made and time which is allotted to buying a product. A product bought in a rush can be very different from the one purchased after a decent consideration. The final consumer's decision is also influenced by another time-related factor – an urgency of the need that is supposed to be satisfied. The purchase is made in a certain surroundings that can be inspiring to as well as discouraging from the buying. [Perreault and McCarthy 2002, 171 - 172]

A national income should be also considered as one of the main factors influencing consumer behaviour. Only when the society is rich enough to satisfy basic physiological and safety needs of its members, like need for food, drink, rest, health or protection, the social and personal desires like status, acceptance by others, relaxation or fun arise. If the society is poor, the people are interested only products that satisfy their basic needs. Therefore the society must be economically strong enough to afford consuming products satisfying higher-level needs, like relaxation and with it connected products of tourism.

## 2.1 Consumer Behaviour in Tourism

The issue of people's consume behavior in tourism has been discussed since tourism started, experiencing a rapid growth some thirty years ago. Nowadays in highly competitive world of tourism, understanding consumers' decision-making process is one of the pillars for practical business considerations. The ability to adapt to new trends and customers' requirements is vital for successful tourism business. [Hudson 2000, 1- 2]

Consumer behaviour research in tourism takes into consideration possible environmental, socioeconomic, cultural and demographic impacts on potential tourists. It focuses on how they choose among travel alternatives, why they prefer one destination to another, and how they behave while travelling. Some researchers suggest that decision-

making process of a traveler consists of five steps: desire or need to travel, collecting and evaluating the information, decision, preparation for travel and actual travel experience, evaluation of travel satisfaction. <sup>[Hudson 2000, 22]</sup>

Unlike many other industries, tourism does not provide one tangible product but a set of services which form one intangible product. Besides, there is usually a considerable delay between the purchase of the product and its actual use. In the meantime, travelers create their own image of the product which finally does not have to necessarily correspond with the reality. This often leads to dissatisfaction and brings bad promotion to the destination. It is well-advised to improve the level of compatibility between the tourist's image of the product and real travel experience. <sup>[Hudson 2000, 1- 2]</sup> In order to succeed in this aim, it is essential to find out, what factors influence consumers to buy the product and on which bases they build their image of the product. However, the knowledge of afore mentioned would provide mere clues, not a perfect manual of tips how to win potential customers.

## 3 CHINA

### 3.1 Country Profile

History of China dates back to the period around 2000 – 2500 years BC. Until twentieth century, Chinese political system can be described as a cycle of dynasties, following one another, with one ruling family. Twenty century brought many revolutionary changes, among which the most significant was an establishment of the republic after two thousand years long history of feudal monarchy. <sup>[Chinese Government's Official Web Portal]</sup>

People's Republic of China (PRC) was founded on October 1, 1949, as a result of a revolution led by communist chairman Mao Zedong. China is now governed by leading Communist Party, headed by the president Hu Jintao. Nowadays political status is defined in the Chinese constitution as follows: „The People's Republic of China is a socialist state under the people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants“ <sup>[Chinese Government's Official Web Portal]</sup>

The country lies in the east of Asia by western coast of Pacific Ocean. After Russia and Canada, China is the third largest country in the world. It encompasses a total land area of 9.6 million square kilometers which is approximately a half of Europe. <sup>[Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Czech Republic, c]</sup>

The capital city of China is Beijing. The country is administratively divided into 23 provinces (including Taiwan which regards itself as an independent country), 5 autonomous regions – Guangxi, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia, Tibet and Xinjiang, 4 municipalities – Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Chongqing and 2 Special Administrative Regions – Hong Kong and Macao (Macau). <sup>[China Today, a]</sup>

China is the most populated country in the world. In the year 2011 a total population in mainland China was 1.374 billion citizens, which represents an increase of 6.44 million persons compared to year 2010. In 2011 the urban population for the first time in China's history exceeded the rural population with the ratio of 51,3% and 48,7% respectively. <sup>[National Bureau of Statistics of China]</sup> Chinese citizens are concentrated more in the eastern part of the country (more than 300 persons per square kilometer), whereas density of population in the west is rather small (around 40 persons per square kilometer). <sup>[China Today, b]</sup>

China is a country with 56 different ethnic groups. The majority of people - 92% - are of Han nationality, which is the nationality of Chinese aborigines. The remaining 8%

includes 55 ethnic minorities like Tibetan, Uygur, Mongolian and others. As said by the Chinese law, all of the ethnic groups are equal. [China Today, b]

The national language of the People's Republic of China is so called Putonghua (the common speech), sometimes referred to as Mandarin Chinese. With its 6000 years old history, written Chinese is one of the oldest language systems in the world. It is also one of the five working languages at the United Nations. Besides official Mandarin Chinese, nearly every of 55 nationalities has its own language, among which the most wide spread is Cantonese used in southern China. [China Today, b]

Chinese currency is named Renminbi with the abbreviation RMB and meaning "People's Currency". The unit is called Yuan that is why the currency is sometimes referred to as CNY – Chinese Yuan. Current exchange rate between Euro and RMB is 1:8,289 and between USD and RMB 1:6,299 (data from 17 February 2012). [China Today, b]

### **3.2 Chinese Economy**

Chinese economy is no doubt the fastest growing economy in the world. The modern history of Chinese economy started in 1978 when Chinese government introduced a new economic reform which changed existing centrally-planned economy system to more market-oriented economy system. Since then, Chinese economy has grown annually by 10%, the average per capita net income has doubled every ten years and overall performance of the economic factors has improved. Such a growth has never been achieved by any other country in the modern history. [World Tourism Organization 2008, 6]

Over the past ten years, China's GDP has increased to the extent that Chinese economy has overtaken several advanced economies as Canada, Italy, France, Great Britain or Germany. In the year 2007 China's economy was the third biggest economy in the world and in February 2011 China became the second biggest world's economy. It is estimated that within 15 years, China will exceed USA which for a long time has been the biggest economy in the world. [BusinessInfo, a]

Hand in hand with the introduction of new economic reforms in the 1978, the Chinese government started to carry out a new policy of opening to the outside world. It has brought a huge development of Chinese foreign trade. New commodities were introduced in the export as well as in import - processed products have replaced heavy industry and agricultural products, foreign capital started to flow to China and a number of

cooperating countries has been rising since then. The state has replaced its monopolistic approach to the foreign trade with a new system of indirect regulations via customs dues, exchange rates, loans and tax refunds. [Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Czech Republic, a]

The above mentioned economic growth rate is closely associated with a fast changing demand for new products, technologies, facilities and services. There is a vast amount of foreign companies trying to penetrate the promising but very difficult market. Chinese producers and service providers are more and more competitive and the chances for successful business in China depend on a good knowledge of the market, well-considered strategy and an appropriate quality vs. price ratio. [BusinessInfo, b]

There are three main areas where the economic miracle is most visible. In the north, there is the region around the capital city of Beijing and nearby industrial city Tianjin. The agglomeration concentrating at the city of Guangzhou and its neighbourhood represents the southern source and between these two there is another important region lying at the delta-mouth of Yangzi jiang river by the city of Shanghai. [World Tourism Organization 2008, 12] These three areas are also the most important sources of developing tourism industry which is introduced in the following part.

### 3.3 Chinese Tourism

Tourism in China is a relatively new phenomenon. Since implementing the opening up policy in 1978, Chinese economy has experienced a significant change, total GDP has grown and people have become wealthier than ever before. Together with growing living standard, a need of Chinese citizens for traveling has increased as well. [Embassy of the People's

Republic of China in the Czech Republic, b] In 2010, total tourism income reached 1.570 billion RMB (c. 189 mil. EUR), rising by 21% compared to 2009. [Arlt 2011a, 1] China is now on the third place in the number of hosted inbound tourists worldwide, and within Asia it generates the biggest number of outbound tourists. [China Tourism Academy 2011, 1] As for international tourism expenditure, China experienced the fastest growth of all countries in the past ten years. Since 2000, the expenditure has multiplied four times. Chinese tourists are now among top three international tourism's spenders. [World Tourism Organization, b] In 2010, they spend around 42 billion EUR while travelling abroad. [World Tourism Organization, a]

Tourism industry in China is very closely bound with the state policy. Until the death of the former communist leader Mao Zedong in 1976, tourism was ideologically stigmatized as a waste of time and people were discouraged from any travelling. As said

before, it was in 1978 when Deng Xiaoping, a new and progressive communist chairman, introduced revolutionary economic reforms and realized that by permitting inbound tourism, the country will open the way to get foreign currency. <sup>[Nyiri 2006, 3]</sup> The real boom of tourism came after China entered World Trade Organization (UNWTO) in 1990. <sup>[Ryan and Gu 2009, 226]</sup> The fact that tourism industry has a positive impact on economy and social development was recognized by the State Council in 2009 when tourism was proclaimed to be one of the strategic pillars of national economy and “a modern service industry increasing people’s satisfaction”. <sup>[Arlt 2011a, 3]</sup> Thus the Chinese central government accented the important role of tourism and its influence to the improvement of people’s livelihood in the process of economic development. <sup>[Arlt 2011a, 17 - 19]</sup>

Chinese policy towards tourism is well described by the words of David Scowsill, President and CEO of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC): “China’s commitment to tourism was underlined with the declaration of the National Tourism Day of China. Signing the Open Letter reiterates this long term commitment, and demonstrates China’s leadership role in the Travel & Tourism industry. WTTC has long noted the significant enthusiasm and support that the Chinese authorities provide to tourism. The government truly understands the impact on job creation and the positive economic impact that Travel & Tourism brings to global GDP”. <sup>[World Tourism Organization, a]</sup>

### 3.3.1 Domestic tourism

Chinese government actively and increasingly supports the expansion of domestic, inbound as well as outbound tourism. <sup>[Arlt 2011a, 17 - 19]</sup> Domestic tourism began basically in 1990 when the development of national economy generated enough disposable income and State Council publicized the “National holidays and memorial days” that served to extend public holidays. This act created so called three golden weeks around the Chinese New Year, May 1 and October 1 National Day, and boosted the desire of Chinese people for traveling. In 1990 there were about 276 million domestic tourist arrivals, in 2000 the amount rose to 744 million <sup>[World Tourism Organization 2003, 16]</sup>, and in 2010 it was already 2.1 billion domestic arrivals. Such a rapid growth was caused firstly by afore mentioned vigorous approach of Chinese government towards tourism, secondly by correspondently increasing promotion activities and lastly by a decent number of huge social events that excited people’s desire to travel, from all let’s mention Olympic Games in Beijing, World Expo in Shanghai or Asia Games in Guangzhou. To enhance the development of domestic

tourism, China is currently working on improving internal infrastructure and providing better public service facilities. [Arlt 2011a, 11, 18]

### 3.3.2 Inbound tourism

Inbound tourism underwent its huge takeoff at the beginning of twenty-first century. [Ryan and Gu 2009, 226] China is now the third global tourist destination, surpassing Spain and following only France and the USA. The number of incoming tourists in 2010 was 134 million, an increase of 5,8%. From these tourists 56 million stayed at least over one night, which is a rise of 9,4%. They generated 35 billion EUR in international tourism receipts, up by 15,5% compared to 2009. Most of the inbound tourists – 80% – came from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. [Arlt 2011a, 9] The resting 20% of incoming tourists represents 26 million people from abroad, an increase of 19,1%. [BusinessInfo, a] Foreign tourists were by 70% from Asian countries and Russia. These figures suggest that neighbouring areas are very important source markets for Chinese inbound tourism. However, the amount of foreign tourists from Europe is steadily increasing as well. Thus inbound tourism not only represents an important economic benefit but also thanks to the uniqueness of local touristic spots, it has an unexceptionable positive impact on the general image of the country. [Arlt 2011a, 9, 18]

### 3.3.3 Outbound tourism

The concept of outbound tourism in China is in many aspects different from the concepts applied in western countries. Besides its mighty potential, the most significant feature of Chinese outbound tourism is the role of the national government. There are much more regulations, restrictions and control imposed on travelling. China's tourism policy reflects national values and inclinations that are often not understood by western world. Knowing how the socialist system in Chinese outbound tourism works, contributes greatly to overcoming the barriers and misunderstanding that many destination face when trying to assert in the Chinese market. [Zhang, Yi and Liu 2004, 8-9]

Before 1978, travelling abroad was basically restricted to official and business travels. Chinese people have started to travel for private purposes, mainly to visit family and relatives, after the adoption of the open-up policy. Accordingly, also the amount of passport holders has grown since then. As for passports, there are three types – public, private and passports for seamen. Issuing and supervision of passports is a matter of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Public Security and Ministry of Communications.



The public passports are used for several reasons mainly of business or official nature. A holder of the private passport goes abroad mostly to visit relatives and friends, to settle down or to spend a holiday. Until 1990's, the public passport holders predominated over the private passport holders, nevertheless the proportion has inverted as more and more people travel abroad for private purposes. [World Tourism Organization 2003, 21]

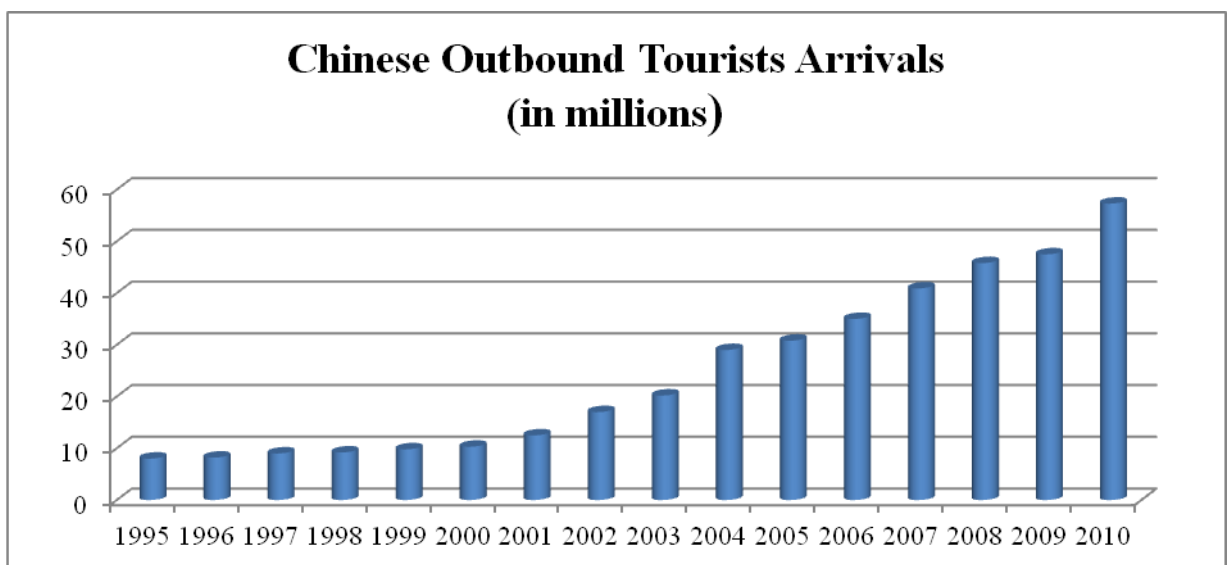
A key role in the development, promotion and regulation of tourism in China plays the Chinese National Tourism Administration (CNTA), a state organization responsible for tourism in China. CNTA imposes harsh and complicated regulations on traveling abroad as well as on licensing of local outbound travel agencies. [World Tourism Organization 2008, 29] The "Regulations for the outbound tourism of Chinese citizens", a document issued by the Chinese government in 2002, not only sets yearly quotas on number of outbound tourists but also states that only those travel agencies who have had long-time exceptional inbound accomplishments can get the license for providing outbound services. These rules mirror a government's consideration that the money spent by Chinese citizens abroad must be exceeded by the money spent by foreigners in China, so the economic balance and benefit for China remain. [Nyiri 2010, 72]

Traveling for leisure officially started in 1995 with introducing an Approved Destination Status (ADS) system. [Arlt 2006, 27] ADS is granted to a particular country upon a bilateral government agreement and signifies that Chinese citizens can officially travel to the country for leisure. Until the implementation of ADS system, only traveling for business purpose and official journeys with the approval of government were allowed. Business or official travels are not liable to ADS, [China Contact] therefore they can be organized basically to any country in the world. The act of ADS system was a clear attempt of national government to gain control over the outbound tourism in order to keep the hard currency within China. [Arlt 2006, 27 - 31] However, it is important to mention that the regulations set by national government are constantly loosening. [World Tourism Organization 2008, 35]

During the past few years, Chinese outbound tourism has been experiencing a rapid development. Regardless of the threat of SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) in 2003, financial crises in 2008 and 2009 and political distemper that has influenced the tourism in many countries of the world the amount of Chinese outbound tourists is steadily growing. [China Tourism Academy 2011, 1] In 2002 it overtook Japan and became the biggest outbound source market in Asia. It is nonetheless necessary to mention that a majority of

all the outbound journeys head for Hong Kong, Macao or Taiwan. <sup>[Arlt 2006, 105]</sup> Although these areas are officially a part China, the citizens of so called mainland China need to use a passport to enter them. Thus the absolute numbers of outbound tourists are not precise.

In 2010, thanks to the constantly growing economic development, increasing RMB exchange rate and also due to the reduction of visa constraints implemented by some destination countries, Chinese outbound tourism achieved the highest results ever. According to the data presented in the Annual Report of China Outbound Tourism Development issued by China Tourism Academy, the arrivals of outbound tourists reached more than 57 million, which is an increase of 20,4% compared with 2009. The spending of outbound tourists was EUR 36 billion, an increase of 14%. <sup>[China Tourism Academy 2011, 1- 3]</sup> The consumption of Chinese tourists abroad exceeded the consumption of international inbound tourists in China causing an international deficit in Chinese tourism sector. <sup>[Arlt 2011a, 99]</sup> The following graph shows the rapid growth of the quantity of Chinese outbound tourists between the year 1995 and 2010:



**Graph 1: Numbers of Chinese Outbound Tourists Arrivals, 1995 – 2010**

Source: Data adapted from Arlt, Wolfgang G. 2011b.

From the total number of outbound tourists, the vast majority (more than 51 million) heads for Asian countries. However, the following table illustrates an impressive upheaval of long-haul journeys in 2010. The most popular non-Asian destination is Europe,

although the increase in the arrivals is the lowest of all. The new destinations as Oceania and Africa noted the biggest growth of 66% and 91% respectively, although the total number of Chinese tourists in these territories is relatively small.

**Table 1: Arrivals in the world destinations and the growth rate in 2010**

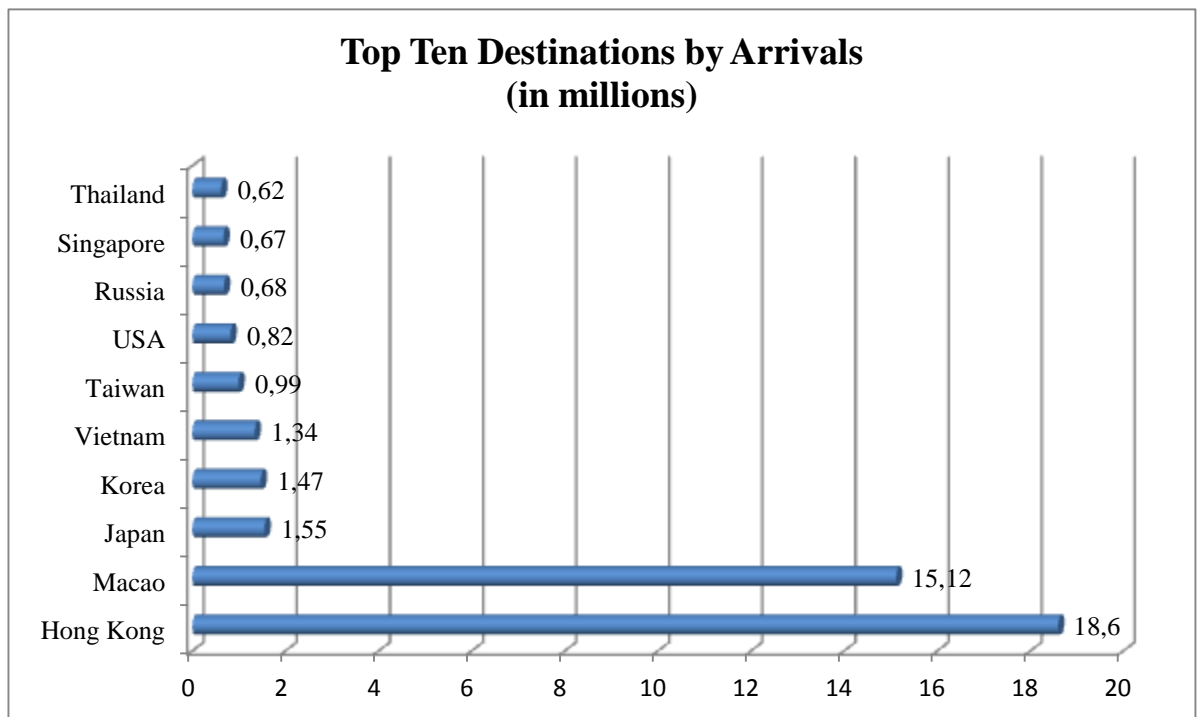
Destination	Total number of outbound tourists (in millions)	Increase over the 2009
Asia	51,63	19%
Europe	2,33	15%
America	1,49	28%
Oceania	1,10	66%
Africa	0,73	91%

Source: Data from China Tourism Academy 2011.

The reasons why the outbound tourism is so flourishing are external as well as internal. Chinese government has been constantly easing the regulations imposed on the outbound tourism. Hand in hand with the central support comes more straightforward access to hard currency and passports. Obtaining visa for entering the ADS countries is handled by designated travel agencies therefore Chinese citizens are spared of the difficult visa process at consulates. <sup>[China Contact]</sup> Chinese outbound market has also opened the door for international tour operators. In recent years many destination countries have established their branch offices in China in order to promote their destinations and attract potential visitors. <sup>[Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Czech Republic, b]</sup> Simultaneously, a decent number of destination countries have simplified or even abandon the visa procedures. <sup>[Arlt 2011a, 98]</sup> At the same time, the income of Chinese citizens has grown. A newly emerged middle class become wealthy enough to cover the basic needs but also to afford the luxury of traveling abroad. Now, after nearly 20 years of leisure tourism history, the Chinese outbound market generates not only more and more first-time tourists but also many experienced travelers with growing interest in new destinations. <sup>[Arlt 2011b]</sup>

As mentioned before, neighbouring countries are very important source destinations for inbound tourism. Similar situation occurs in outbound tourism. A list of top ten most

favourite destinations comprises mostly of Asian countries. The exceptions are the USA, which is greatly promoted in China and Russia which shared common borders and in the long term enjoys a good relationship with China. The following graph contains information about the ten first-stop destinations for mainland China outbound tourists in 2009. As the graph indicates, Hong Kong and Macao are by far the most popular destination with more than 18 million and more than 15 million outbound tourists respectively. Sometimes it is argued if the journeys to these destinations are real outbound journeys as they are a part of People's Republic of China. But due to the obligation to use passport when entering these territories, they can be considered as outbound destinations.



**Graph 2: Top ten destination by arrivals of mainland outbound tourists in 2009**

Source: Data adapted from China Tourism Academy 2011, 62.

## **II. ANALYSIS**

## 4 METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

The practical part of the thesis is based on data collected from primary as well as secondary sources. The first primary source is my one-and-half-year personal experience working at a Czech incoming travel agency Dreamboat focusing on Chinese tourists, second source of primary data includes personal interviews with Chinese outbound tour-operators at the tourism trade fair COTTM (Chinese Outbound Travel & Tourism Market) held in Beijing in April 18 – 20, 2012, see the list of contacts in the Appendix P X.

The main secondary sources comprise of following studies: a current survey “Outbound Tourists’ Behavior Questionnaire” from the year 2011, conducted by China Tourism Academy (CTA) and a study “The Chinese Outbound Travel Market with Special insight into the Image of Europe as a Destination” which was specially prepared in 2008 by European Tour Operators Association upon the request of World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

## 5 CHINESE OUTBOUND TOURISTS' BEHAVIOUR

In past few years, Chinese outbound tourism has experienced one of the most remarkable expansions in the world. Numbers of Chinese tourists traveling abroad are growing every year. In 1995, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in its document *Tourism 2020 Vision* made a prediction that by 2020 the Chinese outbound arrivals will reach 100 million. Taking into consideration the recent development, China is on a good way to reach this goal much earlier.<sup>[World Trade Organization 2008, 31]</sup> Many world destination countries have recognized the huge potential rendered by Chinese tourists and they consider China to be the most promising outbound market.<sup>[Li 2007, 3]</sup> However, the hosting countries still have not comprehended the urge to remove the psychological, social and cultural obstacles that disallow Chinese tourists to fully enjoy their holiday. To prevail over other competing destinations, it is essential to learn about the common features of Chinese tourists' consumer behaviour and use the knowledge to adjust the offer to the customers' needs. The following chapter not only provides the latest data about who, when, where, how and why travels abroad but it also has the ambition to trace the influences that have helped to form the basic features of Chinese outbound tourists consumer behaviour.

### 5.1 Factors influencing Chinese tourists' behaviour

When studying Chinese tourists' behaviour, it is important to a) consider the values that have for many generations formed the Chinese way of thinking, b) reflect on current changes that influence the mindset of Chinese people. Chinese society is to the large extent based on the moral principles of Confucian tradition that above all prizes a harmony within the group. Collective happiness is seen as more important than the happiness of an individual.<sup>[Luo 2010, 330]</sup> Chinese people have always highly valued personal relationships (so called *guanxi*), social status and personal image (so called *mianzi* - "face") and obligation (*ren*) within a group.<sup>[Bowen and Clarke 2009, 17]</sup> These traditional values now face a great challenge represented by an economical change that is modern Chinese society currently undergoing. With the words of Wolfgang Arlt, "Chinese society is at the cross-roads in its development". On one hand the society is trying to modernize and on the other hand it strives to preserve its traditional values. It is on the way to define the "new Chineseness" and outbound tourists are one of the tools that demonstrate the new image of the country abroad.<sup>[Arlt 2011b]</sup>

## 5.2 Purpose of traveling of Chinese outbound tourists

The purpose why Chinese people travel abroad can be obvious as well as hidden. Nevertheless, all of the reasons relate to the above mentioned values, especially gaining personal prestige and upgrading social status. Business or official trips, visiting friends and relatives, shopping, relaxation, or studies are some of the standard reasons for traveling, common to all nations. But Chinese tourists travel abroad for other not so easily detectable reasons. Experience from international traveling helps them to gain a certain prestige. Many Chinese travel abroad just because they want to show off to their neighbours and thus create a better personal image. As Chinese society highly prizes status and connections, the international traveling serves as a vow for a better position. Chinese also travel abroad to learn how to behave as rich people. A recent rapid economical growth in China generated a huge number of millionaires and billionaires, most of which are first-generation rich. With no or little previous high-society experience, the Chinese use international luxury traveling as a kind of training of upper-class behaviour. But moreover, Chinese travel abroad to show the world the economic strength of China. Chinese government has recognized the potential of international traveling as a tool for spreading so called soft power. It means that through the mighty purchasing power of Chinese tourists China displays its economic domination. Such an approach to traveling reflects Chinese obligation within a group, in this case in the whole Chinese society. <sup>[Arlt 2011b]</sup>

## 5.3 Chinese outbound tourists' behaviour in statistic data

Following part brings latest statistic data concerning behaviour of Chinese outbound tourists. It is based on a survey "Outbound Tourists' Behavior Questionnaire", conducted by China Tourism Academy (CTA), a specialized institution directly liable to Chinese National Tourism Administration (CNTA), with a main focus on researches regarding the development of tourism. <sup>[China Tourism Academy]</sup> This survey was aimed to describe factors that form a comprehensive characterization of a Chinese outbound tourist. It was carried through the year 2010, once each month in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and other cities with a total number of 2503 returned questionnaires. <sup>[China Tourism Academy 2011,</sup>

<sup>66]</sup> The results of the survey have been published in *Annual Report of China Outbound Tourism Development 2011*.



The survey starts with the description of demographic features of Chinese outbound tourists. According to the gathered data, the proportion of male and female tourists was nearly the same. Male outbound tourists with 53% just slightly surpassed female tourists with 47%. Regarding the age, most of the tourists (64%) were between 25 – 44 years old. The travelers had at least secondary education but they mainly possessed a bachelor's or higher education degree (70%).<sup>[China Tourism Academy 2011, 66]</sup> The exact numbers can be seen in the Appendixes P I and P II.

As for the profession of tourists, the top three occupations were education (12 %), 10% of tourists work in manufacturing industry and the third place occupy tourists from finance or IT, computer and software industries (both 8%). Indispensable part (7%) form students going abroad for studies. Outbound tourists recruited mainly from higher-income groups, 30% of which earned from monthly RMB 5,001 – 8, 000 (EUR 600 – 961 according to exchange rate on March 2, 2012),<sup>[China Tourism Academy 2011, 69]</sup> as shown in the Appendix P III.

As mentioned before in the paper, more people are traveling for private than for business or official purposes.<sup>[World Tourism Organization 2003, 21]</sup> In 2010, the main reasons for going abroad were sightseeing and leisure. For other purposes of outbound traveling see the Appendix P IV. Most of the outbound tourists (68,6%) were so called first-time travelers, 31,6% already had some experience with traveling abroad. 66,1% of the respondents mentioned that their decision for outbound travel was important for them.

The process of decision-making in its early stages encompasses a searching for information. Although the 'word of mouth' played a considerable role in gathering data for Chinese outbound tourist, the Internet was the number one source of information as shown at the Appendix P V. Potential travelers were interested mainly in scenic spots, costs of the tour, transportation, lodging and possibilities for shopping at the target country. The tourist sites and the tour price were also the most influential factors in choosing the eventual destination.<sup>[China Tourism Academy 2011, 70]</sup>, see the Appendix P VI.

Because Chinese tourists in 2010 traveled abroad mainly for leisure, nearly half of them (47%) went with the family members and another 25,1% with friends. Travel companions from company, class, association or accompanying colleagues for business meetings and conferences made 16,4% of all travelers. Other tourists were either alone or

went on independent or self-guided tour. As for the accommodation, most of the tourists preferred mid-priced and economy hotels but on the other hand luxury lodging, meaning 4- and 5-stars hotels, was also quite popular. The travels lasted usually around one week, <sup>[China Tourism Academy 2011, 70 - 72]</sup> as is indicated in the Appendix P VII.

Chinese outbound tourists in 2010 spent around EUR 36 million abroad reaching a historical record in consumption. It represented an increase of 14% comparing with 2009. <sup>[China Tourism Academy 2011, 4]</sup> The average amount of money spent on outbound traveling was 5001 – 10 000 RMB, which is approximately EUR 600 – 1,200, <sup>[China Tourism Academy 2011, 74]</sup> see the Appendix P VIII.

The Appendix P IX shows that the biggest part of the expenditure was spent on shopping and transportation. Most of the travelers cited that the expenditure on self-paid goods exceeded the costs set by a travel agency for purchasing the tour. <sup>[China Tourism Academy 2011, 74]</sup>

The survey also dealt with the issue of travelers' satisfaction. The participants were asked to answer questions concerning six basic factors comprising outbound traveling – board, accommodation, transport, touring, shopping and entertainment. As results showed, the overall satisfaction has risen greatly comparing to 2009. Respondents gave favourable comments especially to the public service at the destination. They were most satisfied with transportation services, accommodation, entertainment and resort services. As for entertainment, most people valued mainly entertainment facilities and featured entertainment. Regarding resort services, recognizable traffic signs got very good comments, whereas admission fees were seen as a weak point. Also the travel agency services and food and beverage services did not rank very high. Shopping represents a great part of outbound travelling, but it obtained critical comments. Although the respondents of the survey were satisfied with the variety of products and appreciated featured product, they gave low rating to the prices of the products. <sup>[China Tourism Academy 2011, 106]</sup>

## **5.4 Two segments of Chinese tourists**

A recent trend shows that Chinese outbound tourism market is becoming more segmented into two distinct parts. The majority is represented by tourists seeking for package tours of lowest possible price, whereas quality is not their prime concern. On the

other hand there is an increasingly distinctive group of high-end customers requiring more sophisticated offers, willing to pay higher price for the quality of tours. [Arlt 2011b]

The first group of travelers consists mostly of so called first-time travelers who especially when going on long-haul trip, want to see as many places as possible. They can be described also as sightseers for their main goal is to visit the most famous sights. As travelers, they are not very confident therefore prefer group traveling in comfortable, secured mode with an experienced guide who takes care of their needs. Their holiday activities comprise mostly of visiting famous attractions and historic sites and shopping for well-known local brands and souvenirs. They are not interested in getting to know the life of local people but rather in collecting photographs of “must see” sights which they can show to their friends or relatives at home. Traveling abroad is thus related to the need to elevate their personal image and gaining prestige and a higher social status. [Tourism Australia, 12- 13]

The latter group of high-end tourists includes mainly those who already have some previous travel experience and come from higher-income classes. They are already confident travelers who require an adequate respect for their individual needs and preferences. They are willing to spend huge amounts of money for high-quality products, luxury accommodation and individually organized itinerary. Not limited by the lack of money, they can choose from a wide range of destinations, often preferring the ones offering unusual experiences or adventure. They are particularly interested in the western destination, seeking for opportunities to familiarize with the culture and real life of local people. The reasons for traveling arise from their inner need to broaden their horizons and to learn about themselves. Experienced, high-end travelers at the same time represent a modern image of China abroad. As a result, traveling abroad is connected to Chinese sense of obligation within a group as well as to radiation of soft power, as mentioned before. [Tourism Australia, 6 - 7]

Both groups have one key feature in common – the love for shopping. Although the people from the first group push the tour operators to accept the lowest possible price for a package tour, they do not hesitate to spend twice as big amount of money on shopping. The high-end travelers have already gained the reputation of big spenders worldwide. In the last few years, the shops with luxury goods in the main touristic destinations have experienced an immense growth of customers from China requiring the best-quality

products for high prices. Chinese buyers show a particular interest in famous brands and commodities with local characteristics. They travel for instance to Hong Kong to buy gold and silverware, to Thailand to purchase articles made of crocodile skin, in Australia they buy woolen products and Europe is popular for famous brands garments and handbags.

[World Tourism Organization 2003, 54 - 55]

## 5.5 Common features of Chinese consumer behaviour

Although trying to describe Chinese consumer behaviour in general is a nearly impossible task, considering the large area and variety of cultures in China, researchers have found some common features and came up with several hypotheses characterizing consumer behaviour of Chinese tourists traveling abroad. The explanations of each point show the relation with the Chinese tradition values:

- Shopping activities are important part of the outbound traveling of Chinese tourists [Arlt 2010, 27]

- here is a clear connection to Chinese tendency to show off, as many of the products bought abroad are luxury goods that are intended to reinforce the social status of the owner

- Chinese consumers depend more on the opinion of their tour guide than on the recommendation of locals (westerners) [Arlt 2010, 27]

- Chinese are naturally distrustful of foreigners who are not parts of their group and believe that a Chinese guide who they consider to be a member of their group understands their needs better than a foreigner

- Chinese consumers are likely to be influenced by relationship marketing strategies [Arlt 2010, 27]

- only marketers who are able to make long-lasting relationship with their customers can be successful in the Chinese society who is strongly based on good rapport

- Chinese do not like advertisements openly criticizing competitors' products and services [Arlt 2010, 27]

- Chinese are very sensitive to losing face in public and they do not like to see somebody to lose their face either

- As for tourism services consumption, an individual relies greatly on the decision made by a group [Arlt 2010, 27]

- this point shows the overall group-oriented nature of the whole Chinese society where the individual decision making is not encouraged

- Comparing to westerners, Chinese consumers less express their dissatisfaction to tourism suppliers <sup>[Arlt 2010, 27]</sup>
  - as mentioned above, Chinese people do not feel comfortable when they make somebody to lose face
- Chinese consumers show more consumer consciousness than westerners <sup>[Arlt 2010, 27]</sup>
  - this point can be related to the Chinese concept of collective happiness in sense of not enforcing the selfish desire of individual over satisfaction of others

The Chinese National Tourism Administration CNTA predicts that by 2015 Chinese outbound travelers will number 100 millions spending USD 100 billion outside China. Given the current government support of tourism and constantly growing figures of Chinese outbound travelers it is expected that in the future China will become a world's number one source market. <sup>[Arlt 2011b]</sup>

## 6 KEY FACTORS FOR CHOOSING THE CZECH REPUBLIC AS A TARGET DESTINATION

Czech-Chinese relationship in the area of tourism officially started in 2004 upon signing a bilateral agreement of ADS. <sup>[World Tourism Organization 2008, Annex I]</sup> Since then, the amount of Chinese tourists coming to the Czech Republic has been steadily growing. In 2010, the total number of Chinese visitors in the Czech Republic was 79 186 which represents an increase of 28,1% to 2009. According to the data collected by a Research and Analysis Department of Czech Tourist Authority CzechTourism, the main reasons for choosing the Czech Republic as a target destination were sightseeing (57,1%), shopping (49,6%) and entertainment (42,1%). The most visited regions were Prague (65,5%), South Bohemia (15,4%), Karlovy Vary (8,2%) and South Moravia (5,2%). The high season starts in May and ends in October. <sup>[CzechTourism, a]</sup> An average time spend in the country was 1,73 days. In 2011 the number of tourists raised by 37,4% to 108 802. <sup>[CzechTourism, b]</sup>

Generally speaking, there is a lack of deeper research concerning Chinese tourists, although the Czech Statistical Office and CzechTourism provide some basic statistics in this field. However, in attempt to identify the main factors determining the choice of the Czech Republic as a target destination it is possible to use the information provided by research focused on the image of the whole Europe as a destination for Chinese tourists. Following chapter is based on the findings summarized in the survey *The Chinese Outbound Travel Market with Special Insight into the Image of Europe as Destination* published by World Tourism Organization in 2008. Consequent conclusions imply the results of my working experience in the field of Chinese outbound tourism as well as information obtained at interviews with Chinese tour-operators focusing on outbound travels.

### 6.1 Factors encouraging Chinese tourists to visit the Czech Republic

According to the aforementioned survey, Europe is perceived by Chinese people as a “dream” destination comprising of various regions with individual characteristics. <sup>[World Tourism Organization 2008, XV]</sup> Due to the high price resulting from the long-distance flight costs, Europe is still unreachable for most of Chinese people. However, if they decide for holiday in Europe they are willing to pay the higher price. Concerning the fact that most of the Chinese travelers visit several countries during one holiday, the Czech Republic with its position in the middle of Europe is almost unavoidable for those travelers who decide to

visit central Europe including countries like Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria and/or Germany.

The Czech Republic can benefit not only from the strategic position in the middle of Europe but also from the membership in Shengen Area. Chinese tourists travel to the Czech Republic on Shengen visa which applies also to other countries within the Shengen Area. As a holder of Shengen visa, the tourist can travel also to other European destinations.

The most popular activity of Chinese travelers is shopping. [World Tourism Organization 2008, XV] Due to the high tariffs that are imposed on imported luxury goods in China, the prices of the luxury products in the country of the origin are very attractive for Chinese visitors. [Yang Ning. 2011] Czech-made products that raise the biggest interest of Chinese people are mostly glass products, such as Bohemian crystal, Moser glass and other hand-made glass articles. Biggest Czech cities also offer shops of famous world brands which attract Chinese customers with relatively low prices.

In the mindset of Chinese people, image of Europe is closely related to the history. [World Tourism Organization 2008, XV] Czech Republic is a place with very high density of castles, chateaus and other monuments of high historical value; twelve of the Czech sites are included in the UNESCO World Heritage list. Although Chinese are familiar with the famous European symbols like Eiffel Tower in Paris, Big Ben in London or Colosseum in Rome, the Prague castle can be no less appealing to them and has the potential to become another “must see in Europe” site.

More experienced Chinese travelers are interested in the customs of local people. [World Tourism Organization 2008, XV] The tradition in the Czech Republic and especially in Moravia is still very lively. During the whole year, countless folklore festivals with traditional music and dance performances are held throughout the country. Czech folklore tradition is distinct from the traditions of other European countries and with an appropriate promotion it can become a unique attraction of the Czech Republic.

Chinese tourists in general do not want to risk their safety and security while traveling. [World Tourism Organization 2008, 74] Natural disasters as earthquakes and tsunami in Japan or Thailand, political unrests as demonstrations in Middle East countries or severe epidemic diseases as the deadly flu in Mexico are unlikely to happen in the Czech Republic. Another point worth mentioning is, that unlike for example in the USA, in the

Czech Republic it is forbidden to carry a gun. Therefore the country represents a place of safety holiday.

## **6.2 Factors discouraging Chinese tourists to visit the Czech Republic**

Besides above mentioned factors that create a positive image of the Czech Republic there are also several facts that could discourage Chinese people from the visit in the Czech Republic. The most emphasized constraint is the visa application process <sup>[World Tourism Organization 2008, XVI]</sup> even though it has been already simplified by implementing the Shengen visa. Chinese travelers can apply for visa either at the Czech Embassy in Beijing or in the Czech consulate in Shanghai depending on their residency. But unfortunately, the visa procedure is more complicated and takes more time than in other Central European consulates. Furthermore, unlike other European countries, Czech Republic has not yet accepted Euro as a currency, therefore the visit in the country bears more inconvenience for foreign travelers.

Another disadvantage comparing to other European countries is the lack of direct flights to and from China. For most of the travelers, long-haul flights are very exhausting and the necessity of further traveling to get to the Czech Republic can be crucial factor for abandoning the country from the itinerary.

Last, but not least obstruction is connected with differences in cultures. Chinese visitors often complain on the customer service of European service providers. They criticize an unfriendly approach which arouses their feeling of unwelcomed visitors. This problem is related to language barrier as well as to bad understanding of Chinese taste. <sup>[World Tourism Organization 2008, XVI]</sup> Service providers in the world have already noticed that Chinese customers require different treatment, and with the enormous development of Chinese outbound tourism, they are getting wiser in how to treat Chinese tourists. However the Czech service providers have not done much effort to comprehend this large and important issue.

Next chapter offers several suggestions that can help to solve aforementioned problems and create more hospitable environment attracting more Chinese tourists.



## **7 RECOMMENDATIONS INCREASING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC FOR CHINESE OUTBOUND TOURISTS**

A strategy that would help to increase the attractiveness and strengthen the competitiveness of the Czech Republic among other world destinations should be carried out comprehensively by a number of tourism-related subjects. The recommendations are therefore divided into three parts according to the addressee of proposed suggestions. The first part is aimed on governmental bodies such as Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Regional Development and Czech Embassy and Consulates in China who have the power to upgrade current policy towards Chinese incoming tourists. The second section addresses the Czech Tourist Authority - CzechTourism responsible for the promotion of the Czech Republic in China. Last set of recommendations is assigned to Czech providers of tourism-related services whose quality can have significant impact on spreading either good or bad reputation of the Czech Republic as a destination country among potential Chinese visitors. All of above mentioned bodies, companies and service providers should be aware of the fact that Chinese tourists are becoming very important players on the field of incoming tourism to the Czech Republic and therefore the changes necessary to be made for their satisfaction are worth considering. The recommendations are designed according to the complaints and advices of interviewed Chinese outbound tour-operators.

### **7.1 Recommendations for Government Authorities**

Negotiations on the government level should be held regularly to enhance the relationship based on mutual benefit and reciprocity. The government bodies should try to upgrade ADS agreement in order to set more convenient conditions for Chinese travelers and thus encouraging them to choose the Czech Republic as a target destination. Our government authorities should support trade, cultural, educational and other exchanges in order to establish relationship on the level of individuals of both countries. Greater efforts to introduce direct flights to China should be made in cooperation with local airlines. The constant growth of visa applicants should be reflected by Czech Consulates both in Beijing and in Shanghai by recruiting more staff to handle the visa applications. Following a successful example of some countries which have eased the visa requirements, Czech

Consulates in China should liberalize the complicated visa application formalities so as not to discourage potential Chinese tourists from visiting the Czech Republic.

## **7.2 Recommendations for Czech Tourist Authority in China**

Regarding the severe competition among destination countries trying to win Chinese tourists, the Czech Republic should be massively promoted in China. The first step towards Chinese people is to launch the official tourist website introducing the Czech Republic in Chinese. The promotional materials should include also the information about Czech habits and morals so as to prevent eventual misunderstanding. Czech Republic should be portrayed as a safe destination with number of diverse touristic spots and many shopping possibilities. The promotion should also emphasize uniqueness of local products that can be reached only in the Czech Republic. The new areas should be introduced to the Chinese market. Nowadays, Chinese travelers are familiar only with Prague and surrounding cities but by promoting other places like Moravia and Silesia with their distinct folk tradition could attract more mature travelers. The Research and Analysis Department of the CzechTourism should conduct more research that would analyze Chinese tourists' behavioral patterns and establish a system evaluating the satisfaction of Chinese tourists in the Czech Republic.

## **7.3 Recommendations for Czech service providers**

The Czech service providers should focus not only on the consumption of the Chinese tourists but also on understanding the special needs of this more and more demanding group. They should adjust their services to individual tourist's interests and requirements. The biggest concern they should bear in mind is that Chinese tourists must feel welcomed. In order to achieve this goal, they should improve their professionalism and focus on details that could be crucial for the final satisfaction of Chinese guests. Education and training on the topics related to the Chinese behaviour, habits, attitudes and culture should be introduced. As language barrier represents one of the biggest problems, hotels as well as shops with luxury products should encourage their staff to learn Chinese. With a view to bigger spending, they should be also willing to accept Chinese currency and Chinese credit cards. Chinese newspapers and TV programmes should become a part of standard services provided by hotels. Touristic spots should provide Chinese mutations of

their informational materials. For developing the industry and becoming competitive, it is necessary to constantly develop more diverse, tailor-made products, like offering new undiscovered areas, theme tours, unique experiences or luxury traveling.

## 8 CONCLUSION

Recent economical boom in China together with open-up policy conducted by Chinese government caused a rapid growth of Chinese tourist traveling abroad. Due to the distinctive cultural background and short history of outbound travels, the Chinese outbound market represents a young, promising but also very special and challenging market. In order to satisfy the needs of Chinese tourists, it is necessary to comprehend their values, motivation and expectation connected with traveling abroad. The main goal of this thesis was to define typical characteristics of consumer behaviour of Chinese outbound tourists and use the outcomes of the subsequent analysis to recommend solutions that would enhance the attractiveness of the Czech Republic for Chinese tourists.

The work applied experience and knowledge that I have obtain during my year-and-half work for a incoming travel agency focusing on Chinese market as well as information provided by Chinese tour operators in personal interviews. I have also employed the data from studies written on related topics.

The thesis was divided into two parts. The theoretical part focused on defining the basic concepts concerning tourism, consumer behaviour, economical situation in China and Chinese tourism. The practical part was devoted to analyzing consumer behaviour of Chinese tourists when traveling. The analysis was supplemented with current statistic data in the field of Chinese outbound tourism. The final part of the work comprised of the analysis of possibilities that the Czech Republic as a target destination can offer to Chinese tourists. At the end, the recommendations for increasing the attractiveness of the Czech Republic were provided.

From the conducted analysis emerged several results. China is very likely to be the main source of international tourists in the near future. Chinese tourism is, unlike in other parts of the world, very tightly bound with the state government regulations. Although most of the Chinese outbound tourists are first-time travelers requiring common itineraries for the lowest possible cost, there is a considerable part of experienced tourists willing to pay higher prices for unique, tailor-made tourism products. The motivation for traveling abroad is connected to the basic values of Chinese society, as gaining prestige, enhancing the social status and radiating soft power. Shopping is the most favourite activity of when traveling abroad, Chinese tourists are especially interested in the world-brand products and unique local goods of high quality. The biggest problems arising from traveling abroad is the language barrier, cultural differences and difficult visa procedure.

Europe represents an attractive but expensive holiday destination. In the year 2011 the Czech Republic has hosted more than 108 000 Chinese travelers. Most of them visited Prague and surrounding touristic spots, as Karlovy Vary and Český Krumlov. Key factors leading to choosing the Czech Republic as a target destination were defined as follows: strategic position in the middle of Europe, membership in Schengen area, good shopping opportunities, historical monuments including several listed in the World Heritage UNESCO, rich folklore tradition and safety. On the other hand, there are still many reasons that discourage Chinese tourists from visiting the Czech Republic. Among the most important was the difficult visa procedure, absence of direct flights, non-acceptance of Euro and above all the misunderstanding of local service providers arising from language and cultural differences.

The increase in the number of Chinese tourists coming to the Czech Republic should be reflected by changes to be made at all levels of interaction with this unique and promising market, ranging from the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Czech tourism-related service providers. The recommendations offered at the end of the thesis can serve as clues to enhancing the competitiveness of the Czech Republic among other world destinations trying to attract Chinese outbound tourists.

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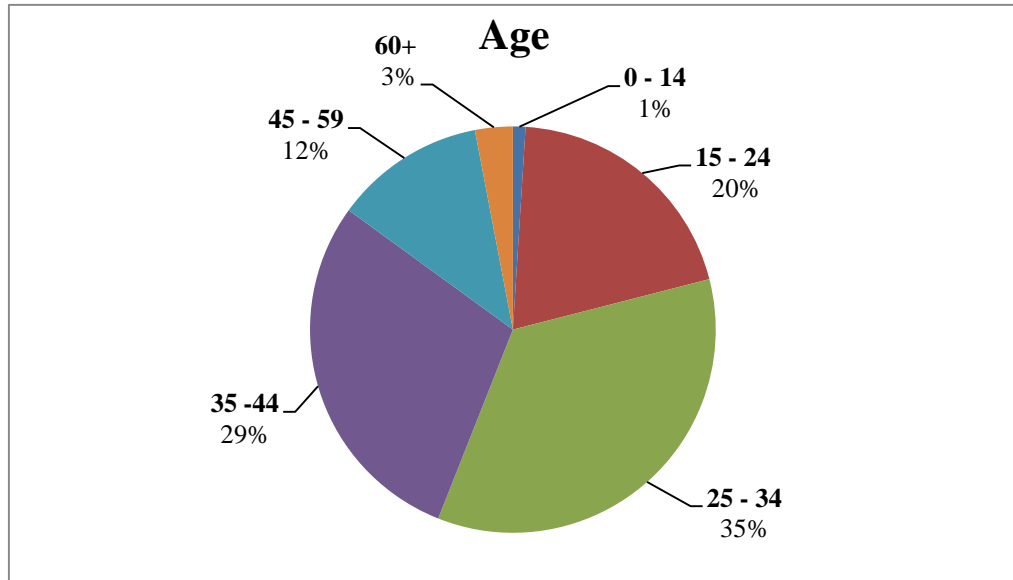
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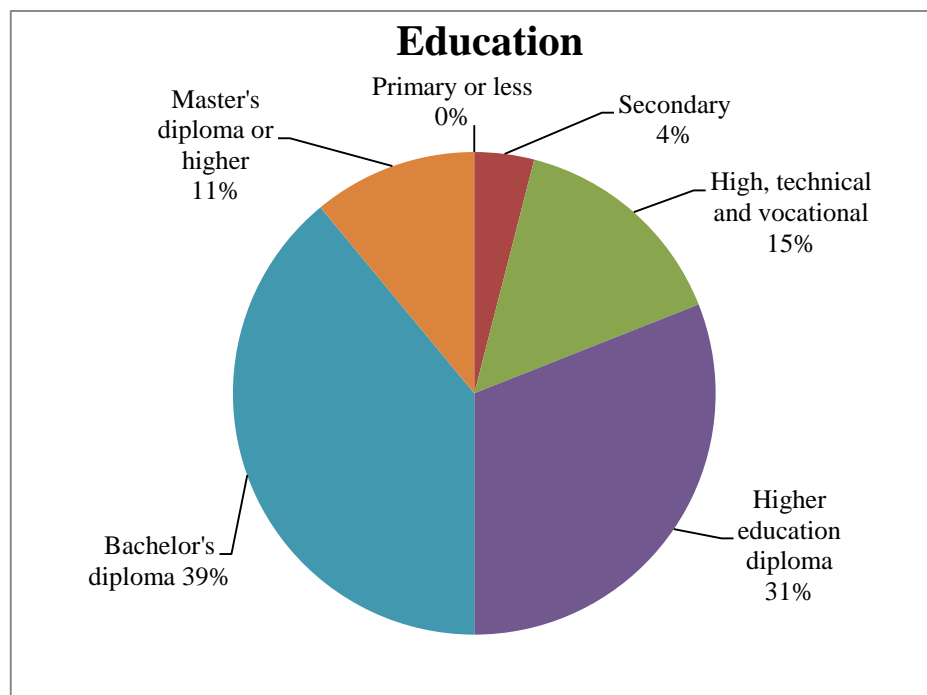
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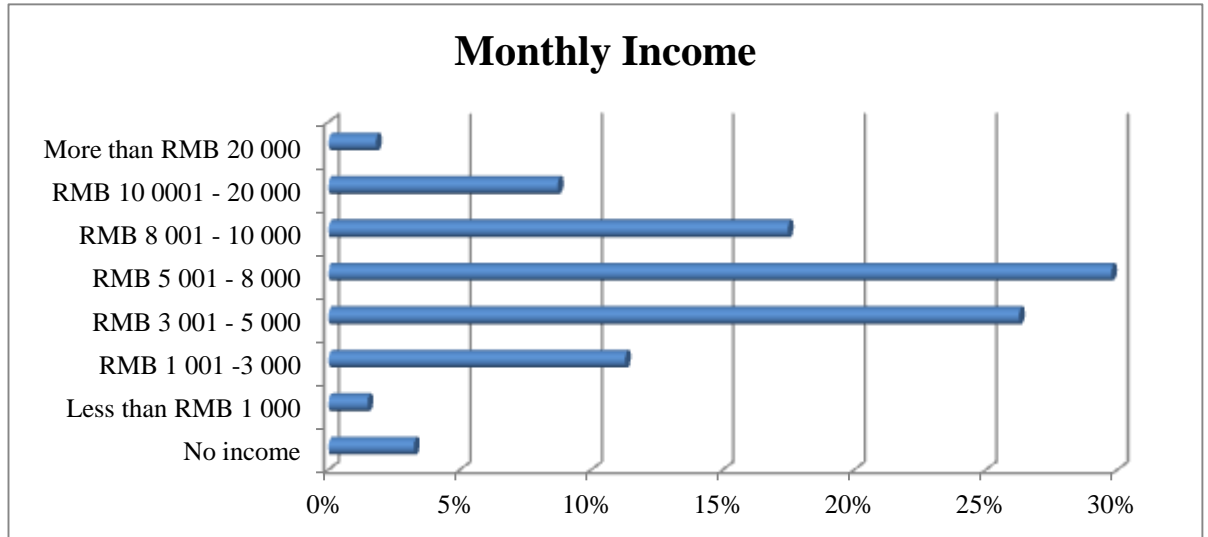
Source: Data adapted from China Tourism Academy 2011, 67.

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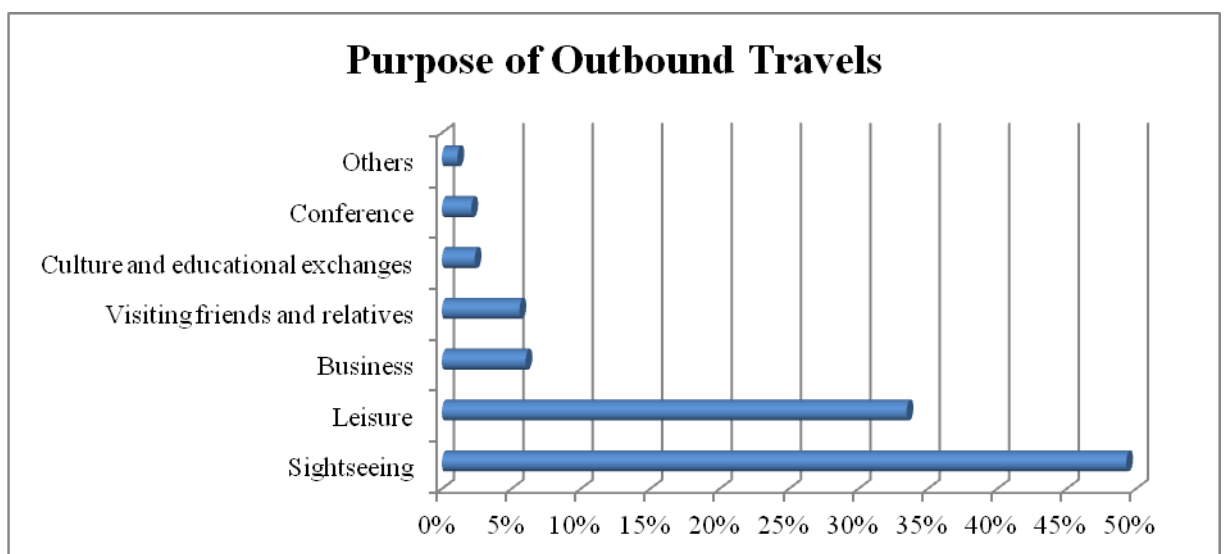
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Source: Data adapted from China Tourism Academy 2011, 69.

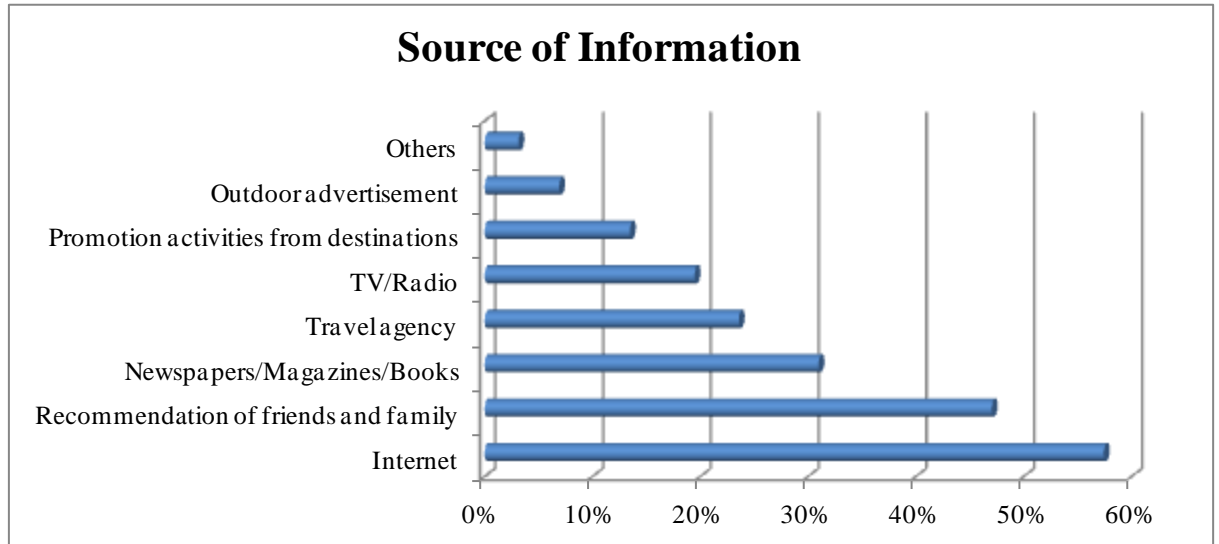
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Source: Data adapted from China Tourism Academy 2011, 70.

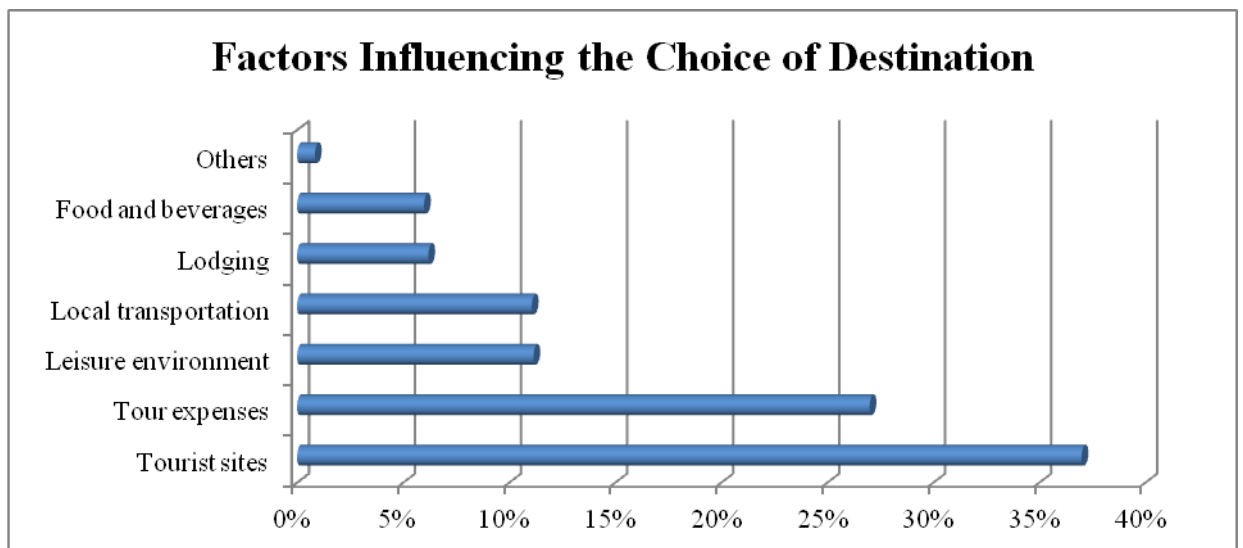


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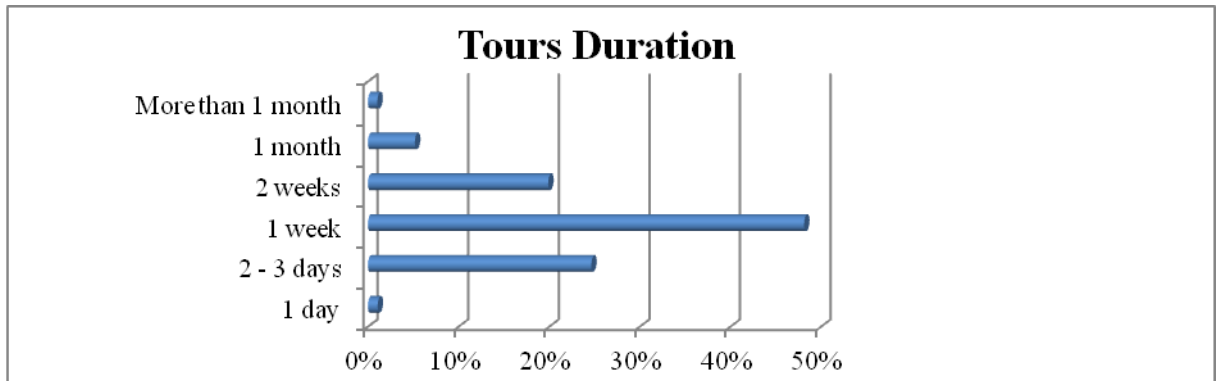
Source: Data adapted from China Tourism Academy 2011, 71.

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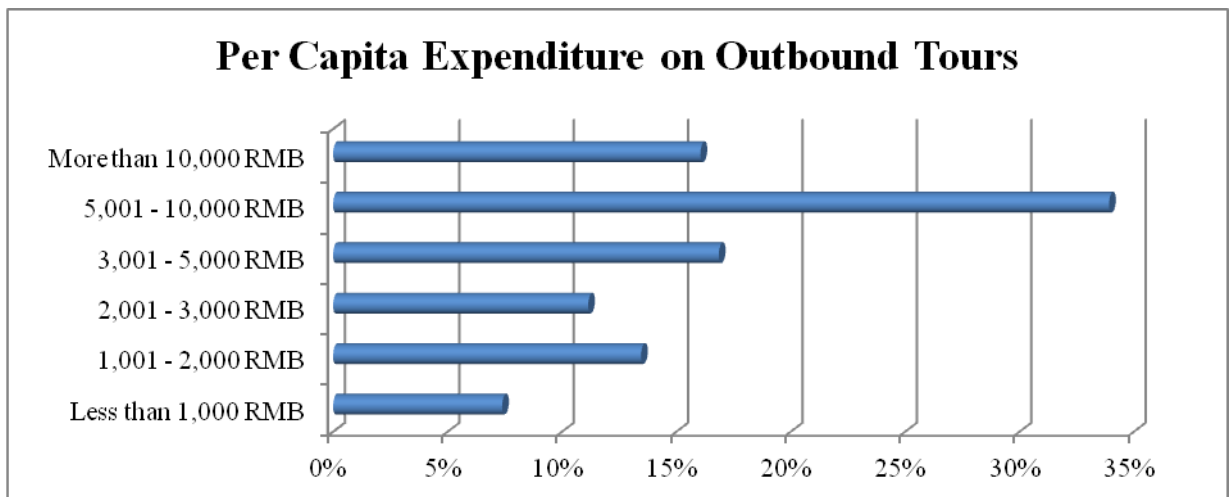
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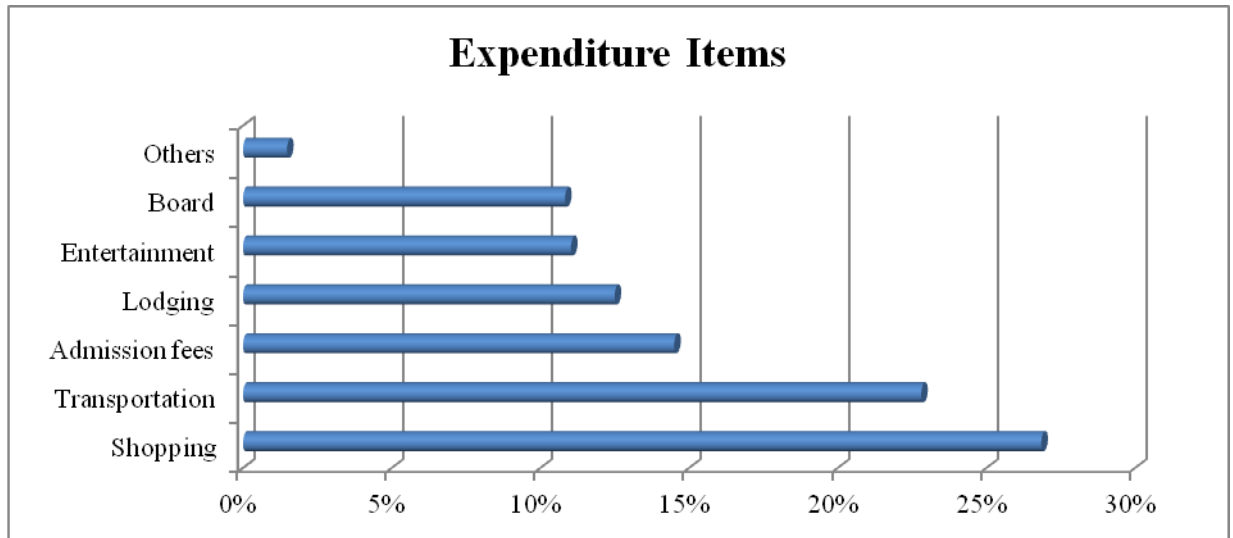
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**Yang Ling**, China Sunrise Travel Service, Authorized Outbound Tour Center, Beijing

**Sun Weijuan**, Easytour International Tours Co., Ltd. Guomao Branch, Beijing

**Robin Geng**, China Golden Bridge Travel Service Co., Ltd., Beijing

**Grace Wang**, China Commercial International Travel Service Co., Ltd., Beijing

**Nathie Sun**, Aijiatu, Beijing

**Cui Jing**, Beijing Refendo International Tours Co., Ltd., Beijing

**Liu Wenhong**, CITS Overseas Travel Co., Ltd., Beijing

**Feng LiNa**, CTS Sport Travel Service Co., Ltd., Beijing

**Yuan Jiang**, Mandarin International Tours Co., Ltd., Beijing

**Zhou Ping**, A. M. O. International Business Service Center, Beijing

**Lian Hong Bin**, Beijing Dragontours International Travel Service, Beijing

**Chen Botao**, China M&R Special Tours, Beijing

**Lei Wang**, China Sunrise Travel Service, Beijing

**Ning Shi**, China Bamboo Garden International Travel Service Co., Ltd. Beijing

**Bao Xue**, Harbin Efengxing Int'l Travel Service Co., Ltd., Beijing

**Feng Yang**, Tainjing Silent Bay International Travel Service Co., Ltd., Tianjin

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**Du Yang**, China Environment International Travel Service Co., Ltd., Beijing

**Michael Li**, China Travel Service

**Lily Zhou**, C.Y.T.S. of Liaoning Province, Shenyang

**Jack Lee**, NJM International Travel Agency, Taiyuan

**Zhang Ying (Sissi)**, Lv Mama, Shanghai

**Candy Lee**, China Classical Holiday, Tianjin

**Zhang Yi**, China Comfort Travel, Tianjin

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**Yang Ying**, Tianjin Prestige Holiday International Travel Service Co., Ltd., Tianjin

**Liu Hui Ling**, CITS Ningxia China International Travel Service Co., Ltd., Ningxia

**Yan Tie Jun**, Hubei Easy To Travel The World of International Travel, Jianghan

**Wu Qingwei**, CTS Jiangsu China Travel Service Co., Ltd., Nanjing

**Ma Nan**, Tianjin Seastar Business Travel Co., Ltd., Tianjin

**Hao jing fei**, CITS Handan China International Travel Service, Handan

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**Wang Yifei**, Ningxia Yifei International Travel Service, Ningxia

**Jessica Wang**, Zhejiang Feiyang International Tourism Group Co., Ltd., Zhejiang

**Jing Yu**, Chengdu Everbright International Travel Service Co., Ltd., Chengdu

**Sun Xiao Tong**, CTS Sports Travel Service Co., Ltd., Beijing

**Berry Bai**, China Environmnet Int'l Travel Service Co., Ltd., Beijing

**Ricky Bai**, Beijing Global Tour International Travel Service Co., Ltd., Beijing

**Dora Shen**, Royal Holidays, Beijing

**Isabelle Shi Ge**, Beijing Harmony Int'l Travel Service Ltd., Beijing

# APPENDIX P XI: PHOTOCOPIES OF BUSINESS CARDS OF THE INTERVIEWED TOUR-OPERATORS



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许可证号: L-BJ-GJ00104

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