

**New Zealand's Destination Image and the Chinese Outbound
Market: A comparative study between the Beijing (north)
and Guangdong (south) markets**

By

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification for any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgment is made in the acknowledgements.”

SIGNITURE _____

DATE _____

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the similarities and differences between northern and southern Chinese markets (in this case, the Beijing and Guangdong markets) in relation to New Zealand's destination image, from both visitors' and tour guides' perspectives. Destination image issues focused on information source and cultural factors, as well as their interrelationships. The purpose of this research is to achieve a better understanding of the Chinese outbound market as well as the heterogeneous market characteristics in order to provide insight for the New Zealand tourism industry.

This research involves both interviews with visitors and tour guides based on a grounded theory methodology. Analysis of the interviews was based on two research themes: factors influence New Zealand's destination image at different stages, as well as the Chinese regional market difference in relation to destination image. Interviews were also focused on two stages of destination image formation: pre-visit images and in-destination images. Difference between Beijing and Guangdong markets on the research themes during the different stages were explored and analyzed.

Research findings showed that destination image is influenced by both the information source and the cultural factors for Chinese tourists. Moreover, regional difference existed in China in particular their perceptions about New Zealand, preferences and personal values. Most tourists consider pre-visit image is essential; however, New Zealand's image in China was not very impressive and effective. Before visitation, New Zealand's destination image is influenced heavily by information available in China. The way tourists search for information and the image they were attracted for coming to New Zealand between Beijing and Guangdong were different. During-visit impressions of New Zealand were considered by majority of the tourists to be better than their expectations. However, due to their different cultural backgrounds, Beijing and Guangdong tourists have different reactions to New Zealand's products, which can be reflected through different shopping behaviors, and different demands and satisfaction levels. Overall, segmenting the Chinese outbound market into regions is recommended for future marketing, in order to attract more visitors by providing more suitable products.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

While the recognition of China as a powerful tourist generating market has resulted in a number of academic studies, this market is still treated as a homogeneous consumer segment. This thesis aims to unravel the complexity of China's outbound market by determining whether there are regional similarities and differences between Northern and Southern Chinese tourists in terms of their impressions of New Zealand. The image of a destination and the decision-making process when choosing a travel destination can be influenced by a number of factors. This thesis will address two major factors; namely the *information* and *culture* in relationship to New Zealand's destination image. Specifically, this research will use two markets, Beijing and Guangdong, to investigate the similarities and differences in terms of New Zealand's destination image.

Guangdong is a province that has 21 major cities and regions; therefore, it is not comparable to cities like Beijing. However, Beijing also contains many suburbs outside the main city (www.sina.com.cn), therefore, in this research, Beijing and Guangdong have been treated as two regional markets, or sub-national markets. As Guangdong province has so many major cities, only Guangzhou and Shenzhen have been chosen to represent Guangdong as a tourism market to compare with Beijing. The reasons for doing this are threefold: first of all, Guangzhou and Shenzhen are the top two markets in terms of population and economic development status. According to the fifth national population survey (2005), Guangzhou has 9.943million in residence, making it the biggest city in Guangdong province. Shenzhen, with a population of more than 7 million, is the second biggest city in Guangdong province in terms of population (National Bureau of statistics, 2005). Due to the economic and technological development in these cities, the living standards in these markets is relatively higher than in other cities, providing more disposable income and opportunities for people to travel overseas. Secondly, tourism in Guangzhou and Shenzhen is developing at a very fast-pace, and the travel demands of people from these two cities are among the highest

in China (CNTA, 2005). Guangzhou and Shenzhen have also got over 50% of Guangdong's total travel agents dealing with outbound travel, and the researcher assumes that the majority of the Guangdong tourists coming to New Zealand were organized by those travel agents in Guangzhou and Shenzhen. Thirdly, Guangzhou and Shenzhen are very similar in climate, lifestyles, and culture, therefore, could be treated as the mainstream culture that represents modern Guangdong province. Therefore, the researcher has used the terms "Guangdong" and "Beijing" as two case-markets in this thesis.

1.1 CHINESE OUTBOUND MARKET

With a population of 1.3 billion, China is the world's number one country in terms of market size (UN Population Division, 2005). A recent development report from the Chinese Bureau of Statistics stated that China's GDP has been increasing at a rate of 9.7% annually, and that Chinese residents' annual savings exceeded 10.1 trillion yuan or US \$1.2 trillion for the year ending in October 2003. The World Tourism Organization (WTO, 2004) sees China as an increasingly important player as both a tourism destination and a country of origin. As a result of China's rapid economic growth and the increasing amount of disposable personal income, travel has become a "lifestyle essential" for most Chinese residents, which in turn, has boosted the development of China's tourism industry. In 2004, Chinese inbound tourist numbers reached 109 million, up 19% compared with 2003. This surpassed Italy, and ranked China fourth worldwide. The revenue from inbound tourism in 2004 was US\$25.74 billion, nearly twice the revenue income in 2003; this also exceeded Germany and the UK, making China the fifth biggest destination in terms of international receipts. Also in 2004, domestic tourist numbers surpassed one billion, spending RMB (Chinese currency) 471 billion, up 37% from 2003. The development of both inbound and domestic tourism in China has paved the road for China's outbound tourism growth.

During the last decade, the growing importance of the Chinese outbound market has become more and more evident, which is reflected by the high-speed growth of

outbound traveler numbers. In 2003, the outbound number was 20.2 million, up 21.8% compared with 2002. 2004 was the most splendid year for China, when it boosted its outbound tourist number up to 29 million, becoming the top country in Asia, providing the biggest outbound tourist number (CNTA, 2005). In the first 10 months of 2005, the outbound number was 25.76 million, up another 8% compared to 2004. The sustained growth in outbound tourism from China appears to be due mainly to China's economic growth, the improved standard of living and the desire for travel of Chinese people, along with the relaxation of the outbound travel restrictions by the Chinese government (Yu & Weiler, 2001; Pan & Laws, 2001).

Although the current total outbound tourist number is only a small percentage of China's total population, it is no longer small in comparison with other countries, and the potential of the Chinese outbound market is still huge. Up to last year, less than 3% of China's population had traveled abroad, but the World Tourism Organization (2004) and Tourism New Zealand (2004) estimated the Chinese market would experience a fast growth rate over the next five years, and there would be about 100 million outbound travelers by the end of year 2010, which is about 7% of China's total population.

In response to this increasingly important market, it is critical for potential destinations such as New Zealand to understand the nature of the Chinese outbound market, especially the characteristics of Chinese tourists, their perceptions of New Zealand's image, as well as their impressions of New Zealand. For New Zealand, China is a giant cake, and currently the country is just receiving a tiny slice of benefits. Therefore, gaining a better understanding of the Chinese market and a more in-depth knowledge of the views of Chinese outbound travelers can not only help with increasing tourist numbers, but also help with maintaining the quality of the tour experience in New Zealand.

Measure	Mar 98	Mar 99	Mar 00	Mar 01	Mar 02	Mar 03	Mar 04	Mar 05
People	13,119	13,001	18,772	33,027	49,374	72,089	64,018	84,731
% Change	-	-0.90%	44.40%	75.90%	49.50%	46.00%	-11.20%	32.40%
Total Visitor Nights (night)	242,491	211,263	323,627	917,368	1,586,388	3,333,284	3,108,993	2,838,962
Average length of stay (night)	18.5	16.3	17.2	27.8	32.1	46.2	48.6	33.5

Source: *International Visitor Survey 1998~2005*

Table 1: Chinese Market: Visitor Number, Length of Stay, Expenditure

1.2 NEW ZEALAND INBOUND TRAVEL FROM CHINA

New Zealand has experienced a rapid increase in Chinese visitors during the last five years. China is now ranked as the fifth largest inbound market; visitors spent a total of NZ \$409.5 million in the year to June 2004, and an average of NZ \$5471 per visitor (Tourism New Zealand, 2004). Table 1 shows that New Zealand has experienced some dramatic changes from inbound Chinese tourist numbers, especially between 1999 and 2001, and experienced the highest growth rate (+75.9%) of Chinese visitor numbers coming to New Zealand. The inbound tourist number from China in 2004 was nearly five times that of 1998. The length of stay between the years 2000 and 2001 increased dramatically, up by 1.6 times, and between 2001 and 2005, the length of stay of Chinese tourists also increased rapidly.

According to the annual report of Tourism New Zealand (2004-2005), and to a continuing survey on International Visitors (2004-2005) to New Zealand, through March 2005, 41% of Chinese visitor nights were spent in private homes of friends/relatives, compared with 21% in the year ended March 2004. This showed that the relaxed immigration policy in New Zealand has provided many Chinese people potential opportunities to work and live in New Zealand, which also enhanced the connections between Chinese residents and those Chinese people living in New Zealand.

Chinese tour groups to New Zealand spend the majority of their time in a limited number of large cities, mainly Auckland and Rotorua. This was due to the limited time they stay in New Zealand in total, and budget issues. Although the average length of stay in New Zealand in the year ending March 2005 was 33.5 days, which was relatively long, this figure included Chinese students studying in New Zealand, quite different from the length of stay for majority of tour groups coming to New Zealand for leisure and business. According to CNTA (2005), most of the tour groups coming to New Zealand are groups, touring both Australia and New Zealand, spending eight days in Australia, and three days in New Zealand. Tourism New Zealand showed that the majority of Chinese visitors in the year ending March 2005 visited another country en-route to/from New Zealand (73%), with the majority 80% of these visitors citing Australia as the other destination. This is why very few Chinese groups go to cities other than Auckland and Rotorua. During their stay, the main activities for Chinese visitors were shopping (81%), eating out/restaurants (79%), general sightseeing (75%) and a walk in the city (71%). (Source: Tourism New Zealand-IVS, 2001-2005)

Based on the International Visitor Survey (IVS, 2005), China is New Zealand's fifth largest source of international visitor expenditure, with Chinese spending NZ\$404 million in New Zealand in the year ending March 2005, up 3% from the previous year. Education tours remained the top-spending segment among Chinese people, and business tours were the second highest spending segment, followed by the Visit Friend and Relative and the Holiday segments. The IVS (TNZ, 2005) also shows that one of the most distinctive patterns in the Chinese visitor data is the dominance of male visitors. In the year ending March 2005, 64% of all visitors were male – a proportion that has been relatively consistent since 1997. In the year to March 2005, 68% of all Chinese visitors were aged between 35 and 54, with the remainder of visitors spread across the other age groups. It is interesting to note that the age groups with the most visitors (35-44 years old, 45-54 years old) are also the most dominated by male visitors (62% and 79% respectively). Due to the fact that middle-aged Chinese tourists were still the dominant power of outbound travelling, New Zealand's destination image is

mainly experienced by this market segment and age group; therefore, the people interviewed in this particular research are mainly middle aged and male tourists.

Although there is no direct flight from China to New Zealand, there are a number of airlines, such as Qantas, China Eastern, Korean, Thai and Singapore airlines offering indirect-flight service. According to Tourism New Zealand Market Research, there are 528 approved outbound agents in China who are licensed to handle outbound travel to approved destinations, and about 39 approved outbound agents are selling New Zealand. Among the 39 agents, 28 are in Beijing and Guangdong, the other 30% spread out the whole country (Tourism New Zealand, 2005). According to an up-to-date report done by the National Bureau of Statistics in China (2004), Beijing was ranked the top outbound market, arranging nearly 30% of total outbound tours, Guangdong followed as the second, arranging nearly 22% of the total outbound tours, Shanghai (11.7%), Zhejiang (4.3%), Jiangsu (4.25%). This shows that Beijing and Guangdong provinces were the two main powers for arranging outbound tour groups, taking up more than 50% of China's total outbound market. Therefore, this research has focused on these two regions to study New Zealand's image as a destination, can be seen as reasonable and representative.

Although the number of Chinese visitors to New Zealand is increasing at a very fast rate, the quality of the tours is getting worse, with a very low budgets and loose itineraries (TNZ, 2005). This indicates that New Zealand's current destination image is not promoted very well in China — tourists are coming to New Zealand just for a quick budget tour experience. Currently, Tourism New Zealand is planning to re-build New Zealand's destination image in China in order to attract more “interactive travelers” through promoting New Zealand as a quality and luxury destination. To do this, a superficial understanding of the Chinese outbound market is obviously not enough, and the strategy of treating China as a homogenous market needs to be up-to-dated and changed.

1.3 AIMS AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Although previous studies of Chinese outbound tourists have developed a basic and superficial understanding of Chinese tourists' characteristics, preferences and behaviors, destination image and influential factors have not yet been explored in a sub-national context. Furthermore, within the existing body of literature, the China outbound market has been seen and treated as a homogeneous, consumer segment, and the question of whether there are differences existing between regions and sub-markets in China has not drawn much attention in academic tourism research. Previous studies have demonstrated the importance of destination image, in terms of influence on consumers' behavior (e.g., Dann, 1996; Choi, Sonme & Sirakaya, 2000; Beerlin & Martin, 2004). These studies were also based on Western perspectives. Despite the growing interest and attention in studying image, little empirical research has focused on how image is actually formed in a particular country (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999).

In this context, this thesis aims to build on the existing studies, and to fill gaps in the existing literature by exploring the dynamics of the outbound tourism phenomenon in China - especially the regional differences between northern and southern China - through a comparison study of the Beijing and Guangdong markets with the particular focus on the formation of New Zealand's destination image.

Beijing and Guangdong are two major regions where most of the tourists in New Zealand come from (Tourism New Zealand, 2004), and also the two of the most developed areas in China (CNTA, 2004), with differences in terms of culture, lifestyle, language, and consumer behaviors. These factors will ultimately influence the way they search for and collect information, as well as how they perceive New Zealand, which in turn will impact on New Zealand's destination image and the travel decisions of in the future. "Information sources" are defined as stimulus factors (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999), which are considered to be influential factors in people's perceptions and evaluations (Gartner, 1993). There has also been a growing body of evidence showing that tourist behavior and travel patterns are influenced by culture (Pizam & Sussman,

1995; Kozak, 2001; Zhang & Heung, 2001). You et al (2000) pointed out that tourism is “culture-specific”, people with different cultural backgrounds have different attitudes and perceptions about the same destination and tour experience. Therefore, understanding these factors at a regional level will provide a more thorough understanding of the regional differences between segments in China, which will have some significant marketing implications for New Zealand. This will enable New Zealand to attract more Chinese outbound travelers by meeting their different needs, through their preferred and favorite marketing tools, and promoting New Zealand in a more effective and efficient way.

1.3.1 RESEARCH STRUCTURE AND FRAMEWORK

As previous discussion has shown, research on destination image from culture/regional comparisons is deficient in several respects: it is general, tends to identify a whole picture focusing only on demographics and trip characteristics; it is also localized, as most of the studies were from Western perspective. Therefore, a detailed conceptual framework that outlines the basis upon which the two perspectives will be compared is presented in Figure 1.

Theories and patterns will be made based on findings in order to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) To determine the similarities and differences between the Beijing and Guangdong markets
- 2) To determine the main causes for the similarities and differences
- 3) To provide a better understanding of the relationship between destination image and the information source and cultural factors
- 4) To fill the research gap on destination image from an Asian perspective at the regional level.
- 5) To examine how realistically NZ as a destination has been portrayed to the Chinese market.

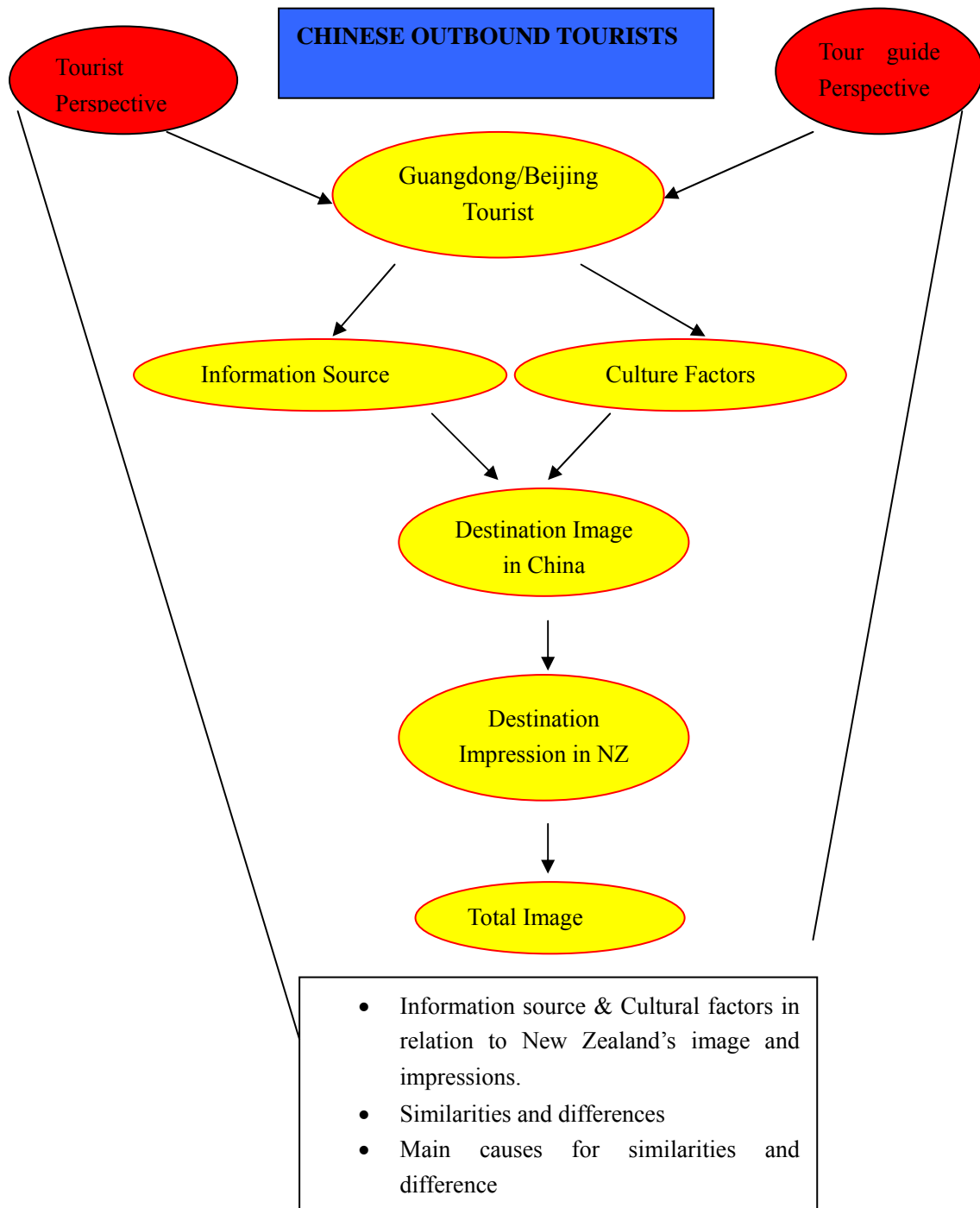


Figure 1: Research Framework

1.4 METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the objectives set out for this research, an appropriate research methodology needed to be implemented. Grounded theory was seen to be the most suitable method for this research, based on its purpose and characteristics. As Crooks (2001 p.25) suggests “grounded theory gives us a picture of what people do, what their prime concerns are, and how they deal with these concerns”. The aim of the grounded theory approach is to develop explanatory theory about common social patterns. This background of grounded theory matches the aim of this research project, namely to reveal the relationship between factors and destinations image, and to gain a better understanding of the Chinese markets. Theoretical sampling in grounded theory also enables better research, as it is a flexible tool for the researcher to select samples based on situations and cases, until the main patterns and theories have emerged. Furthermore, in the grounded theory methodology, data are analyzed by constantly comparing with others, by developing categories, and finally by developing theories. This method also enables the researcher to revise existing theories, define new emerging theories, and integrate these theories.

1.5 CONCLUSION

The review of China’s tourism market size, current situation and future development, confirms China is an essential market for all tourism destinations in the world. The policy of easing travel by the Chinese government, the increased spending power of Chinese consumers, and the passion and desire for traveling overseas all contribute to China's outbound tourism boom. The desire to "get away from the stressful world" and "get closer to nature" will definitely be an attractive point for Chinese outbound tourists in the near future. New Zealand as a small island located in the South Pacific, has tasted the “sweetness” of China’s outbound market, however, the current share of this giant market for New Zealand is still very tiny; this can be improved through strategic marketing and promotions. Knowing the characteristics and preferences of this market is necessary for providing suitable tourism products, which will ultimately enhance tourist experiences. However, the differences between tourists from regions, especially

the two major markets Beijing and Guangdong have not been addressed. This research will explore China's outbound tourism sub-market differences, in order to provide a new and in-depth understanding of these markets, resulting in new insights into this phenomenon.

Following the background discussion on Chinese outbound tourists presented in this chapter, Chapter Two begins the thesis with an in-depth literature review on destination image and influential factors. Information source & cultural background are seen to be the two main influential factors, which contribute to destination images; therefore, the theoretical aspects of these areas and the interrelationships between the two factors will be emphasized and discussed. Next, the means and methods by which information gathered from visitors and tour guides are explained in Chapter Three. The limitations of this study and ethical issue are also identified and acknowledged. Chapter Four analyses the results from secondary research, which provides some useful information about the background of the Chinese outbound market, and the Beijing and Guangdong markets. Chapter Five examines the primary research findings from both tourists and tour guides. The main findings have been tabulated, and comments and quotes from those interviewed have also been included as part of the presentation to support and explain trends. Chapter Six raises some implications and makes comparisons, and a conclusion is reached, aiming at building towards a deeper understanding of Chinese tourists, especially the Beijing and Guangdong markets, and some recommendations and management strategies are made.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review structure is mainly based on a model developed by the researcher, adapted from Beerli and Martin's (2004) Model of the Formation of Destination Image. For present purposes, "personal factors" has been replaced with "cultural factors", as this research will look at a cross-cultural perspective between the Beijing and Guangdong markets. The discussion begins with an overview of studies on destination image in general, narrowing down to destination image formation and the two influential factors this research is focused on: information factors and cultural factors. The interrelationship between factors and destination image will be discussed and analyzed in the following sections.

The increasingly globalized economy requires marketers to understand the similarities and differences existing in consumers from different cultural backgrounds, and to have a better understanding of culture's influence on consumer behavior (Yoo, McKercher and Mena, 2002). In addition, Ackman and Tellis (2002) put forward the argument that culture has a profound effect not only on consumers' selection of products and services, but also on their consumption patterns, decision making process and characteristics. Apart from that, information collected before travel has a great impact on tourists' image about a destination, which ultimately influences their destination choice and travel decision-making process. This statement has already been supported through a number of studies (see Burgess, 1978; Brokaw, 1990; Han, 1989; Gartner, 1993; Gunn, 1988). Different information collected and different channels used for information searching could be influenced by a number of factors, such as the information availability, personal preferences, travel motivation, and region of residence (see Morrison, 1989; Goodall, 1998; Han, 1989; Kotler, 1991; Gartner, 1993).

Although much literature exists that explores the relationship of culture to consumer behavior (E.g., Hirschman, 1981; Oyewole, 1998), Dimanche (1994) noted that relatively little cross-cultural research has been conducted in the context of destination image and marketing and this situation continues today. There is little research focused on information source and cultural factors on a regional level, studying two sub-national regions within a country. The purpose of this study is to build on the existing knowledge about the intricate relationship between destination image and various possible determinant variables, investigating whether New Zealand as a destination's image, as perceived by sub-national Chinese markets, can be influenced by information factors and regional culture factors, and how Chinese are influenced by these two factors. It aims to explore the extent to which tourists' cultural backgrounds can be a useful factor in better understanding the destination image and visitor experience in a destination and to find out the implications on tourism marketing and product development.

2.2 DEFINITION OF DESTINATION IMAGE

It is difficult to define what “a destination image” exactly is, as this term has been defined and used differently in a variety of contexts and disciplines. Crompton (1979, p18) defined it as the “sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination”. Pearce (1988, p162) further on commented that “image is one of those terms that will not go away, a term with vague and shifting meanings”. A more integrative definition was given by Echtner and Ritchie (1991, p4) as “the individual traits or qualities and the total impression an entity makes on the minds of others”. Kim and Richardson (2003) collected all the ideas and summarize the destination image as a totality of impressions, beliefs, ideas, expectations, and feelings accumulated towards a place over time.

Research on destination image helps understand the destination selection process of tourists. According to Jenkins (1999), destination image influences tourists' travel decision, their cognition and behavior at the destination, as well as satisfaction levels

and recollection of the experience. Gartner (1993) also suggests destination image is the key underlying factor in the destination site selection process. Sirakaya, Sonmez and Choi (2001) suggested travelers use images and perceptions of a destination to form their destination awareness sets. During last two decades, there has been much research across fields studying this topic from different angles and perspectives. Some studies have focused on the meaning and importance of destination image (Dichter, 1985; Echtner and Ritchie, 1991), or measurements of image (Echtner and Ritchie, 1993; Driscoll, Lawson and Niven, 1994), and some have examined the relationship between image and distance (Crompton, 1979; Hunt, 1975).

2.3 COMPONENTS OF DESTINATION IMAGE

Early studies like Mayo and Jarvis' (1981) found there are three basic dimensions of holiday destination images: scenery, congestion and climate. This only focused on physical or functional characteristics. Dichter (1985)'s study supported the multi-component nature of destination image, an image is not only individual traits or qualities but also the total impression an entity makes on the minds of others, and each image of this type should be based on the functional and the psychological characteristics of the products. MacInnis and Price (1987) also confirmed that image processing should consist of individual attributes, and holistic impressions, as well as functional and psychological components. Through further study and analysis based on these four components of a destination's image, Echtner and Ritchie (1991) developed a new framework. This new framework ranges from those based on common functional and psychological traits to those based on more unique features, events, feelings or auras. A common problem of destination image research is that destination images are "holistic" representations of a place and that in attempting to measure them, researchers are compelled to look at the parts or attributes singularly (Jenkins, 1999). Echtner and Ritchie's (1991) model overcame this problem by including more possible dimensions of a destination's image, and in this way, those parts of destination image that can be broken down into attributes are captured, as are the total, holistic impression. From all of the previous studies, it can be concluded that a destination's image is

multi-dimensional, consisting of physical attributes such as attractions, and infrastructure, as well as psychological attributes, such as feelings and attitudes. Destination image components can be ranging from holistic to specific, from unique features to common features.

2.4 DESTINATION IMAGE FORMATION

In an effort to help destination authorities who are striving to portray positive images for their destinations, researchers have tried to enhance their understanding of the complex nature of the destination image construct, especially its formation and the determinants playing a role in this formation. As destination competition is currently quite intense, Chon (1992) stated that developers of a destination image should firstly understand how tourists form the image of a destination, and what factors influence this formation process. Kim and Yoon (2002) further suggested that a clearer understanding of destination image formation has become a fundamental step and procedure to enhance destination attractiveness as well as market competitiveness. Hence, the concept of destination image formation needs to be carefully studied and understood.

Reynolds (1965) described the formation of image as the development of a mental construct based on a few impressions chosen from a “flood of information”. The “flood of information” in his definition has many sources including travel brochures, ideas and suggestions from other people, TV, books, and other medias. He also pointed out that the image is modified after visiting the destination. Based on this concept, Gunn (1988) put destination image formation into context and developed a seven phase model of travel experience:

- 1. Accumulation of mental images about the experience on the destination*
- 2. Modification of those images by further information*
- 3. Decision to take a trip*
- 4. Travel to the destination*
- 5. Participation at the destination*

6. *Return home*

7. *Modification of image based on experience*

This theory involves a constant building and modification of images, and it implies that images held by potential visitors, non-visitors and returned visitors would differ (Gunn, 1988). This process of image formation involves not only different types of information sources but also cultural factors, such as motivation, perceptions, socio-demographical characteristics, as well as past tour experiences. Stage 1, 2 and 3 are pre-visitation stages, where people's images are based mainly non-experience information, whereas stage 5 is the during-visitation stage, and the image of the destination is mainly based on self-experience. This research is mainly focused on these two stages, which will be discussed in the following sections. Gartner (1993) based on Gunn's model, proposed a typology of "eight-image formation agents" in relation to the degree of control by the promoter and credibility with the target market. This consisted of four induced and four organic categories. In this framework, Gartner (1993) viewed the image formation process as a continuum consisting of eight different agents:

- Overt induced I agent: traditional forms of advertising
- Overt Induced II agent: Information received from tour operators
- Covert Induced I agent: Second party endorsement of products through traditional forms of advertising
- Covert Induced II agent: Second party endorsement through unbiased reports such as newspaper articles
- Autonomous Agent: News and popular culture
- Unsolicited Organic Agent: Unsolicited information received from friends and relatives
- Solicited organic agent: Solicited information received from friends and relatives
- Organic Agent: actual visitation

Gartner (1993) argued that because image formation agents affect the formation process at different levels, more complicated and mixed stages are involved in the division of image type. This further division of organic and induced images has important implications for creation and change of image by destination marketers.

The previous review has shown that formation of a destination image is based on many influential factors at different stages of the travel experience, and information factors has been considered as a very important factor in terms of tourists' decision making process. However, this research aims to explore whether regional difference exist in China's outbound market based on regional culture differences, therefore, cultural factors such as "geographical location" "values" and "personal preference" are examined. Information sources are defined as stimulus factors (Baluglu and McCleary, 1999) or image forming agents (Gartner, 1993), which are considered to be influential factors of peoples' perceptions and evaluations. Most of the researchers agree that apart from information sources, other factors, such as personal factors, distance factors and cultural background of tourists can also determine whether certain destinations are considered as possible choices (e.g., Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Gartner, 1993; Um and Crompton, 1990). Therefore, information factors and cultural factors have been selected as the two main variables to be studied in this research.

2.5 PRE-VISIT DESTINATION IMAGE

2.5.1 INFORMATION SOURCE

Information sources at the broad level can be divided into two types: primary and secondary (Gunn, 1971). Primary resources are based on personal experiences, such as actual travel to and visitation of the destination, and previous travel experience. Secondary resource refers to second-hand information, which is obtained from non-personal travel experience, such as books and other media sources. Gunn further divided the secondary information source into two categories: *organic* and *induced*, which implies two different types of information source. Organic information sources are non-tourist information about the destination, such as TV documentaries, books, school lessons, and stories of friends' experiences. Induced information are those

information that have been put out in brochures, publicity and advertisements to attract tourists' attentions and travel willingness. Similar to this dichotomous conceptualization, Stabler (1988) divided the factors influencing the formation of consumers' destination image into demand and supply. The demand factors roughly correspond with Gunn's organic image formation, whereas the supply factors correspond to induced image formation. Although they are different in name, the logic and content of the division is similar. Organic (person-determined) images are those based upon information assimilated from non-touristic, non-commercial sources and reflect individual differences in information processing and interpretation. Induced images or images are based on commercial sources reflecting the destination's resources and attributes.

For first-time tourists with no previous travel experiences most of their images of the destination are from induced source, such as commercials, newspaper advertisements, and travel brochures. This is due to the lack of organic sources available, information such as documentary books and TV programmes are so limited in number and places, therefore, destination still use more induced image to attract tourists. However, too many induced images of a destination can also lead to a negative outcome. Ahmed (1991) found out that attempting to raise an induced image above the organic would lead to unrealized expectations once trips were taken and that the resulting process of image reformation would have negative consequences. This, Ahmed argued, was due to the nature of the destination marketing in creating the induced images. Images marketed to the consumer tend to go further and further away from "reality" or the original. Tourism marketing produces information that too often depicts places as unreal and demeans their inhabitants.

Relph (1976) stated that

At tourist destinations both the image and the actual physical setting have been manipulated and manufactured so that they correspond and the result is a superficial and trivial identity for places which increasingly pervades all

our experiences of places and which can only be transcended by a considerable intellectual or social effort (p59).

The travel media or publications that carry tourism advertisements treat destination goods and services as items to be consumed, and portray them in a highly favorable and glossy manner. These induced images have gone too far from reality, and tourists have learnt not to trust them. Ahmed (1991) therefore suggested that marketing dollars should be better spent on image components with a stronger organic rating.

Gunn (1971) established in his seven-phase model that the types of information sources tourists search for and collect are different in the different stages. Gunn argues that the first three phases should be considered as the most important in the tourist consumer behavior process because a tourist's image is generally very resistant to change once it has been formed. Goodall (1991) asserted that knowing which factors influencing it would help identify target markets and decide which image should be promoted to which segment of the market. As noted by Brokaw (1990, p32) "before images can be used to influence behaviors, it is important to understand what influences image". There has been much research done across many fields emphasizing the essential need to study and understand the factors that are behind the image (Gartner, 1993; Burgess, 1978; Brokaw, 1990; Han, 1989; Kotler, 1991). Yet researchers such as Echtner and Ritchie (1993) and Gartner (1993) have suggested that most images studies lacked a strong conceptual framework.

Previous research has also divided information source into different types and categories. Morrison (1989) quoted that tourists search for both objective and subjective information before taking the actual trip. "Objective" information includes prices, locations, and physical characteristics of the facilities or the destination; "subjective" information includes personal feelings, affections and connections with the destination. Both objective and subjective information sources are important attributes in forming a destination image before visitation (Kozak, et al, 2004). Other researchers assert that there are both formal and informal sources involved in the

pre-visitation stage of a tourist (Goodall, 1991; Mill and Morrison, 1985). “Formal” sources consist of travel agents, brochures, travel logs, travel-guide books, and maps, and in some countries, radio and TV programs essentially dedicated to tourism and printed information in magazines and newspaper (Burkart and Medlik, 1981). The other type of information is from the recommendations and impressions of other people, most of the time friends or relatives, based on their own past travel experience (Goodall, 1988; Murphy, 1985). Nolan (1976) in his research found out that information given by official sources ranked high in terms of both credibility and quality, and Mansfeld (1992) concluded that brochures have also been a major information source at least in U.K. It has also been found that the more educated the tourists, the more information sources he or she will use (Francken and Van Raaij, 1979). Travel agents have been one of the major information providers for tourists in most of the countries, and according to Mill and Morrison (1985), travel agents are considered very important when tourists consider going to remote destinations. Moreover, the travel agent plays an essential role in situations when tourists have only a vague idea of where they want to go.

2.5.2 CULTURAL FACTORS

There has been a growing body of evidence showing that tourist behavior and travel patterns are influenced by culture (See Pizam and Sussman, 1995). You et al (2000) pointed out that tourism is “culture-specific”; people with different cultural backgrounds have different attitudes and perceptions about the same destination and tour experience. Kozak et al., (2004) showed that significant differences existed in the destination image formation among tourists of different cultures. So what is culture? Hofstede (1980, p6) defined culture as “...the interactive aggregate of common characteristics that influence a group’s response to its environment.” People from different societies and communities vary in terms of five dimensions of culture: power distance; individualism — collectivism; masculinity-femininity; uncertainty-avoidance; and the Confucian dynamic or long-term orientation. Although a number of papers exploring the relationship of culture and consumer behavior have been increased, relatively little cross-cultural research has been conducted in the context of tourism

marketing, especially the destination image area. Three of the main factors that contribute to cultural differences are discussed briefly in the following sections: geographical location; values; personal preference.

The main cause of the cultural differences between tourists is the geographical location, in another word, culture is place-specific. Prior research has also supported the fact that people from different geographical areas have disparate images of a single destination based on their own 'cultures' (Ahmed, 1991; Crompton, 1979; Douglas, 1977; Gartner and Hunt, 1987). Blackwell et al (2001) commented that one of the main factors that influence destination image through the way tourists collect information is the geographical area of residence or sometimes called "distance "factors. Most of the empirical work (see Roth, 1995; Tse et al, 1991; Choi and Geistfeld, 2003) has attempted to analyze the differences in destination images arising from cultural factors focusing on the tourists' geographical origin. Chen and Kerstetter (1999) found a positive relationship between the perceived image and the tourists' country of origin. Similarly, Ahmed (1991) found a significant difference in the perceived image of Utah among North Americans, depending on the region where they lived. According to Hunt (1975), destination image formation is determined by distance from the destination, because people are more likely to have visited the destinations near their homes and to have been exposed to information about them through the media and from friends and relatives. All of the above mentioned researchers concluded that people are likely to have stronger and more realistic images of a destination if it is near their home. Previous research also proved that there is a relationship between how far a particular tourist will travel and their demographic profiles such as age, occupation, education level, income, and tourist attitude as well as their personal preference of a certain tourist product or a location (Pike, 2004).

The concept of "cultural distance" is an important indicator when investigating the relationship of culture to tourist's behavior. According to McIntosh and Goeldner (1990), cultural distance refers to the extent to which the tourists' home culture differs

from that of the area being visited. They suggest that relatively larger cultural distance may produce greater interest among those who wish to experience differences between the culture of their home and that of destination areas. In contrast, for visitors from proximate culture distance, culture may not be a compelling reason to visit similar destinations and different travel patterns may be evident. McKercher and Du Cros (2003) explored the relationship between cultural distance and participation in cultural tourism activities in Hong Kong, by comparing cultural tourism participation rates among Asian visitors and Westerns visitors. The findings showed there are statistically significant differences between these groups in the depth of experience sought and the types of activities when visiting Hong Kong. The authors argued that difference in cultural distance between Asian and Western tourists might explain differences noted in their travel behavior.

Another important factor related to culture is personal values, defined as “the core concept across all social sciences” (Kahle and Chiagouris, 1997, p6). Personal values are a set of enduring beliefs that control and/or direct a mode of conduct for actions throughout one’s life. Therefore, it may be construed that one’s personal values systems exert influence, either directly or indirectly on one’s attitudes, behavior, and lifestyle preference. As personal values is a long-term process developed throughout the whole life time, the culture of the residence country and region have a great impact on influencing and building up one's beliefs as well as lifestyles, in another words, personal factors are based on culture. The most significant application of personal values on hospitality and tourism marketing research started with a study of visitors to Scandinavia, conducted by Madrigal and Kahle (1994). This study confirmed that tourists’ personal value systems can affect their lifestyle and activity preferences, which ultimately have impact on how they behave when select a destination, and how they perceive a destination after visitation.

2.6 DESTINATION IMPRESSION

Returning to Gunn's (1971) model, the destination image in phases one and two before visitation is based on secondary sources, which are the information sources collected and gathered to select the final destination and provide the first impression about the chosen destination. These sources may not provide realistic information, which is different from the actual visitation experience defined as the Phases Five in Gunn's model (1971). The images from the actual visitation, tend to be more realistic, complex and differentiated, and mostly are different from these of the pre-visit phases. The information source in this latter phase is mainly from the actual visitation and experience, which is also known as the primary image, formed by personal experience or by visiting the destination. Some researchers have pointed out that the actual visitation of a destination can provide tourists with a more realistic, complex and different image from the one formed through secondary sources of information (Gartner and Hunt, 1987; Pearce, 1982; Phelps, 1986).

One of the factors related to primary information source is the intensity of the visit, or, in other words, the extent of an individual's interaction with the place (Jenkins, 1997). Although no research was found that examined the effect of visit intensity on the image, it would seem only logical to assume that this varies in line with tourists' experiences. People with different cultural backgrounds will have different attitudes, preferences, and impressions about a destination, which means they will react differently to the same destination and may also interact with different dimensions of a destination. Therefore, the primary source of information formed by personal experience or visits will influence the perceived image depending on the number of visits and their duration or on the degree of involvement with the place during the stay. Therefore, considerations of all of these factors are necessary and essential in order to gain a thorough understanding of destination image formation process.

2.7 RESEARCH GAP

In summary a great deal of research indicated that that “information source” and “cultures” are important factors in destination image formation, however, previous research has been done at the national level, there has been no study empirically testing the regional differences within a country, for example, within the Chinese outbound market. Therefore, an aim of this research is to fill the gap in the existing literature on this issue, exploring and understanding the relationship between New Zealand’s destination image and the influential factors within Chinese regions. More specifically, this research is trying to explore and compare how tourists from Beijing and Guangdong markets perceive New Zealand’s destination image, and to examine what the similarities and differences are in their perceptions, based on their information search behavior and factors of cultural background. Based on the literature and the research aim, the researcher adapted Krakover and Stern's (2003) model, developed a new research model (Figure 2), which is shown on the next page.

The original model by Krakover and Stern (2003) divided destination image into two parts: information source and personal factors, but within the new model, the researcher replaced the personal factor with cultural factors, at the same time, using two regional markets: Beijing and Guangdong as comparative variables. According to this model, the characteristics of both the information source and the individual’s cultural background have an effect on the system of interrelationships governing the perceived stimuli of the environment, producing a compound image. In this framework, two major forces influence destination image: information factors such as TV, books and brochures, and cultural factors such as personal values and lifestyles. This framework also notes that the overall image construct has both pre-visitation image and during-visitation image based on stages first in China and then in New Zealand.

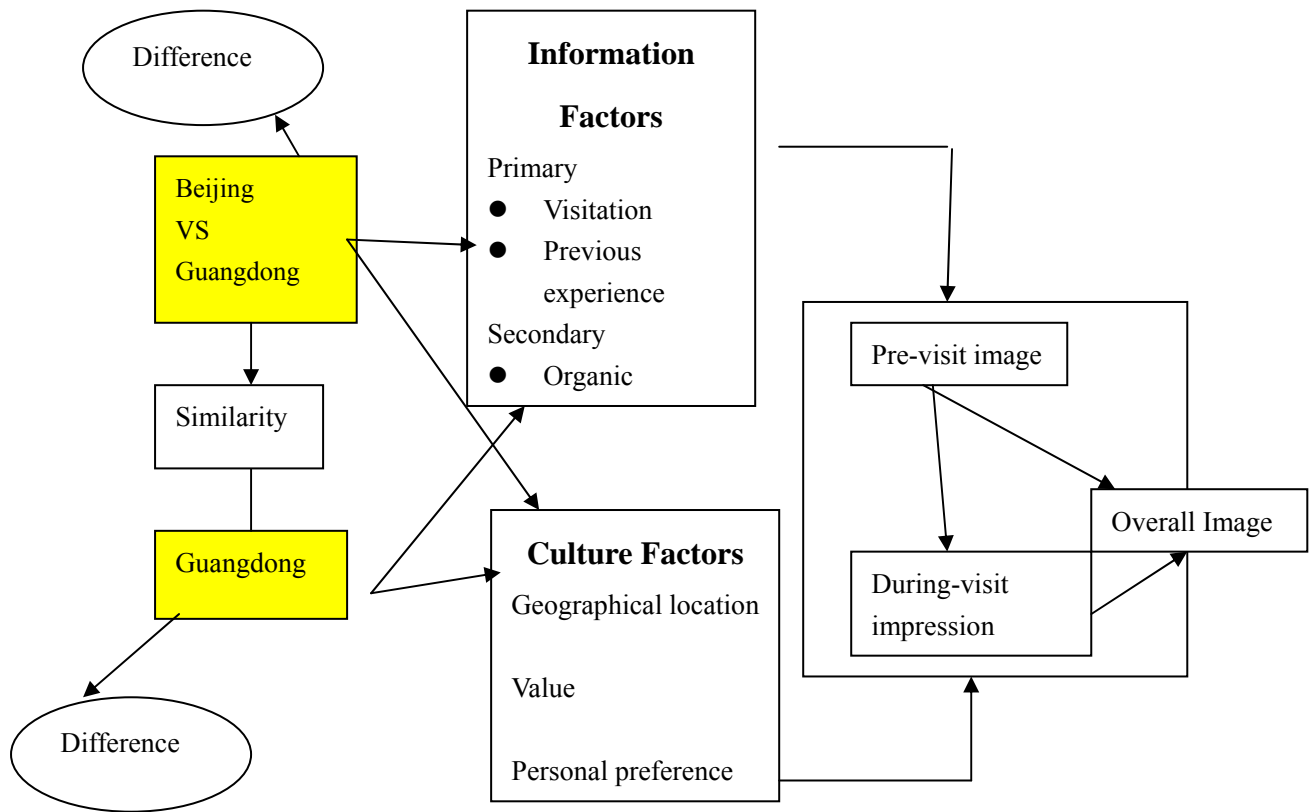


Figure 2 Research Model

2.8 CONCLUSION

After examining different aspects relating to destination image, it is apparent that there are many issues to identify and discuss in order to have a good understanding of the destination image concept. It is important to note the destination image formation process is very complicated, involving pre-visit, during-visit and after-visit stages; tourists at each of these three stages utilize different information sources, and their images and impressions about the destination are influenced by cultural factors. Therefore, in the ideal situation, examination of the images at different stages would provide more realistic and valid information. However, due to the limitation of this research, it is not feasible to include all related theories and areas. Therefore, information source and cultural factors have been selected as the most significant and influential factors for Chinese tourists in terms of their impressions and images of New Zealand. This research is in an effort to examine how realistic New Zealand as a

destination has been portrayed to the Chinese market, in specific, to two different regions-Beijing and Guangdong with different cultural background, this research is interested in how similar and different New Zealand can be perceived within two Chinese markets and how these differences can be applied into new marketing strategies for future marketing in Chinese regions. More specifically, this research will obtain data from both tour guide and tourists on two themes in destination image formation process: information source and cultural factors, and both pre-visit image in China and impression of New Zealand during-visitation will be explored.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

It is always important to adopt an appropriate research methodology in order to perform an extensive examination of all relevant areas (Decrop, 1999). Checkland and Holwell (1998) concluded that all research is based on some underlying assumptions about what constitutes 'valid' research, and which research methods are appropriate. With regards to the purpose of this research, a qualitative approach was seen as the most relevant for two reasons. Firstly, stated in Chapter 1, the researcher sought to ascertain how Beijing and Guangdong tourists are similar and different in terms of their images and impressions of New Zealand, and why. Strauss and Corbin's position (1990) that qualitative methods are useful for revealing and understanding what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is known, is supportive of this. Secondly, destination image formation is a dynamic process influenced by several factors; individual experience will differ to a great extent, which is harder to explain through standardized quantitative methods. This chapter firstly outlines the purposes and importance of the secondary resources used in this research. Then, the methods and means of carrying out primary research among tourists and tour guides are examined. Sampling issues and data collection are discussed in turn, and the limitation of this methodology has also been discussed throughout this chapter.

3.2 SECONDARY SOURCES

Collecting information from secondary sources is a very useful way to identify some key issues and important areas that need to be further addressed in the primary research. This is especially necessary in this research, where findings from the secondary sources have revealed the importance of the Beijing and Guangdong markets, as well as provided some background information about these two sub-markets in China's outbound travel industry.

Websites such as the New Zealand Tourism Research Council (www.trcnz.govt.nz) and the New Zealand Ministry of Tourism (www.tourisminfo.govt.nz) were utilized for collecting secondary data on the Chinese market in New Zealand. Information in regard to visitor profiles, such as gender, country of origin, and age, were of main interest. Other statistics and information regarding China's outbound travel market were also gathered. The China National Tourism Association (CNTA) website (www.cnta.govt.cn) was useful for collecting information on outbound travel numbers and tourist characteristics. Previous research about China's outbound tourism, conducted by different national tourism organizations, has also been studied; this provided a good background for this research. Previous research conducted in New Zealand, focusing on relevant issues, has also been used in forming background information.

3.3 FIELD RESEARCH: GROUNDED THEORY

Research often begins with questions that seek to explore and understand processes of transition, change, and the evolution of social constructions (Stiller, 2000). Initial research questions that could be used for the current study might be "How do the Beijing and Guangdong markets perceive NZ? What, if any, are the differences and similarities?" These questions are broad, open, unassuming, and provide directions for the study by telling researchers that the key phenomena of interest are the differences between Beijing and Guangdong outbound tourists' perceptions of New Zealand's destination image. Starting with these questions can help to identify the phenomenon under investigation and help the researcher learn about the process from the participants. Furthermore, it also provides latitude for deep exploration of the phenomenon and facilitates discovery of new concepts.

The key to effective research is a study's research design (Boyd, 2001). A research design is the plan and structure of the investigation used to obtain evidence to answer research questions (Macmillan and Schumacher, 1997). Grounded theory is a qualitative research method that was developed for the purpose of studying a social

phenomenon, and to generate a theory relating to a particular situation (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). The aim of the grounded theory approach is to develop explanatory theory about common social patterns. Strauss and Corbin (1998) defined it as “a set of well-developed concepts related through statements of relationship, which together constitute an integrated framework that can be used to explain or predict phenomena” (cited in Mellion and Tovin, 2002, p110). Becker (1993) suggests that the goal of grounded theory is to identify some major issues, themes or categories of a phenomenon, or to explain inter-relationships. According to Mellion and Tovin (2002, p110), grounded theory is an appropriate choice for addressing research questions about “complex relationships and new areas of inquiry”. Given this background, grounded theory therefore provides a suitable framework and exploring, for explaining the differences between the Beijing and Guangdong markets, as this specific study of destination image, within a country, and between regions is a new area that has not been explored and studied by previous research. Although grounded theory was first introduced in the 1960s, it has become popular only during the last two decades, as more and more researchers and scholars apply this methodology into different domains and fields. Glaser (1978) noted that beyond the confines of sociology, researchers in other fields have adapted grounded theory and found it useful. Researchers in physical therapy and clinical services have used grounded theory to develop theories and explain relationships (Ohman and Hagg, 1998; Stiller, 2000), as well as to study patients’ experiences (Stephenson and Wiles, 2000). Grounded theory has also been used in feminist research (Keddy, Sims and Stern, 1996). In the last years, there have been several examples of a grounded theory approach in tourism research (e.g., Herold, Garcia and Demoya, 2001; Riley, 1995; Connell and Lowe, 1997; Decrop and Snelders, 2004), most of which were looking at the application of inductive methods in tourism and hospitality management research. Therefore, the study of destination image using grounded theory expands the use of this theory as a method.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection and analysis consistent with grounded theory methodology has been adopted for this research. Grounded theory contains many unique characteristics that are designed to maintain the "groundedness" of the approach. Data collection and analysis are consciously combined, and initial data analysis is used to shape continuing data collection. This can provide the researcher opportunities to increase the "density" and "saturation" of recurring categories (Charmaz, 2000), as well as to assist in providing follow-up procedures in regards to unanticipated results. Doing the data collection and analysis at the same time is also designed to increase some insights and clarify the parameters of the emerging theory (Creswell, 1998).

3.4.1 PARTICIPANTS

The participants for this research are two-fold, involving both tourists and tour guides. As a qualitative study, this research established some special criteria, which then came under scrutiny when the validity and reliability of the results were evaluated. The criteria for the tourists were: 1) they were within a group; 2) they were from either Beijing, or Guangzhou, or Shenzhen City of Guangdong market, and 3) they were leaving New Zealand in the morning of the next day. Criteria for tour guides were: 1) Chinese, with over 5 years working experience; 2) have experience in guiding tourists from both markets.

Tour guides were interviewed first to get some general opinions on their perceptions of the similarities and differences between Beijing and Guangdong tourists, as well as to gain other insights about New Zealand's destination image from a third party perspective. All of the tour guides interviewed had plenty of experience guiding in these two markets. They know and understand the characteristics of Beijing and Guangdong tourists through spending days with them while they are in New Zealand. Tour guides were contacted through utilization of the researcher's connections; the time and place for interviews were arranged through telephone conversations. Consent forms and information sheets were given out before the actual research took place,

allowing the tour guide to have some general idea and knowledge about this research. Tourist participants were organized and arranged with the help of a number of different tour guides. The researcher gave every tour guide coming to the Agrodome some copies of the consent form and information sheet; the tour guides distributed them among tourists when the tours they were guiding were from either Beijing or Guangdong. The researcher would be notified in advance if there were any tourists willing to participate. The exact time was arranged later.

Based on the researcher's personal understanding, and reconfirmed by tour guides, it can be said that Chinese tourists were not open to expressing their true opinions, nor were they willing to participate in any interview or survey. This is due to the conservative culture in China and the political sensitivity of Chinese people. People are scared of getting themselves into trouble by saying too much; therefore, most of the time, they avoid being questioned. In China, most of the surveys are done using incentives, either money or gifts; "free" surveys will not be successful as people do not have the passion to get involved in anything like this. Time is valued as "money", therefore, anything that involved their personal time should be compensated by some kind of return. Therefore, in order to increase the participants' willingness to join the research, gifts were given out by the researcher as suggested by the tour guides. Each tourist participating in the interview was given two packs of Lanolin Cream and a block of New Zealand chocolate, and each tour guide was given a bottle of Kiwifruit wine. The reason for giving these gifts to tourists was based on the tour guides' comments that tourists like buying Lanolin products in New Zealand as gifts to take back home for friends and relatives. Kiwifruit wine was given to each tour guide in order to show the researcher's appreciation of their time and suggestions on the research. The reasons for choosing Lanolin cream and New Zealand chocolate were due to the fact that in China, New Zealand is mostly famous for its "sheep-related products", such as sheepskin and lanolin products; the reason for choosing Kiwifruit wine was due to the fact that New Zealand is famous for its kiwifruit, and New Zealanders are proud of being called "Kiwis", plus the taste of kiwifruit wine is quite nice, therefore, suitable for tour guides.

Through these little gifts, participants were more disposed to share their opinions and perceptions, and when the researcher explained that the purpose of this research was for her Masters thesis, their trust was gained, and they were more open to express their true feelings. Most of the actual interviews took 40 minutes or more, as some of the tourists were also happy to talk about personal things and had social conversations with the researcher.

3.4.2 INTERVIEWS

Data collection by interview was seen as the most appropriate method for collecting in-depth perspectives on New Zealand's destination image. Interviewing has been divided into different types in various ways (e.g., Hitchcock, 1989; Patton, 1987). Because this research tries to get to grips with concepts and situational factors associated with the phenomenon of destination image, the face-to-face interview method was seen as most suitable. By conducting face-to-face interviews, the response rate will be 100 % and unqualified responses will also be avoided. The researcher used a semi-structured interview approach to interview both the tourists and tour guides, which allowed for structured questions in a set sequence with wording that was prescribed, but flexible, to “account for the flow of the conversation” (Merriam, 1998, p. 74). A semi-structured interview has a primary focus, but multiple subunits are studied to “help understand the primary case more fully” (Yin, 1994, pp. 41-44). One outstanding technique for qualitative interviewing is what Carl Rogers (1951) called “reflection”: to get more detail or additional insight, especially when you sense uncertainty in the person, rephrase what they have been telling you and put it in the form of a question. Although this method is more time-consuming and the data are more difficult to collect and analyze than the self-completion survey, it allows more freedom during interviews as well as raising other unexpected issues or factors not defined in the questionnaire.

3.4.3 SAMPLING

This research adopted the theoretical sampling method. Theoretical sampling is one of the main characteristics and distinctive features of grounded theory methodology; it means looking for cases that were likely to yield rich and varied information in order to maximize theory development (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). This type of sampling method can identify the main issues and relevant factors, as well as the later research themes. On this basis, the researcher talked to ten tour guides first, and obtained some general knowledge about the tour groups from Beijing or Guangdong. Next, the researcher selected ten tourists from each market as participants who meet the criteria set-up for this research. Only the most effective and efficient tourists were selected from each group because they could best speak to the phenomenon under study. This selection process was assisted by the tour guides, who provided recommendations and comments on the most suitable person to represent the whole group.

After these initial interviews, the researcher placed the data in general patterns and themes, and new questions and areas then emerged for further interviews. This phase deliberately selects individuals, objects or documents to verify the main categories and the theory as a whole, in order for more specific and more in-depth data collection. During the second phrase of data collection, ten more tour guides and twenty more tourists from Beijing and Guangdong were selected with different backgrounds and characteristics, in order to confirm the previous patterns and themes developed through the initial sample. After the general pattern and themes were developed, ten more tourists were interviewed in order to obtain some specific data on a particular issue in order to reconfirm the previous findings, as well as filling any gaps.

The sampling for grounded theory methodology is not a fixed-number sample; it will vary according to the research situation and research findings. The initial sample is likely to be defined by the researcher's choice based on the research situation. If there are many people associated with the situation, as categories emerge from the data, then

the researcher can seek to add to the original sample in such a way that further increases the diversity of the research. The purpose is to strengthen the emerging theory by defining the properties of the categories, and show how those mediate the relationship of category to category. The ideal number of participants varies amongst researchers. Creswell (1998) suggests that interviews with twenty to thirty participants is reasonable. Others suggest that it is unrealistic to specify the number of participants because the researcher cannot know how many participants will be required to reach saturation of the revealed concepts and make sure that all of the concepts important to the study are coded. Additionally, the researcher cannot accurately anticipate the number of participants given that a change in study focus may be suggested by the data (Charmaz, 2000; Streubert and Rinaldi, 2003).

The idea of flexibility of sample size was utilized in this market-based study. Since many tourists from Beijing and Guangdong were not qualified to participate due to time and other reasons, this flexibility of sample size provided the researcher with some adjusted spaces to either extend the area from which participants are drawn or perhaps adjust the focus of the study. For this particular research, ten people from each market were reached and interviewed within the first research month, allowing the researcher to get the general feel of these two markets. Similar responses were identified and patterns emerged, and therefore, the second phase was focused on a number of questions but went into more depth, so as to avoid obtaining repeated answers. After interviewing ten more tourists from each market, some new themes emerged in addition to the ones from the first phase; however, there were still some gaps that had not been well explained. Thus, an additional ten tourists were interviewed for only two or three questions but in more open ways, allowing them to express their ideas freely and from different perspectives. In total, there were thirty people from each market interviewed, plus twenty tour guides who had been taking both tourists from Beijing and Guangdong. By the time the eighty interviews were completed, the information was saturated and some categories had emerged.

3.4.4 INTERVIEW LOCATION AND TIME FRAME

All the interviews took place in Rotorua. The reason for choosing Rotorua was due to the fact that the researcher is based in Rotorua, and is familiar with hotels, attractions and tourist-related organizations. It was therefore easier for the researcher to get permission from these places, based on her previous work experience and social network. It was also due to the research aim — to see how the different markets in China perceive New Zealand, and how the regional differences can affect the overall experience in New Zealand — therefore, it was reasonable and logical to collect data after tourists had gained some traveling experience in New Zealand. Based on the tour schedules from Chinese travel agents, most of the tour groups spend the last day prior to leaving New Zealand in Rotorua, the central tourist city in the North Island.

Interviews with tour guides were held inside the Agrodome, which is one of the five-star tourist attractions in Rotorua. About 100,000 Chinese tourists visit each year. As a previous full-time staff member at the Agrodome, the researcher has some social connections with most of the tour guides, which made it easier to invite a few of them for a 30-minutes interview during each show. To choose the best place to approach the tourists, the researcher had to take three things into consideration: 1) a quiet environment; 2) a place where most Chinese tourists could be reached, 3) a place that gave permission to survey the tourists. After considering these issues, the researcher chose the hotel lounges in three major hotels. These three hotels in Rotorua are the Lake Plaza Hotel, Park Heritage Hotel, and the Grand Tiara Hotel, which, according to tour agents, are the three most popular hotels in Rotorua, hosting most of the Chinese tourists.

The day that the interview took place was also very important. Due to limited financial resources, interviewing tourists both before and after visitation was impossible. As mentioned before, Chinese tourists are very sensitive about giving opinions and expressing feelings in China, so it is extremely hard to conduct interviews with tourists

without attractive incentives or big government organizations as a backup. Tourists were only interviewed once on the day prior to leaving New Zealand. This was because of the nature of the tour tourists depart Rotorua in the early morning and fly out from Auckland airport before lunchtime. The last day was determined to be unsuitable for interviewing, as tourists are concerned about their flights and airport shopping, so they will not be interested or willing to express their opinions and feelings on that day. Therefore, the most appropriate time to collect the most reliable data was thought to be on the day prior to leaving New Zealand.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

“Analysis is the interplay between researchers and data” (Strauss and Corbin, 1994). It is also the process researchers use to distill data into a small group of core categories that describe the nature of the phenomenon studied. Data made from the grounded theory approach were analyzed using Glaser’s (1978) emerging approach, which suggests that a lack of rigidity allows data to have a voice so that categories and theories can emerge from the data instead of being forced to take shape. Data were analyzed by constantly comparing them with other data, by developing categories, and finally by developing theories. This allowed the researcher to find the research gaps, and the areas that needed to be focused on more specifically in later data collection. Data collection continued until saturation was reached. The researcher strives to recognize relationships between the data and the categories, and identify the core concepts. Eventually concepts were found that were common throughout the data, represented the phenomenon, and informed new or revised theory building. New emerging theories were also integrated into the existing theories through continuous, constant comparison among data, the literature and research background.

Due to the fact that Chinese are very sensitive about being tape recorded, the researcher did not record the interview conversations, but took detailed interview notes for each interview. A full statement of participants’ comments and suggestions, as well as two A4 pages of interview notes were written down in Mandarin for later analysis. As notes

were collected they were examined for areas of commonality and difference. In seeking to understand the data, the researcher identified categories of data that described a similar phenomenon or carried a similar meaning. Each category was then given a code, which is “a shorthand designation for various aspects of data” (Merriam, 1998, p. 164), for the later analysis. As transcribing interviews is a very time consuming task, Lofland and Lofland (1995) advise that the analysis of qualitative data is not left until the entire set of interviews has been completed and transcribed. Therefore, the researcher transcribed the interviews in an ongoing sequence, which allowed her to be more aware of emerging themes that could be asked about in a more direct way in later interviews.

The first step in data analysis is coding. Coding, according to Glaser and Strauss (1967) is done at three levels: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. In the first phase of data coding, the open coding level was utilized by the researcher and data were coded based on concepts. After collecting more data during the second phase, the researcher developed some general categories to organize the new data with the existing data, and axial coding was used. Finally, the researcher used the Selective Coding when the central category and core themes had been identified in relation to other categories. Viewing the data through the categories allowed the researcher to build a model or theory linking the data, through the categories, to the phenomenon studied.

3.6 LIMITATIONS

For the most comprehensive results of tourists’ perspectives of New Zealand’s destination images, the ideal would be to do interviews before, during and after their visit. This would mean the data collection process should be three-fold, one interview would be in China where the tourists come from, another would be in New Zealand on the day prior to flying home, and a third one in China again for the post-visit survey. However, this ideal method was not possible, due to time, resources, and the availability of tourists in China, as well as because of privacy constraints. The method thus needed to be adjusted so that all data could be collected in New Zealand. To do so,

the researcher added questions about tourists' pre-visit image of New Zealand, as well as their post-visit behaviors after they go back to China. However, Jenkins (1999) also suggested that respondents' ability to recall pre-visit expectations is questionable, as images sometimes can be mixed and multi-dimensional and evolve over time, and it is hard for tourists to differentiate the images clearly and accurately. Therefore, data analysis should focus on the generalization of the pattern and common characteristics rather than on specific issues.

3.7 ETHICAL ISSUES

The issue of ethics in qualitative research is critical, and researchers have to ensure they have adequately addressed issues such as privacy and confidentiality, as well as ensuring data accuracy and integrity (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Stake 2000). According to the rules of Auckland University of Technology, all projects involving "human participants" require approval from the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee before research may proceed. A set of indicative interview questions and other materials were submitted to the committee in May 2005 for approval, which was received in May 2005. In addition, the following procedures were adhered to:

- An information sheet was given to the participants for the purpose of clearly informing them about their rights and benefits from participating in the research, as well as the research aim and research outcome. This information sheet also assured the participants of their anonymity. This sheet was translated into Chinese and handed out before the interview took place.
- A "Consent Form for Participants" was also drafted and this letter was required to be signed by both the interviewee and the interviewer before the interview. Bartunek and Louis (1996) emphasized the importance of repeatedly confirming informed consent during qualitative research. Before interviews, respondents should be provided with sufficient information to allow them to decide whether they wish to part of the research or not. Furthermore, the use of informed consent forms, allowed respondents to know how information was going to be used and

gave them an opportunity to ask any questions they might have going into the interview (Seidman, 1998, pp. 49-62; Fontana and Frey, 2000, p. 662)

- For the purpose of confirmation, the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee also provided the contact details of the researchers and research supervisor.

3.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has outlined the methodological framework utilized within this study. Data from secondary sources such as newspapers, statistical documents and websites provided background data for this research; this will be explained in the next chapter. In terms of the primary research, congruent with the grounded theory approach, theoretical sampling and constant comparative analysis have been central to this study. Interviews with both tourists and tour guides were the two major data collection methods. The ethical aspects associated with this research have been addressed within the chapter and the steps taken to ensure privacy issues have also been discussed. Despite the challenges faced in the process of data collection, this research overcame many obstacles through the assistance and support of industry players. The subsequent chapters explore the findings from the primary research.

The first half of this thesis has discussed the main components of the thesis framework. From the next chapter, results from both secondary and field research will be presented and discussed. Discussion will be focused on finding out the similarities and differences between the Beijing and Guangdong markets in terms of their perceptions about New Zealand's destination image, and some important factors influencing New Zealand's image before, during and after visitation. This will be achieved using both tour guides and tourists. Finally, the last chapter will present the outcome of this research by comparing the two markets, theories will be grounded, and common patterns and trends will be summarized. From there, marketing implications and strategies will also be recommended. The nature of the Chinese outbound market in relation to New Zealand, the research themes and channels in which data will be

collected and analyzed have been examined to provide a general background for this research.

CHAPTER FOUR: BACKGROUND

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As mentioned in the previous chapter, secondary data were collected through statistics, books, relevant websites and reports; these contribute to a thorough understanding of the Chinese outbound market and the general background of the Beijing and Guangdong markets. Therefore, this chapter is organized to provide some overall information about China's outbound tourism development, from government, tourists and industry perspectives. The general background of the Beijing and Guangdong markets will be introduced afterwards.

4.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHINESE OUTBOUND MARKET

Despite the huge growth in outbound visitor numbers in China since 1983, there have not been many attempts to examine the Chinese outbound industry. Because of its growth and potential, understanding the dynamics of the Chinese outbound industry and its relationship with foreign destinations is becoming increasingly important, and presents the New Zealand tourism industry with as many challenges as benefits.

During the last decade, the importance of the Chinese outbound market is becoming more and more evident, which is reflected in the high-speed growth of outbound traveler numbers. In 2002, outbound tourists numbered 16,000,000, up 40% compared with 2001, and in 2003, the outbound total was 20,220,000, up 21.8% compared with 2002. The sustained growth in outbound tourism from China appears to be due mainly to China's economic growth, the improved standard of living and the desire for travel of the Chinese people, and the policy of relaxation of outbound travel restrictions by the Chinese government (Yu and Weiler, 2001; Pan and Laws, 2001).

4.3 GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE

During the last century, China was closed for many years, and private travel to overseas destinations was impossible, with few exceptions (Guo, 2002). Under Chairman Mao's regime, both domestic and international travel was rare, and it was only with the introduction in 1978 of Deng Xiao-Ping's 'open door' economic reforms that there was a reversal of the policies that suppressed travel. Since then, China has emerged as a major global tourism player (Bramwell and Lane, 2004). Nineteen ninety-one was the first year Chinese citizens were permitted to travel internationally for leisure purposes, and 2.1 million departures were recorded in that year (CNTA Yearbook, 2000-2005). After China relaxed the restrictions on outbound travel, the spending on travel has increased enormously. For the Chinese government, outbound tourism means taking money out of China, so it holds a tight grip on outbound travelers by controlling the destinations its citizens visit, through the Approved Destination Status (ADS) policy on destination approval, as well as by controlling the amount of money that is spent on traveling.

4.3.1 APPROVED DESTINATION STATUS (ADS)

Outbound travel by Chinese citizens for non-government purposes started in 1983, initially in Guangdong Province only; people were allowed to go abroad to visit their friends and relatives. The following year all other provinces in China received permission to travel overseas for private purposes, under two rules: a) Hong Kong and Macau were the only destinations; b) all the overseas travelers needed a statement of financial security from their overseas friends and relatives. In 1990, mainland Chinese people were allowed to start applying for permits to go abroad, and the first tour groups began the following year, but still only for the purpose of visiting friends and family. During that year, destinations expanded to include Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, and these three countries became the first destinations outside Chinese sovereign territory to be granted the ADS status. The Philippines was added to the list in 1992. At that time, there were only nine travel services handling the outbound market, and this

stage was the experimental period of the development of outbound tourism (Wang, 2003).

As continuous market growth has occurred, more destinations became interested in getting ADS status. In 1998, South Korea, New Zealand and Australia were added to the scheme, and Japan was also approved in 2000. Since then, the Chinese government has steadily opened its door to rest of the world, and ADS numbers are increasing. By May 2004, 63 countries could be visited by Chinese outbound travelers, covering Europe, Asia, Africa, America and the Pacific regions. More than 40 countries are still negotiating to obtain ADS status. This ADS trend has proved that China's outbound tourism has expended to the whole world.

4.3.2 AT OWN EXPENSE

Officially, traveling to an overseas destination still needs to be financially secured by the tourists' friends and relatives in the destination country. However, since more and more countries have been awarded ADS status, and more and more tourists are traveling each year, two new regulations were initiated in 1997 for China's outbound market. The first regulation was drafted by China's National Foreign Exchange (CNFEA), and called "The means of foreign exchange for private outbound purposes". This controls the maximum foreign currency amount outbound travelers can exchange when traveling overseas. Under this regulation, Chinese tourists can buy a maximum of US\$2000 at the official exchange rate (Dou, 2000). The other regulation is the "Provision of regulation on the management of outbound travel by Chinese citizens at their own expense", drafted by the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA). This policy legalized the practice of outbound travel at the tourists' own expense at the official level, and created a basic structure upon which the market and industry could develop (Guo, 2002). Duo (2000) pointed out these two regulations were the first to govern outbound travel at the citizen's own expense, which represents a new phrase of China's outbound tourism development.

4.3.3 GROUP TRAVELLING

One common characteristic of Chinese outbound tourists is that tourists are traveling in groups with everything pre-organized by the travel agents. Jenkins (1997) distinguished several types of travelers and different forms of travel, including free independent tourists, group travelers, backpackers and so on. However, in China's case, people have to join a group traveling when traveling overseas (Roth, 1998). The reasons for this can be explained through China's outbound travel system. One of the most significant reasons for group travel is because it is "a compulsory policy". The other reason may be due to their lack of overseas travel experience. Even in the case of domestic travelers, more and more people are joining inclusive tours for convenience, guaranteed accommodation and transport facilities (Jenkins and Liu, 1997). By traveling within groups, tourists do not need to worry about accommodation, transportation, attractions, food and language problems, as there will always be a Chinese speaking guide taking groups around during sight-seeing. Due to poor English skills, and lack of travel experience overseas, Chinese tourists are scared to be alone, and like to stick together, in order to gain security in a foreign country. Philips and Webster (1983) stated group travel and package tour provide a sense of security, and having a tour guide adds to this 'safe' feeling. Security here refers to safety of self and possessions, confidence to partake in activities, financial confidence, reduced anxiety about language problems and organizing the holiday (Chen, 2003). However, although packaged group travel can provide feeling of "safety", reducing people's anxiety about organizing tours and language problems, it has very limited freedom and flexibility for change. Once the itinerary is set, everything needs to be done within the standard. Therefore, all the Chinese tourists from Beijing and Guangdong have no freedom to change the activities and attractions they are going to visit, and everything has to be done according to the pre-arranged program.

China's outbound tourism is administrated by the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA), which is directly regulated by the State Council and is

responsible for developing, promoting and regulating the Chinese Tourism Industry (CNTA, 2004). The current guiding principle to the development of outbound tourism from China is organized, planned, and controlled development of tourism (Yin, 2003).

4.3.4 TOUR AGENDAS IN NEW ZEALAND

The most common way for tourists to come to New Zealand is to join an “Australia-New Zealand” package, where tourists spend eight days in Australia and 3-4 days in New Zealand. The current price in China for this package is around 11,000 to 13,000 RMP (about NZ\$2000). For Westerners, this price is very economical, as it covers return tickets, 10 days accommodation, food, admissions, transportation, and the tour guide. The New Zealand Ministry of Tourism calculated the rough figure, which shows that the average cost per Chinese tourist per day in New Zealand is only about US \$38 (TNZ, 2005), and it is definitely not sufficient for a standard travel experience. However, this so-called “zero-profit” or “negative-profit” business has been the pricing policy of many travel agents and tour companies, as the competition is getting so intense.

The three days in New Zealand will be mainly spent in Rotorua, as it is one of the most remarkable tourist cities of the country, and is located in the central North Island, only three hours drive from Auckland. According to interviews with tour guides, most of the tour groups were staying in Rotorua for two days and one night, with one day and one night in Auckland. During their stay in New Zealand, there were only one or two paid activities included in the tour package; others were all "free" sightseeing, such as the lake front, Government Garden, Blue Lake, Red-Forest, and so on. Therefore, the tour schedules were quite loose and flexible, leaving plenty of shopping time and free time for the tourists. The nature of this package ultimately impacts on tourists' perceptions and impressions of New Zealand's image.

4.4 INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE

4.4.1 DESTINATION COMPETITION

With the increasing number of ADS destinations, Chinese travelers have more choices and selections when making oversea-trip decisions. The competition between countries that want to share China's outbound market is getting furious. Destinations are trying to attract the Chinese outbound market through competitive prices, appealing products and quality service. During the last three years, a number of reports concentrating on analyzing the Chinese outbound market have been written, in order to get some in-depth understanding of this giant market (Australian Tourist Commission, 2004; Pan and Laws, 2001; Ryan and Mo, 2001; Scandinavian Tourist Board, 2002/2004; Canadian Tourism Commission, 2001-2003; Beeken, 2003; University of Hawaii, 2003; Visit Britain, 2003; Yu and Weiler, 2001). To date, despite the efforts of these newly opened destinations, the highest market share for the Chinese outbound market is still in South East Asia — Hong Kong and Macau were the first two destinations gaining ADS in 1980s, then Thailand, Singapore and Malaysian joined the ADS destinations in 1990. Moreover, the ease of getting there, the proximity to China, the similarities in culture background, fewer visa requirements, and political issues have made these destinations more accessible and more attractive.

4.4.2 MORE DEVELOPMENT

In response to the growing demand of the Chinese outbound market, there have been further developments in the outbound market. According to a report from China Youth Travel Service (2004), the number of authorized travel services increased from 67 to 528 in 2002, and foreign travel services began to enter China in 2002, such as the Japanese Tourism Board (JTB) and the German Tourism Agent (GTA). Their entry makes the Chinese market more open and competitive, and the Chinese travel service is becoming standardized. Expansion of airline services is another factor that has enhanced the further development of Chinese outbound tourism. European airlines have increased flights between China and Europe, and many airlines such as Singapore Airlines and Cathay Pacific Airlines have started to carry Chinese tourists flying

between New Zealand and China. Currently, new negotiations between China South Airline and Air New Zealand are being undertaken, and there will be a direct flight from China to Auckland in 2006 according to CNTA (2005).

4.4.3 TRAVEL AGENTS

Chinese outbound tourists are required to book through a licensed agent for ADS leisure travel, and agents are the keys to the ADS visa issuance process. The travel trade in China is currently divided into two main categories: a) international travel agents, who can organize inbound travel and domestic travel and selected outbound travel; b) domestic travel agents, who can only organize tours within China (Guo, 2002). Based on the size of the travel agents, Chinese travel agents could also be divided into two types: wholesalers and retail agents.

Wholesale travel agents began to emerge in China in 2003. A few authorized outbound international travel agents in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong take bookings from other domestic travel agents, in particular those who operate outside of the traditional ADS regions, who are not large enough to form their own groups. This is referred to as “CAN TUAN” or "merge tours” (Australian Tourist Commission, 2004).

Beijing	Shanghai	Guangdong
CTS* Head Office	Jin Jiang	GZL International Travel Service
China Comfort	Hua Ting	CTS Guangdong
China Youth Travel		CITS** Guangdong
		Shantou Tourism General Co.

* CTS: China Travel Service

**CITS: China International Travel Service

Table 2: Travel Agents for Outbound Travel (Source: Scandinavian Tourist Board, 2004)

Up to June 2005, there were 670 CNTA retail travel agents in China, authorized to handle outbound travel to destinations with ADS status for Chinese tourists. These travel agents spread into China's major cities, and are predominantly located in Beijing and Guangdong, the two major tourist generating regions for outbound tourism; and other agents are located mainly in Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Tianjin, Shandong, Hebei and Chongqing, all newly-developed regions. Table 2 is a list of the largest outbound agents in China.

Travel agents will continue to play a dominant role in the Chinese industry. Agents will continue to act as both tour operators and travel agencies, and it is expected that more large-scale travel agencies will expand into the market, increasing the number of retail travel agencies.

4.4.4 FUTURE TRENDS

According to reports and predictions made by the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2005) and CNTA (2004), the economy in China will grow at the rate of 7% over the next ten years, with an average per capita GDP growth of 6.5%. More rural areas will be urbanized, and people will spend more money on travel, communication and life-style enjoyment. Family travel will dominate the market, taking over from the traditional group travel. Pure sightseeing tours will be replaced by theme tours or special-interest tours in the future. The overall Chinese outbound market will become one of the youngest in the world, and as people become more educated, free independent travelers (FIT) will emerge in the market over the next 10 years as a new type of tourist. The concept of "multi-countries in one trip" will change to "single destination in-depth tour". The outgoing time mode will likely be the three Golden Week holidays, plus 10 to 15 days of paid holiday leave. Long-haul trips will become one of the preferred travel patterns among Chinese outbound travelers. Wang (2003) has pointed out that the Chinese are sticking close to home for now, but it is only a matter of time before they fan out across the globe, reshaping the tourist landscape.

Du (2004), in his research for CNTA, concluded that outbound tours would no longer be a once-in-a-lifetime event for many Chinese travelers. Repeat traveling would become common. The middle class would become the dominant power in the outbound market. Middle-aged travelers, especially with higher income and education would become the biggest component in the next ten years. Developed countries, such as the U.S. and Europe would be the most sought after destinations. Word-of-mouth would still be the most effective and efficient marketing tool in China.

The World Tourism Organization (WTO) and PATA have estimated the number of Chinese outbound travelers will reach approximately 100 million, becoming the fourth largest tourist-generating country by 2020. Koldwski (2003, p3), Managing Director of the Strategic Intelligence Center of PATA, said in a conference in Beijing: “China is already a key player in the global tourism market, and the growth in outbound travel from China is not only reflected by the volume of trips, but also high expenditure by Chinese tourists”. Chinese tourists’ strong purchasing power has also been demonstrated by Yu and Weiler’s (2001) study. Apart from costs for the package tour, including prepaid international airfares, Chinese travelers are likely to spend all of the extra cash on shopping. Besides shopping for themselves, they buy gifts for their friends and relatives, for colleagues and others. This is a way of showing respect for others, as well as a way of showing acknowledgement of and consideration for favors done by others.

4.5 BEIJING AND GUANGDONG MARKETS

In order to have a better understanding of the Chinese outbound market, studying the general characteristics, behaviors, and travel preferences of Chinese tourists is very important, in terms of providing the appropriate products to meet consumer needs, as well as enhancing customer experience and satisfaction at the destinations. The Chinese tourists from both the Beijing and Guangdong markets have some similarities in terms of their travel behaviors, and these will be outlined first in this section. The Beijing and

Guangdong markets also differ to some extent with respect to personal values, attitude towards traveling, shopping behavior, as well as in some other respects, such as language, culture, food preference and entertainment.

4.5.1 SIMILARITIES

4.5.1.1 Chinese language and meals are preferred

Previous research all showed that Chinese tourists prefer reading the information and travel brochures in their own language. Chinese-speaking tour guides are also required in the overseas destination for sightseeing and tour arrangements, due to the tourists' lack of English skills. Based on CNTA data, most Chinese tourists go to travel agents for basic travel information and recommendations, and most prefer traveling to a number of different countries during a trip. Service quality is one of the areas on which Chinese tourists place a high priority, and frontline staff especially in destinations are required to have comprehensive training in order to provide better service. Chinese tourists particularly prefer to have Chinese meals, especially a hot breakfast.

4.5.1.2 Big spenders

Big spending when shopping at overseas destinations is another typical characteristic of both Beijing and Guangdong outbound tourists. “The growing number of Chinese tourists is bringing economic benefits to their destination countries around the world, both in tourist numbers and tourist expenditures” (Canadian Tourism Administration, 2002). According to the People’s Daily News, and based on China’s National Statistics, Chinese tourists spent more than US\$500 million worth of foreign income in Malaysia in 2003; and they were also the biggest spenders in Hong Kong in the same year. Throughout the past decade, Chinese outbound travel to Australia has experienced annual growth rates of two digits (Guo, 2002). The average expenditure in Australia by Chinese visitors (Aus \$3951 per person) was much higher than the average expenditure for international visitors (Aus \$2152), according to the Bureau of Tourism Research in 2000. In Europe, the expenditure of the Chinese visitor is also higher than that of European and American travelers. Kashi Ran Bhandari, an official of the Nepal

Tourism Board was quoted in an interview: “instead of being a threat, China’s prosperity provides more opportunities for neighboring countries, and tourism is no doubt a good illustration” (Xinhua News, 2005).

4.5.1.3 “Face”

Hofstede’s (1980) study on collectivism and individualism has found that Asian countries are mostly collective, and people typically consider the group not the individual to be the most fundamental component of a society. Unlike western countries, where people have person-centered beliefs (Morris, Nisbett and Peng, 1995), Asians tend to have a more holistic, cognitive orientation, stressing relationships and connectedness (Ji and Nisbett, 2000). As a result, people in these cultures tend to have more willingness and intention to become part of a group, especially when traveling to a strange destination. Mattila and Patterson’s research (2004) also showed that Asian people are likely to regain ‘face’ in the eyes of their family and friends on most occasions, and they have a lower tolerance to uncertain and ambiguous situations. This theory is particularly true among Chinese people, as Lin (2004) noted a word of praise by others in the public, is valued much more than money compensation for Chinese, which reflects their preference and likely response when dealing with service quality issues. Yu and Weiler’s (2001) study shows that Chinese tourists care a lot about their “mianzi” (face), therefore, buying presents from overseas for their friends and colleagues is another way of showing their “face” or status.

4.5.1.4 Travel potential and development

Another thing that both Beijing and Guangdong markets have in common is the great potential for outbound traveling. Beijing received 3.1 million overseas tourists in 2002, which brought to the city total tourist revenue of 3.1 billion U.S. dollars. According to a national study done by the Beijing Tourism Administration (2003), 40% of Beijing residents traveled twice during the year 2003, and family travel was the dominant type, making up 70% of the total travel. The total number of outbound tourists from Beijing was 514,000 people, which was only around 3.5% of Beijing’s total population, which

implies a big growth potential for outbound tourism in the future (China News Website, 2004).

Beijing is also famous for its large number of “rich” people (Lai, 2004), therefore, high spending is a characteristic of a 'Beijinger's travel behavior. The Beijing Academy of Social Sciences conducted a survey amongst the city's rich citizens under a course titled “Analysis and Forecast of the Economic Situation in Beijing”, and found that Beijing's high-income families have total assets reaching 2.356 million Yuan on average, with 66.2% in property assets and 33.8% in financial assets. The survey also found that Beijing's high-income families have 22 cars per 100 households, and that Beijing's millionaire number between 1.5 million and 2 million (1999). During last year's May-Day Golden Week, a Beijing property developer organized buyers from a group of owners who had bought expensive houses in Beijing to form a “Hong Kong spending spree tour”. More than 30 beginners spent on average 50000 Yuan per person (6,045 USD) during the five-day tour, running up a tab of 2 million Yuan for the group. These 'Beijingers' carefree ways with money shocked even the rich residents of Hong Kong.

Guangdong is China's capital of economic and technological development, with the largest GDP, highest industrial output and largest export values of all the provinces (Guangdong Provincial Statistic Bureau, 2003). As China's central economic region, Guangdong has always been the major force for China's tourism development. For many years, Guangdong province has been the top nationwide tourism region in terms of the number of traveler entries, total travel revenue, and foreign currency income via tourism (Asian Times Online, 2005). Guangdong was the first province to conduct overseas tours and its travelers make up more than any other province in the country, with 31.5% of the national total. According to the Guangdong Provincial Statistics Bureau (2003), the outbound tourists from Guangdong for the year 2002 numbered 1.4 million, making up 50% of China's total outbound number. According to the Statistics Bureau, families in Guangdong spend an average of about 1260 Yuan on travel, and

with more and more spare money and time, tourism is becoming a necessary way for Guangdong people to relax the body and get away from stress.

4.5.2 DIFFERENCES

Although both the Beijing and Guangdong markets have some characteristics in common, there are some differences, which should be noted and taken into consideration. Although studying the differences between Beijing and Guangdong is a time-consuming task as it involves so many areas and aspects, this research will cover some of the areas briefly in order to provide a general background of these two markets.

4.5.2.1 Climate Differences

Based on data from China Meteorological Administration (CMA), Beijing is located in the temperate zone and affected by continental monsoons. Spring and autumn in Beijing are shorter, while summer and winter are relatively longer. Beijing's weather is relatively dry throughout the whole year, with an average annual precipitation of about 644 mm and 74 rainy days. Guangdong, however, enjoys a tropical and sub-tropical climate marked by high temperature and plentiful rainfall. It has the highest mean temperatures of 28 degrees Celsius in July (the hottest month), and 13 degrees in January (the coldest month). The greater part of the province has a mean annual precipitation of about 1,500-2,000 mm. and 140-160 rainy days. The coastal regions are frequently visited by typhoons between July and August.

4.5.2.2 Food and Clothes Differences

Their different geographical locations and climates result in different eating habits and clothing preferences for the people of Beijing and Guangdong (Wang, 1992). Due to differences in Northern and Southern China's agriculture production structure, Northern Chinese typically eat wheat products and Southern Chinese eat rice as their main food. According to Duan (2005), in South China, high temperatures and high rainfall determine that the primary form of agriculture is the paddy field. Therefore, rice is the common food supply in this region. In contrast, North China typically has low

rainfall, lower temperature, and the region is full of dry land, therefore, wheat is more likely to grow in this region. That is why flour pastries such as dumplings, steamed buns and other types of bread are sold in nearly every restaurant, lunch bar and flea market in the North, while rice either steamed or fried is always served with dishes in Southern China.

Based on Li's (2005) research findings on the differences between Northern and Southern Chinese, Northern Chinese like eating meat in large servings, for example, dishes such as "meat stew" and "meat pot" are very popular, where people can enjoy meat in large quantities. Southern Chinese eat meat in a different way. It is cut into very tiny pieces like mince, and cooked thoroughly. Southern Chinese like green vegetables, seafood, and drinking special soups with every meal; Northern Chinese like eating dishes with strong flavors and darker colors, and meat is preferred to vegetables and seafood. In Guangdong, culinary art is very important, presentation and nutrition are demanded by people; in Beijing and other northern regions, the "quantity" is more important than the look of the dish; people from Northern China including Beijing have food for satisfying their hunger first (Wang, 1992). This difference is reflected in their different food requirements, which, in turn, will influence their perception and impression of New Zealand food.

4.5.2.3 Perspectives

North and South China have different viewpoints and attitudes towards politics and economics. In general, North China is famous for its political activities, and South China is good at business and trading. North China has been a political center since the Qin Dynasty, as can be seen in the capital city of China, Beijing. Beijing is China's center for politics, culture, technology and research, as well as tertiary education. According to Tang (2004), Beijing people have a greater passion for politics compared to other regions, and they also tend to have a greater sense of social responsibility. Beijing, as a capital city for over four thousand years, for many dynasties and emperors, is considered the most cultural region, with the richest Chinese tradition and history.

Therefore, Beijing people are conservative, and sensitive to new things and new cultures. South China, due to its closeness to the rest of the world, has always been the first place to absorb Western culture, lifestyles and technologies, which have enhanced its economical and technological development, as well as the way people think in this region. In this respect, Guangdong is China's frontline for economic revolution and development, and its economic development has even influenced the pace of development in surrounding cities. Guangdong is very close to Hong Kong, and therefore is influenced by Hong Kong's lifestyle and its orientation towards the world as well as culture (Wang, 1992). Therefore, Guangdong people are very determined to engage in business and commerce, and are also very practical in terms of consumption and living.

4.5.2.4 Lifestyle

Lei Feng (2004) has conducted research on the different lifestyles in three Chinese markets: Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong. Findings showed that there were differences in terms of people's daily life and lifestyle between the regions. Table 3 below is a summary of lifestyle differences between Beijing and Guangdong.

Beijing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like hanging out with friends and colleagues • Less time at home • Prefer bars, pubs and Karaoke • High percentage of sports club and Gym members • Enjoy cultural performance and operas • Not so concerned about food
Guangdong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet-related activities are popular • Enjoy home activities, such as listening to Music, watching TV and videos, • Very fussy about food, especially the nutrition and the appearance of the dish • Not interested in cultural shows

Table 3: Lifestyle

4.5.2.5 Consumption Psychology

Capital China (2004) conducted a national study on the characteristics and consumption psychology among businessmen in different cities, and found that Northern and Southern Chinese had a very different perspective on doing business and commerce, as well as different attitudes towards shopping and consumption. Beijing people preferred using familiar brands and products, and had a very high level of product loyalty while Guangdong people were keen to learn new things and experience differences. Therefore, a new product or a destination should consider Guangdong as its starting point, and then move on to Beijing and other regions, which would lower the investment risks and failure. This suggests that to promote new brands in combination with existing or famous brands to promote will improve the images in the minds of consumers in Beijing. According to Jin (2001), public activities are also very effective in stimulating Beijing consumers' purchasing passion. Beijing people are concerned about politics, and are greatly influenced by government information, therefore, some slogans and recommendations from government, such as on environmental protection, have a great impact on Beijing people's consumption habits. Guangdong people like accepting new things, and collecting information and ideas from all sort of channels, in order to decide which products they like and prefer. Moreover, Guangdong people prefer to combine shopping with entertainment and relaxation; therefore, entertainment facilities are all set up inside and around the shopping malls in Guangdong.

4.5.2.6 Investment Attitude

Zero Research Company found that Beijing people were the worst in terms of private funds management among the three most developed cities (Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong). Beijing people are conservative and Guangdong people are "open-minded" and ready to take a higher level of risk. Beijing people prefer "holding" their money in their hands, in order to feel safe and secure, therefore, people in Beijing like depositing money in the bank on a regular basis; Guangdong people prefer using money to make more money, through many channels, such as foreign exchange, stocks, trust and funds, as well as real estate and business trading. Currently,

Guangdong's consumption attitude is experiencing something like people spend money to buy "Happiness and Health". It is very common nowadays to see Guangdong people borrow money from the bank to buy a car or a house; people are paying for maids to do the cleaning and cooking; most people will spend a fairly large amount of money on traveling and entertainment during holidays; and the money spent on the health products and health checks is increasing in Guangdong. This shows that Guangdong people have more intention to enjoy a higher quality of life, and are moving towards the same perspective and lifestyle as Western people. Therefore, the potential for outbound travel from Guangdong seems to be very great.

4.5.2.7 Different Perceptions about Travel

According to a research conducted in Beijing and Guangdong (2002), traveling means different things to different people. According to Li (2005), a senior consultant in the China Travel Service, travel for Beijing people is a way of gaining knowledge, broadening life experience, and representing social status. Beijing people always admire those with lots of travel experience, and those people with plenty of knowledge about other countries. However, for people in Guangdong, travel is a means to leisure and relaxation. Guangdong tourists travel to get away from normal life, to escape from stress and their hard-work environment. This difference results in their different motivations for travel, and their perceptions about a destination image. Guangdong tourists are looking for a destination that will be, therefore, places with less population, less pollution, and less stress will be ideal for Guangdong tourists; Beijing tourists are interested in destinations with culture and historical backgrounds, where they could find out something new and special, and show it to others to gain "face". Therefore, information and image related to culture and heritage would attract Beijing tourists more.

4.5.2.8 Media Differences

Beijing's public media concentrate on reporting up-to-date news at the national level, mainly about international conferences, government leaders and their activities. News

at the international, national, and local levels is reported in all types of media in Beijing. Guangdong's public media are influenced heavily by Hong Kong, which are mainly in Cantonese and focused on entertainment from Hong Kong and other countries (Duan, 2005). Hong Kong is famous for its high-quality entertainment programmes, series and movies; therefore, most people from Guangdong have been watching programmes from Hong Kong since they first had television at home. Beijing people like reading newspapers, and watching news, even the taxi drivers will listen to up-to-date news on the radio. The desire to be part of the nation and to get involved in China's politics drives Beijing people to learn and be concerned about political movement as a part of their daily lives (Tang, 2004). Beijing people don't like Guangdong's media and presenters, as they perceive them to produce less useful, less valuable information, and most of the programmes cater to the lower common denominator. Everything in the media is too far away from reality, people can only have short-term pleasure from it, and nothing can be gained from it. Guangdong people hardly watch CCTV (Beijing's top TV channel), as all of the programmes are in Mandarin and originally from Northern China, therefore, very different from the lifestyle in Guangdong. Moreover, Guangdong people perceive Beijing's media as too political, reporting news as its main priority, and for them, the purpose of TV is to relax and entertain people rather than educating them. The difference in public media between Guangdong and Beijing will influence their perception of the information carried by the media, and ultimately affect their preferred media channel and how they see different media in each other's region. Marketing New Zealand's image through different media and channels will provide a better outcome.

4.6 CONCLUSION

The Chinese outbound market has been developing rapidly since the year 2000 with increasing numbers of tourists traveling overseas. This was due to China's economic growth, improved standard of living and desire for travel, and the easing of travel restrictions by the Chinese government. The number of ADS destinations had risen to 63 by May 2005; Chinese tourists are now able to travel to Asia and the Pacific,

America, Europe, and Africa. While the competition between destinations is becoming more and more intense, the Chinese outbound industry is also experiencing further development, such as increasing numbers of flights between China and the rest of the world, as well as an increased number of travel agents who can arrange outbound travel. Although Chinese tourists from both Beijing and Guangdong do have common characteristics in terms of travel behaviors, there are also some differences between these two markets in aspects such as climate, food, lifestyle and perception of tourism. This suggests that it is necessary to segment the Chinese outbound market in order to understand it fully and capture issues of concern. The findings of this research will build towards a deeper understanding of the Northern and Southern Chinese markets, (Beijing and Guangdong in this case), which can all be linked to the findings from the field research through interviews. The next chapter will present some of the important findings from the primary research, with the data organized into different categories and sub-categories. Implications from these categories will also be illustrated at the end of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Both information source and cultural background are important factors contributing to destination image, particularly with respect to ensuring New Zealand is perceived as attractive through positive images in China. The importance of the Chinese outbound market to New Zealand's tourism development makes it necessary to examine further the different segmentations within the market. Comparing Beijing and Guangdong, two regional markets can provide a clear understanding of the similarities and differences, which can enable New Zealand to provide better products and services to cater for the different segments in China. This study has divided the destination image into two parts: Image in China (pre-visit image) and Impressions in New Zealand (in-destination image).

Based on Gunn's seven-stage model on destination image and decision making (1976), the results of this research are presented according to stages, as the destination image of New Zealand is formed in a continuing process. These are summarized in text form, with representative quotes from participants and tour guides. Each stage will be analyzed and explained by providing some related reasons. Stage one focus on pre-visit destination image perception in China. The important issues and the similarities and differences between Beijing and Guangdong markets are examined. Stage two will present how tourists from both markets perceive New Zealand during visitation, and how similar and different their impressions of New Zealand are. This chapter presents the research findings concerning tourists' images of New Zealand, before and during visitation, and in relation to information factors and cultural factors. At the same time, comparisons between the Beijing and Guangdong markets in relation to these issues will also be examined. Finally, the implications rising from the findings will be discussed.

5.2 STAGE ONE: PRE-VISIT DESTINATION IMAGE

This section focuses on the perceived New Zealand image before Chinese tourists' visitation to New Zealand. The similarities of both markets on pre-visit image of New Zealand will be discussed first, and then the differences in pre-visit image of New Zealand

between the Beijing and Guangdong markets will be presented in relation to information source and cultural factors.

5.2.1 PRE-VISIT IMAGE IS IMPORTANT

Many participants both from Beijing and Guangdong markets agree on the importance of pre-visit image, as this Beijing tourist illustrates:

For us, traveling such a long distance is always a big thing, money, time, and safety issues...so you know, we have to be careful when we choose the place to go. Of course I will go to those places with the most positive comments, because you know, there are so many choices for us nowadays in China, many countries are open to China. Chinese, well, my family and friends, we always choose some place where we are familiar with, well, comparatively, and where we have a good impression about it... Because you can only trust your feeling and your 'sixth-sense' when it is impossible for you to try ...traveling is like that...

This tourist had identified the importance and weight of a destination image in tourists' decision-making process when selecting a place to travel. Several participants in the study also confirmed the role of pre-travel "destination image" in terms of influencing their travel decisions, as two tourists from Guangdong comment:

It is definitely an important part in the whole place selection process, if I don't know a place, I don't have a clear and positive image about a place, I won't go, that's like 'put money on fire'...too dangerous!

China is too far away from Australia and New Zealand, we come here not easily, long hour flight time, lots of money, so we must make sure our trip is valuable for money and time worthy, and the only way that attracts us is the image or the impression created in China by these destinations...

5.2.2 NEW ZEALAND'S VAGUE IMAGE

All of these tourists from both markets go to Australia first and stay for seven days before the trip to New Zealand. New Zealand, for Chinese tourists, is just an "add on destination". Tourists have a very vague image of New Zealand before coming here. The main problems

identified by many participants were things such as “lack of information about New Zealand in China”, “less access to electronic information”, and “few New Zealand experts”. Most of the tourists revealed that the problems with New Zealand’s destination image were centered on “lack of promotion in China”, “less information source” and “absence of effective communication tools”. This point is illustrated by the following extract:

I don’t really have any knowledge about New Zealand, I mean I would love to know more about this place before I came, but I couldn’t see much information in Beijing. Australia is different, I can hear from radio, I can see advertisements on TV, even the travel agents, and they talked about Australia much more than New Zealand. That is why, why we have more impression about Australia, only little image about New Zealand...sheep (Laugh.), sheep everywhere! You know, New Zealand is such a young country, and so far away from China, so it has to promote itself in order to let Chinese know, otherwise, who wants to fly 16 hours to come here?? Right?

Another participant supports this point:

If I had some more knowledge about New Zealand, I probably would take a New Zealand only trip, staying here for more days, because I knew so little about here when I was in China, therefore, I didn’t have a good impression about here...well, didn’t impress me very much, not as much as in Australia...I mean, for a long-haul travel destination like here, I, and most Chinese people would just come once a lifetime...due to many factors, you know, such as money, time and visa ...etc. So, I think, image is very important, needs to be outstanding and need to be easy to remember with positive feelings...and most importantly, should raise people’s interest and desire for traveling...

Other tourists had identified the problem that promotion in China was not effective or impressive. The way New Zealand “brands” itself was not very successful in catching people’s eyes, which leads to a low level of recognition and appreciation. Several tourists from both Beijing and Guangdong highlighted this problem, as this comment illustrates:

I don’t see New Zealand’s attractiveness, I mean, from the introduction and description from the travel consultant in the travel company, I didn’t think there was anything worth seeing. I will only travel that far if there are many things worth seeing and spending money on, you know what I mean?

Another participant also added:

I had an impression before coming that New Zealand has only sheep and grass, nothing else, and people are hardly seen on the street, there are farms everywhere.... There weren't many things to do! There are in fact! But when I was in China, I couldn't get any information about the "real New Zealand", they don't have flash advertisements on TV, they don't have pictorial brochures, they don't have road shows...well, I didn't see any impressive promotions....I came here because of the joint tour with Australia, otherwise, I would not come to New Zealand only....

These tourists listed above have identified some of the potential problems involved in the current "image-forming" or "image-creating" process in China, and it illustrated New Zealand's current image generally was not very effective or successful. Although Chinese tourists have a very limited image of New Zealand, both Beijing and Guangdong tourists have good images and impressions about Australia, according to the responses from interviews. Based on the findings from the interviews, it is much easier to search for information about Australia on the website, as well as through travel brochures and related materials; travel agents were more than willing to promote Australia and introduce Australia; Australia's advertisements can be seen and heard everywhere, from TV, newspaper, radio, bus stop, sub-ways, and even in some of the hotels. Apart from that, Australia has already provided an image by hosting the Sydney Olympic Games, and people came to know some of the famous attractions, such as the Opera House. As one of the participant mentioned:

Australia is everywhere in Guangdong, if you go to Guangdong, you will see lots of information about it, even on TV and radio station...When I read the travel book, there are so many world-famous attractions over there, and I was very keen to see that country...

I like reading magazines, when I saw some pictures of Australia's places, I felt it was so beautiful and natural, and so rich in culture and history, I went to the travel agents, they also provided me some of the brochures and information, which deepened my impression about this country. I have also seen the newly released TV commercials, very attractive, the rainbow

one....do you know that? Short, but catchy, easy to remember. My children even downloaded it and leant to sing.... so overall, I mean, Australia has provided so many channels for visitors to search information, New Zealand is weak in this...

This tourist has demonstrated that New Zealand only has a vague image among Chinese tourists in China; however, Australia is leading the market with clear impressions. The reason for that is mainly due to the promotional efforts each country has put into China's major markets. Since 2000, Australia began to target China as a potential inbound market, with a great amount of monetary input and efforts expended in three major regions: Beijing, Shanghai and Guangdong (CNTA 2005). A report from CNTA (2003) also showed that Australia put up advertisements about its culture and animals in Shanghai's most famous street, which drew lots of attention from residents. A 43% increase in visitor numbers was achieved by Australia in its inbound tourists from China in 2004, and there were more than 253,000 visitors from China in total. This exceeds the total visitor numbers from Singapore and South Korea, and places China second, after Japan, in terms of Asian visitor numbers for Australia. From January 2005, Australia spent another 5.7 million Australian dollars (37.05 million Chinese yuan) for marketing and promotion in China. One of the most popular, eye-catching advertisements is a TV commercial, with a beautiful soft English song, and lots of clips about Australia's tourism resources, ranging from nature, sports, leisure and entertainment. This advertisement has had many good comments and creates a good and deep image about Australia among Chinese people.

This multi-media image building activity throughout China has informed and enabled Chinese tourists to form a strong, positive image of Australia; it is repeated image building. This tour guide adds:

They (Beijing and Guangdong tourists) told me that they knew many things about Australia, but nothing about New Zealand; they saw many advertisements in their hometown (Beijing and Guangdong)

According to CNTA (2005), Australia has also put up advertisements on the websites, radio stations, and bus stops, and bus bodies in major regions such as Beijing, Shanghai and

Guangdong-as well as some newly developed regions such as Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Tianjin, Shandong, Hebei, and Chongqing. In addition, by February 2005, there were 380 qualified “Australian Experts” in China, including product designers, sales staff, tour guides, and travel consultants. All of these “Australian experts” had been strictly trained and examined; therefore they have a wide range of knowledge and experience about Australia’s many aspects, which ultimately can provide thorough and correct images to the tourists. Apart from that, major newspapers and travel materials have also been used as promotional media to introduce Australia to the Chinese people, and information about Australia is very easy to find on websites, in both Chinese and English versions. Australia’s series of promotional strategies has been paid back by the increasing awareness of Australia between Chinese tourists, the growing interest about going to Australia in the near future, and the rapid increase of Chinese visitors to Australia.

On the other hand, the CNTA (2005) report also showed that New Zealand has not provided sufficient finance and efforts to boost the Chinese market, except at the TRENZ exhibition held every year in New Zealand, which is the only chance overseas buyers have to get to know the products and tourism resources. As New Zealand is such a new country to China, and is a fairly long distance away, image-building needs to be a long-term process with sufficient and easy-to-access information. This also needs to be implemented by a range of marketing activities, such as TV commercials, print materials, posters, and show cases in a number of places in China to catch consumers’ eyes and to enhance their image of New Zealand, and consequently to increase their willingness to travel to New Zealand.

5.2.3 CULTURAL FACTORS AND IMAGE ATTRACTION

Due to the limited information available in China, many tourists do not have a clear image of New Zealand before coming. However, there are some tourists who do have images and these images tend to differ depending on the markets. For example, Beijing tourists were attracted more by New Zealand’s safe environment and its agriculture, as well as the increasing reputation of “Lord of the Rings”. Guangdong tourists were attracted more by the natural beauty, unpolluted land and relaxed lifestyle of New Zealand. As these participants from Guangdong pointed out:

I was impressed by New Zealand's cleanness, I heard it was the cleanest country in the world...gotta have a look, China is still very polluted, dirty, so I came to see the unpolluted natural land

I heard from my colleagues that New Zealand was very clean and beautiful, and lots of sheep and plants, I like nature, you know, something that can make you feel peaceful and less stressful...very importantly, New Zealand doesn't have many people, I think I am really sick of living in the crowded city, people are everywhere,, so I want to go somewhere that I can have a rest..

Some Beijing tourists also mentioned the importance of reputation and the political issues when deciding on travel destinations:

New Zealand is a politically safe place, compared to Asian and African countries, it is too far away from other countries, so even when there is a war happening, it will not harm NZ at all...Also, China has a good relationship with New Zealand, like the Prime Minister Helen Clark, came to China for a visit, raising its awareness among Beijing people, as we very much care about the status and the relationship between China and the destination. We have heard something about Chinese tourists being raped and beaten in a foreign country, due to the discrimination and the bad relationship politically; therefore, we try to avoid such things.

I was impressed by the movie "Lord of the Rings", those places in the movie are so beautiful, I can't believe there are still places like that existing in the world, then I know it is New Zealand, I was very interested in going to the scene locations and putting myself into the real pictures...

Some Guangdong tourists addressed the importance of living standards and the environment when they rate a destination,

Guangdong is good, everything is also modern and up-to-date, but just so many people. I hate that, too noisy, there is nowhere you can go to hide, I mean, I need peace and quietness, so New Zealand's image is just suitable for me to get rid of the normal environment.

I always prefer living in a natural environment where people have their own farms and gardens and children can play freely. New Zealand's image was quite attractive to me, as most things are kept in a natural, environmentally friendly way.

These comments reflect people's intention to "get away from home" or to "get away from the normal life", to "experience something different", which can also affect their motivation to travel to New Zealand. This according to Urry (1990) can be explained and linked with the dialectical relationship between the ordinary and extraordinary on which tourism is based. Put simply, tourists' everyday life is constantly evolving, and so does the extraordinary life they are searching for in the overseas destinations. The living environment of China influences their generalized appreciation of environment quality.

5.2.4 CULTURAL BACKGROUND AND INFORMATION SOURCE

The previous sections reviewed some of the ideas Chinese tourists had when they were in China about New Zealand. So where were these images from? Both Beijing and Guangdong tourists collected information from a range of sources and channels, such as travel agents, brochures, travel books, magazines, TV, radio, personal advice, word of mouth and so on. This has been illustrated through the following comments:

I normally search lots of information before I go overseas, through all kinds of media, such as the Internet, the newspaper, the books, TV and travel agents. I tend to collect anything related to that country, and then I could have more idea and knowledge about that country. I am also more interested in the political environment or relationship of that country with China...

Of course, I search for information about the destination, I normally ask travel agents, look at travel magazines, listen to my friends and relatives' recommendations, or look at some books.... Anyway, I search as much as I can, through all accessible channels. However, for New Zealand, I didn't have much information before coming due to the limited resources.

Although Beijing and Guangdong tourists go through a similar data collection process when searching for information, their preferred channels for information collection are different, as they have different sources, which they trust. Beijing tourists indicate that they

trusted official websites, newspapers and “real-life discovery programmes” and “documentaries”. As some of the tourists comment:

I quite trust the information on the websites, especially those official websites for tourism, but some of the information can not be found in the websites, and also they are all in English, I can't really understand it... Oh, newspapers, I buy a newspaper every day just for knowledge enrichment and information collection...that one, "Beijing Daily" is quite good...

Maybe TV, my family likes watching TV, especially those hot issues, such as the "consumer market", "today's travel", you know those real-life story or issue, and I could get lots of information from those programmes, about the other countries, about China's politics, about today's market and consumer benefit...and so on

In turn, Guangdong tourists are most in favor of using “word of mouth” information from colleagues, friends, and relatives. A number of visitors mentioned that comments from friends/relatives could sometimes be very specific. For example, a man in his 50s was told by his overseas relatives that New Zealand rain could be used to wash the face and clothes; tap water could also be drunk. Other participants also illustrated their preference for word-of-mouth over public media:

I didn't hear much about NZ in China, except from my son; he is studying in New Zealand. Each time I rang him, I would ask him something about New Zealand. Well, basically, I don't trust media, 99% of their sayings are a bit overstated and commercial...can't really believe it, so I normally ask information from my relatives or friends who have been there or who know lots about it...

I never looked at the advertisements, they are all deceptive, trapping people to spend a lot of money, we've got some families living abroad, so we ask for their opinions, we trust their words...because we are family, they wouldn't cheat us...

I like listening to what my friends and colleagues say about that country, in that way, I feel the information I am getting is real, not artificial, can be trusted, sometimes, I ask the travel agents, but don't get information through newspaper or radio advertisements...

All of these information sources used by Beijing and Guangdong markets are mainly “organic” images, where the image portrayed is similar to the reality and the actual fact. Chinese tourists who pay a big amount of money to travel to New Zealand always want to find something “real” and “authentic”, trying to avoid the “commercial traps and tricks”. This corresponds to Ahmed’s (1991) study, where he suggested marketing dollars should be better spent on image components with a stronger organic than induced rating, as tourists are demanding more “authenticity”.

Although both Beijing and Guangdong tourists trust “organic” images from non-commercial and non-tourist information sources, they are also impressed and affected by some advertisements and commercial materials when making travel decisions, as in this participant's comments on Australia’s advertisement:

I like reading newspapers and magazines, and when I see Australia’s promotional pictures, I felt it was so beautiful and natural, and it was so rich in culture and history. I went to the travel agents; they also provided me some of the brochures and information, which deepened my impression about this country.

A few tourists also mentioned that they have seen pictures and images of New Zealand on travel shows and TV shows, which were very impressive and attractive, as these shows were on CCTV (China Central Television), a popular channel, hosted by famous celebrities or popular stars. This also implies that promotion and image building through popular TV channels or celebrity shows can be more impressive and effective in China.

5.3 STAGE TWO: IN-DESTINATION IMPRESSIONS

This section focuses on impressions of New Zealand among Beijing and Guangdong tourists while they were in the country. The similarities and differences between Beijing and Guangdong tourists in destination images will be presented in relation to information source and cultural factors.

5.3.1 CHINESE SIGNS, CHINESE FOOD AND TOUR GUIDES

Through the fieldwork it was found that, while tourists try to leave their everyday life behind, they still try to retain many of the basic routines of their own culture. Due to the language barrier, both Beijing and Guangdong tourists prefer important things to be written in Chinese, as this participant told the researcher:

I was very happy to see Chinese characters in the hotel, telling us about the instructions in the room and the directions in the hotel, making things much easier, otherwise, we have to trouble the tour guides very often....I like this , I think this is very thoughtful.

I saw this sign in Chinese written “welcome” I feel very good, I mean, I feel New Zealand people respect me and show their politeness and friendliness, I think this is very good...you can report this to the Ministry of tourism, we are very pleased about things like this written in Chinese.

These findings indicate that familiarity in a foreign destination can make tourists feel secure enough to enjoy the strangeness; this was correlated with Cohen’s (1972) argument on the positive relationship between familiarization and experience. People with less overseas travel experience and little English skill were very scared of getting lost or being treated badly, therefore, tourists from Beijing and Guangdong are looking for some form of familiarization through their own language and things they know, such as Chinese meals and Chinese-speaking guides. Therefore, provision of some products and activities that Chinese tourists are familiar with can portray a better image of New Zealand as a destination.

All the Chinese tourists expressed a wish for familiar food and drink, Chinese meals and Chinese tea. Some of the participants commented:

I still prefer our Chinese food, foreigner’s food can’t be eaten...no taste, we had the Maori food the other night, it was alright, I mean once is Ok, but if everyday is like that, I think I will lose weight....

Yes, can't really change it, get used to Chinese food now, you think about it, we have been eating that for 50 years, how can we accept something strange and tasteless, I have no appetite when I see western food...

A common complaint from Guangdong tourists was that Chinese restaurants in New Zealand "don't know how to cook", because food is often cooked in a kiwi-style. This is what a female Guangdong participant said:

They (New Zealanders) do not know how to cook the food really, I mean the seafood, if they were cooking it like us in Guangdong that is so perfect...but the way they cook I can not handle...something taste really strange, I don't know what...

A tour guide also commented on this issue:

I am from Guangdong originally; there are so many different variety of delicious food in our city, I mean you can find whatever you like in whatever way you like, everything is so perfect, the taste, the outlook and the nutrition...I personally prefer Chinese food as well, although I have been living in NZ for 10 years now...I guess it is just the way I have been brought up and fed...

Another common complaint is about the lack of seafood in their meals. For example, this lady from Guangdong said:

Australia and New Zealand are islands, surrounded by sea, there must be lots of seafood in the country, how come we only had a seafood meal once?" We are sick of that meat every day, I think you should do something about it; tell them to add some more seafood.

Such statements certainly reflect the tourists' strong habits and, at the same time, illustrate how they interpret their new cultural experiences. For people from Guangdong, eating well is one of the most important things in travel, and plays an important role in determining their travel experience and satisfaction level. They presume they will be served lots of seafood, as New Zealand is an island, therefore, the way their meals have been set up can obviously be seen as a disappointment. The destination needs to pay more attention to the

fact that in a country like China, food is considered to be essential and closely linked to their travel experience.

When they were asked about why they preferred a Chinese guide, tourists from both Beijing and Guangdong markets said:

If I can speak English well, I don't need a Chinese guide, but I can't, so we need somebody to communicate with, to guide us, otherwise, we will understand nothing, just like a deaf and dumb...[Beijing]

I feel very good when I meet Chinese people in a foreign country, especially here, the other end of the earth, and Chinese know Chinese better, so it's easier to talk and easier to spend time together, we can sometimes also talk about something in China... you know, feel very close and warm.
[Guangdong]

Beijing and Guangdong tourists have different perceptions about “a good tour guide”. For Beijing tourists, a tour guide should have abundant knowledge about every aspect of New Zealand, understanding the culture and social values. Moreover, the tour guide should also have a good educational background with a good personality and excellent communication skills. On the other hand, a tour guide for Guangdong tourists is just a person who can take them to have fun and help them relax. It is very obvious that due to cultural background differences, Beijing tourists demand a knowledge base and professionalism from the tour guide, while Guangdong tourists are quite comfortable with anybody as long as they can have a great time in New Zealand.

5.3.2 INFORMATION SOURCE: NEW ZEALAND IS BETTER THAN EXPECTED

Due to the lack of information collected before traveling, tourists have little idea about what New Zealand looks like, and most of them thought it was going to be very similar to Australia. However, after they arrived in New Zealand, they were amazed and surprised to find out how clean and beautiful New Zealand is, which exceeded their expectations.

New Zealand is very beautiful, very peaceful, I like it... It is different from what I thought, much better than travel agents said; it is very clean and natural...good for living.... [Guangdong]

It is very pure, not much pollution, just a bit cold in this time of year...very damp, but I think it is definitely better than what people thought in China...[Guangdong]

Oh, it is much better than I thought before coming, yes, if we knew New Zealand was like this, we could like to stay in here for a longer time...[Beijing]

Overall, both Beijing and Guangdong tourists have an image when they are actually in New Zealand that is better than their expectations; they are very attracted to the beautiful landscape and the clean, green environment, which they did not realize existed before. It can also be assumed that if more information and positive comments about New Zealand were provided by Chinese travel agents and Chinese tourists in China, more people would be willing and eager to come to New Zealand.

The amount of information available, the positive introduction by travel agents as well as the existing reputation all made Australia more appealing to Chinese tourists before visitation. However, the actual visitation resulted in a different perception: many Chinese tourists perceived New Zealand as better than Australia. Many other tourists also have some positive comments about New Zealand, when comparing it with Australia, for example:

It (New Zealand) is better than Australia, Australia is too commercial, I don't like that, very busy, just like in China...New Zealand is totally different, making me feel relaxed and comfortable.... It is also more natural than Australia; I wish I could stay here for some more days [Guangdong]

I prefer New Zealand personally... because New Zealand is a country where you could get away from the stress, noise and dirt, just like a paradise, natural and pretty, I want to live here after retirement... [Guangdong]

At first, we thought New Zealand and Australia had no difference, because they are in the similar geographical locations, however, they are totally different, it is very nice in New Zealand, the overall image is very good, I wish I could stay here longer... [Beijing]

Tourists found it hard to experience the total beauty and attractiveness within three days, and there are still areas they would like to learn about and visit if they had more times in New Zealand. Most tourists feel New Zealand is cleaner, and greener than Australia, less polluted and much safer than Australia, which also indicates that Chinese tourists, either from Northern Beijing or Southern Guangdong, all like somewhere safe and clean with less pollution.

5.3.3 CULTURAL FACTORS

5.3.3.1 Appreciate New Zealand's natural environment

Most of the tourists interviewed were quite surprised to find out how clean and beautiful New Zealand is and its natural landscape and environmental protection is ranked at the top as its most attractive point by Chinese outbound tourists. As these two participants expressed:

Everywhere is a picture; don't need to go to some spots or special places for photography...

Both tourists from Beijing and Guangdong enjoy New Zealand's natural environment a lot, and their comments are always in comparison with their own residential places. For example, a lady from Beijing said:

I can't compare it with Beijing, it can't compare, New Zealand has so little population and people protect their land so well...which I don't think China can compete...too much population, can't help

In our region, there are also some beautiful places, very clean, but only a minor proportion of the whole region, and it is so hard to find now...but in here, everywhere is so natural and unpolluted, I can tell the difference as soon as I got off the airplane, the air is even much fresher...

This illustrates that in cultures with highly developed technologies where nature and society have become increasingly separated, the everyday environment is becoming increasingly unhealthy, crowded and the members of society more alienated (Ateljevic, 2001).

Most of the tourists like the natural environment, and many of them even have an intention to move to New Zealand in the future; these tourists are mainly from the Guangdong region. As one participant put it:

I have been traveling around places in Europe, Africa and Asia, I think New Zealand is the best place for living, I mean after retirement, so peaceful, so safe, and so clean, I will definitely come here if I can, I think I will live longer if I live here because it has less stress, less competition, less pollution, people are living in nature, and even the air quality is much better than most of the countries.

Another Guangdong tourist in his 50s said:

I would bring all my family to here, especially my grandson, he will live happily and healthily, I think this place is rather good for children's education and growing up....

Other comments included:

New Zealand is the most beautiful country in the world of dreaming, relaxing and enjoying the nature.

It is so different from where I live, with fertile lands, plentiful water and relax lifestyle.

5.3.3.2 New Zealand is boring

Although tourists are all happy about the natural environment in New Zealand, feeling the reality to be better than their expectations, neither Beijing nor Guangdong tourists thought

there were many activities to do, especially at night. Most of the tourists complained about the loose tour schedule and lack of activities. This participant stated:

I don't think the tour schedule in New Zealand is well organized, why take us to the same attraction twice? We've seen the sheep show in Australia, and we went to the show again today, what's the point? They could use that money for some other attractions or activities. We have seen enough about the nature, something else to do after 5pm? Too boring, we come back to the hotel after dinner, then nothing...

Other tourists complained that they were trying to find things to do in order to fill the evenings.

We don't have much to do in here, we even play cards in the hotel after dinner, as we have nowhere to go...."We feel so bored in New Zealand, except for the beautiful scenery, but that's all natural, what about the man-made attraction or activities? How can we know if we don't go there?

New Zealand is perceived as a slow-paced country with fewer things to do; people are too relaxed and have too much free time. Chinese tourists were keen to experience the local culture, such as going to night markets, bars or clubs, where they can feel the energy of New Zealand. For example, this tourist commented:

We want to be part of the real new Zealand culture, you know, we would like to know everything about New Zealand, from cooking culture, gardening culture, Maori culture, education, everything, we are here to experience, to learn...that culture...that's why we spend our money to travel...

I wonder what do New Zealand people do after dinner, watch TV? What else? Do they not have nightlife? If so, what? We need some night activities, not just sitting in the hotel...you know? I don't want to sleep at around 8 or 9o'clock, when we were in Guangdong, there just endless entertainment for us to do at night time, what about in here? I think you should arrange something for the tourists as well...[Guangdong]

This illustrated the fact that people's cultural background and lifestyle in their home countries can influence their perceptions and image of a destination like New Zealand.

Both Guangdong and Beijing are two modern regions with a rich range of night life, such as “24 shopping stores”, “night flea market”, “Karaoke bars”, “Party Hall”, tourists listed a range of activities that can be done at night, in order to relax and have fun. However, these activities were not arranged and experienced by these “used-to-being busy” tourists, due to both security and financial reasons, which in turn upset them and provide a negative image of New Zealand.

5.3.3.3 Different Demand for Authenticity

Tourists from Beijing and Guangdong interviewed in this research were all package tourists, for whom everything had been pre-arranged. However, there were some differences between their perceptions of and preferences for the products they had been offered; some of them wanted to see more of the “backside of New Zealand”, some preferred to see what they saw. Through the fieldwork, it is clear that Guangdong people were trying to explore the “genuine New Zealand”, that is, the human spontaneity and genuine hospitality, by interacting with local people in New Zealand. “I prefer eating in real NZ restaurants” “I prefer going to local grocery shopping centers”, “we prefer to have our meals where the locals go” are statements that reflect their desire to “go native”.

I heard there is a kind of experience, something like a farm stay, you don't stay in hotels, but on a farm with local people, and you will see the real life of New Zealanders, from morning to evening, from food to gardening...that's what we want to see and experience.

I really want to get on the street at night, or go to club, or go to Church, to those places where local people usually go, to see what is New Zealand's life like, you know...what we see now is not New Zealand's life, we hardly see anybody in hotels, all tourists from outside New Zealand, then what can we know? I want to try the real NZ meal, real NZ cake, and how they spend their leisure time....

However, when Beijing tourists were asked the same question, they generally had totally different views:

Staying on the farm with local people...oh no, I prefer to live in the hotel, it will be very uncomfortable to live with strangers, especially with our poor English skills, and we have different cultures, we may sometimes do something wrong or not polite, no, it's not a good idea, we can't mix with them..

We still want to keep a little distance from the local people, because we are tourists, we don't want to interrupt local people's normal life, we are here mostly for sightseeing, so don't need to go into the actual local house and spent time with them, plus, we can't communicate, it will be so funny and I will act like a dummy! So, I am quite happy about the current products we go and see, don't forget we are short-time tourists, not anthropologists or history experts...

Beijing tourists are more aware of the cultural difference between countries, therefore, try to keep a distance from the local people, and are quite happy about the current set-up for tourists. Guangdong tourists, however, are very open-minded, and willing to participate in different activities, and be part of the local community and culture, therefore, to fit themselves into New Zealand's culture and lifestyle. They are more willing to participate in any local activities, get involved with the local community and get closer to the local people, in order to experience the "real side" of New Zealand. They are flexible, open to change and new ideas, and very quick to adapt themselves to new environments and lifestyles. Beijing tourists are more conservative, the findings have shown, and try to keep what they were without any new flavor added in. Deep inside, Beijing tourists have the most original Chinese spirit and they are proud of Chinese history and culture. Therefore, Beijing tourists are very slow in accepting new changes, new ideas and new ways of thinking. This implies that Beijing and Guangdong markets have different values and social norms due to their economical, political and social differences. The realization that regions within a nation can have distinctive attitudes and thinking towards the same thing, can be another factor for destinations to consider, in terms of segmenting big markets like China.

This difference can be linked back to the typology of tourists. Cohen (1972) asserted that constructing tourist types is required to understand the touristic experience, and Jafari (1989, 26-27) also agreed that focusing on tourist typological forms can help explain why

people are attracted to specific destinations and attractions. Although based on Cohen's division, Chinese tourists still belong entirely to an "organized mass tour" category. However, Guangdong tourists are moving towards Plog's (1981) "allocentric tourist", while Beijing could be seen as becoming to "mid-centric tourists", who are still very conservative. It can be further argued that despite an individuals' commitment to play the role assigned to him/her by the industry, (e.g., mass packaged tourist), an individual also has a choice to attach himself/herself to some other subtypes, such as culture seekers, fun seekers and work-escapers. Guangdong tourists in this research have expressed their intentions of getting away from pure mass packaged tourism and moving towards the subtype of culture seekers and work-escapers.

Comments from tour guides reconfirmed this:

Guangdong tourists were very flexible, but Beijing people are very conservative. Guangdong people like trying different things, and demand something unusually; they are not scared of being confused or acting stupidly, but like having fun and being involved into the local atmosphere. Very oppositely, Beijing people don't like trying new things, they are still typical old tourists, where they want to live in their little circle, and do not want to interrupt and be interrupted by the other culture, although they say they are looking for culture experience.

Similarly,

That is not surprising, Guangdong tourists have much more travel experience than Beijing tourists, Guangdong tourists also have lots of friends and relatives living abroad, therefore, their opinions and notion are open and easier to adapt. Beijing is the political center, people are very sensitive, and are very careful about the external culture and thinking coming to Beijing, so the ability to accept change is not as good as people in Guangdong. Therefore, Guangdong people are more flexible to fit into different environments than Beijing tourists.

From these comments, it can be concluded that the more developed a region's economy is, the shorter the history of the region is, the more open and adaptable to new things the region's people will be; the more politically sensitive a region is, the more conservative

people from this region will be. Guangdong is China's "economy harbor" as well as the "window to open to the world", therefore, Guangdong is a big free market, very modernized and westernized in the way they dress, the way they behave and most importantly the way they see and do things. Beijing, in terms of economic development, is not as fast as Guangdong; it is however, a political and cultural place, where everybody has a good knowledge of politics, history and other aspects of Chinese culture.

5.3.3.4 Different purchasing behaviors

Shopping is a very important aspect for Chinese tourists when they travel overseas, as Chinese people like to bring gifts back for friends and relatives, in order to show their respect and friendship. Chinese tourists found it hard to select good items and souvenirs to take back home, and their knowledge about New Zealand products was very limited. Some participants said:

I think New Zealand should promote its products in China, such as in the travel book, or travel agents' brochures, or on the internet; we need to know something about the products, then we will know which are good brands, which are locally made, we don't want to buy something made in China in New Zealand.

We travel nearly 20 hours to come here, we don't want to bring something back with a 'made in China' label. I think every Chinese feels the same...we sometimes don't really trust the tour guides, because he always takes us to the Chinese shops, saying those are cheaper and better, but we are not sure if they are really good in quality or locally made...so if we know the brand, we could easily select our products.

I don't know what is worth buying in New Zealand actually. What do you reckon? [Interviewer: I think the sheep skin and lanolin products in here are very good.."]... Yah, I have bought some, but the thing is there are so many different brands, we go to each shop, they have different brands, I don't know which ones are good, which are bad, so I don't buy them anymore, sheep skin, I don't like them, we don't use them in Guangdong, too hot...so didn't buy... anything else? Something representative? Some good NZ brands you can recommend?

These comments show that Chinese tourists intend to spend money shopping for souvenirs in New Zealand; however, they do not have any idea about good products or good brands. Information on these items is very limited in China. The interviews also showed participants are interested in buying locally made products, and the only way to find those is by looking at the labels "Made in New Zealand" or "Made in China". Products made in China are definitely not on their shopping list, as they want to show others the authenticity of the products they have bought. This participant commented:

New Zealand souvenirs are very limited in variety I think, and much more expensive than in Australia, even the exact same thing. How come? It should develop some new things that can be easily taken back to China with meanings, or could represent New Zealand culture or history-most importantly, made in New Zealand. We don't mind spending a bit more for a local made product... But we really prefer something that is easy to carry, and affordable prices....

However, Beijing and Guangdong tourists have different preference in the products they buy in New Zealand. As this Beijing tourist recalled:

I like the Maori carvings, very cultural and reflective, but just too expensive, I would like to buy some gifts for my friends and relatives, but it is hard to find good stuff at reasonable prices... not much variety for me...

New Zealand souvenirs? I reckon the only thing that is cheap here are the deer products. We went to this factory, and the products were quite good with a reasonable price, so the whole group of us spent lots of money on them...we always take some deer related healthy food or pills to keep ourselves healthy and full of energy... We also use it for our special soup...

I bought some propolis; I heard from my colleagues that the bee propolis in New Zealand is very effective and good for the body, especially for diabetes patients, or those with high blood sugar or cholesterol, so I bought lots in duty free shops.

Because we were in Australia for 8 days, only here for 3 days, so we spent lots of money in Australia, and we actually found out Australia has more variety of products and cheaper prices compared to here, and we don't know

what are the most popular or good souvenirs in New Zealand? I bought some wool duvets, I guess they must be made from 100 % pure wool, and New Zealand is a wool country, so must be good quality...

According to tour guides, Guangdong tourists prefer deer products to sheepskins; Beijing tourists prefer buying wool products, such as wool duvets, wool cushions, sheepskins as well as wool jumpers/jerseys. This difference reflects the climate difference between Beijing and Guangdong. For Guangdong tourists, sheep skins are too hot, wool jerseys are not needed due to the hot weather; deer products in New Zealand, however, are believed to be of high quality as the natural environment is very much better, therefore, they would be seen as a very good source of nutrition supplements for Guangdong people. In turn, Beijing has a cold and dry climate, products for keeping warm are in great demand, therefore, sheepskin and wool products are welcome. Moreover, Beijing tourists have very dry skins in general (China Consumer Research, 2002-2003); therefore, natural cosmetics such as Lanolin, especially New Zealand's lanolin products are believed to be the best ones. Guangdong tourists are interested in New Zealand's beauty therapies, such as placenta products and mud masks, which reflect their desire to look good. Beijing tourists also buy health products, such as propolis, honey, royal jelly, and are more interested in buying Maori carvings and paua products. Both markets are very concerned about where the souvenirs are made, trying to avoid anything made in China. One tour guide from Guangdong explained:

Weather in Guangdong is very hot with strong sunshine, therefore, it is easier to get pimples and black dots on the face, and cosmetics that are good for the skin and looking younger are in high demand among Guangdong people. Tourists always buy a lot of placenta products, which they believe can reduce wrinkles and skin imperfections...

Another tour guide from Guangdong also said:

Deer products in Guangdong are also very popular and welcome, because they are believed to have some special functions for restoring energy and being stronger for me; also, it is cheaper to buy those products in New Zealand, therefore, a deer factory is also a must-go attraction for Guangdong tourists.

The tour guides also mentioned other products such as honey, propolis and energy supplements, which are commonly purchased by Guangdong people. This reflects the cultural background of Guangdong; most of the tourists in this region were from a high-stress, intense workload environment. Most of them run their own business, which requires lots of energy and power on a day-to-day basis. Therefore, people from Guangdong are very much concerned about their health. Beijing tourists demand more products for blood pressure, and sugar adjustment as well as calcium and brain supplements. As the tour guide pointed out:

North China (Beijing as an example) is very dry, and with a big temperature difference between summer and winter, and people from this region take lots of oily and fatty food, therefore, high blood pressure and higher blood sugar are very common, people are demanding products for these problems, as well as those for brain supplementation.

5.3.4 DIFFERENT PERCEPTIONS ABOUT ITINERARIES

Tourists from China normally spent three days in New Zealand based on the travel agenda arranged by travel agents in China (CNTA, 2005), therefore, the schedule for the three days is only limited to the North Island (Tourism New Zealand, 2005). Among the three days, two nights were in Rotorua and one night in Auckland, which means most of the in-destination image, is from these two cities only. Inbound operators in New Zealand based on the limited money and time, have developed similar itineraries for different groups, however, tourists from the two markets hold different opinions about the itineraries. In general, Beijing tourists found it not worth the money, with too much free time and too few activities to do; Guangdong tourists were quite happy with the arrangements, as they prefer a slow-paced and relaxed schedule. The following comments from Beijing tourists will show their perceptions:

I think travel agents are too smart, they try to save money, so don't take us to paid attractions, only the lake front, government garden, all natural spots without any admission cost...and most of the time we spent in here is either in hotel or in souvenir shops...we are not here for shopping and sleeping only, we are paid here to experience another culture, ...I am not happy about this

Three days are too short, we can't see anything, plus, there are not much to do in the list, I only went to a sheep show, and a Maori concert, other than that, nothing was exciting, just taking photos in different locations, oh...shopping, always shopping...

Guangdong tourists did not complain about the tour itinerary and the pre-arranged activities, as one lady in her 30s said:

Good, I don't want to rush here and there, and feel very tired, that is not the purpose I come here, I am so happy to sit outside enjoying the sunshine, walking down the bank and in front of the river, I also like bush walking in the red wood forest, quite peaceful and relaxing...plus, the hot spa at night was beautiful, the only pity is that we only here for two days, too short, should stay longer and go to see other places...

Our tour is quite relaxing without any stress, I am sick of stress from my working environment in China, so I prefer sleeping in the morning, and do a couple of activities per day, and I prefer having personal and free time, and we can have some our own activities or walking down the streets ourselves...

When asked about the content of the tour arrangement, Beijing tourists would have liked to include more cultural activities and visits to New Zealand schools; Guangdong tourists preferred having more relaxing activities, such as spas, hot pools, massages. This difference once again reflects their different motivations in coming to New Zealand.

I am not here for education, I don't want to learn...I have learnt at school, at work in China, I am here to relax, forget about everything in China, to enjoy another totally different world...I want to release myself to nature [Guangdong]

I came here for several reasons, of course, I want to have a good holiday after stressful work, but more importantly, I want to see the difference in here, enlarge my knowledge base, also improve my understanding of the western countries...I think we as Chinese people have to learn everything good from different countries, to strength our own country...also, I think, we should try to get as much information as we can in the destination, then when we go back, we could talk endlessly to other people about everything...so I think those people who just want to kill time in here is not smart. [Beijing]

Guangdong tourists frequently mentioned they traveled to New Zealand for “escaping from work” and “relaxation” purposes; while Beijing tourists were generally traveling for “learning about another culture” and “to broaden understanding”. These different motivations exercise a direct influence on the affective component of the image. People with different travel purposes and objectives may view the same destination differently. This supports Beerli and Martin’s (2004) point of view, that motivation drives an individual to act in a certain way to achieve satisfaction.

Participants were also asked about their post-visit behaviors in the interviews, and both of the markets expressed their intentions to “recommend New Zealand to others” when they got back home; they describe travel in New Zealand as a “sweet memory” and an “important part of life experience”. The comments from these participants were representative:

I felt the tour was money worthy, I mean, I had such a different experience, I have seen the most beautiful environment, I felt so close to the nature, I had a relaxing time in here...very good, very good.

That was definitely a good experience, it will be a good memory in my life, I took lots of photos, I even kept a dairy, so I could show other people, and most important, I could go back and look at them again when I am older, that would be so romantic and sweet.

Although both markets considered their New Zealand experience to be quite good and likely to become an unforgettable memory in the future, when they were asked if they would come back to New Zealand for a second trip, the answers differed. One Beijing participant's response:

I don't think I will come back for the second time, as it is too far away from home, 18 hours flight, I think the older I am, the lazier I will be, and the harder I can flight for longer hours. Plus, New Zealand has not got so many things to see, such as famous attractions, I think this place would be a good place for people who are interested in agriculture or environment protection, not business. Therefore, I wouldn't come back for the second time, but rather

I prefer going to other countries, go to as many different countries as I can, experience as much different as I can.

Guangdong tourists seemed to have a different perspective on the same questions:

Come back? I will definitely, if I could, I wish to live in New Zealand in the future. I am honest, I like here, it is so nice and enjoyable living here, without many people, without much noise, without much pollution, without much stress and pressure, and don't you think it is good for living? There are so many areas I want to find out more, such as the South Island, so I would definitely come here and visit some other places next time, if time and money allow...

The above comments suggest that different markets will have different reactions and behaviors after traveling to the same destination; at least, this applies to the Beijing and Guangdong markets. It is good to note that many tourists will recommend New Zealand to their friends and relatives, promoting a positive image of NZ among Chinese people.

5.4 IMPLICATIONS

The significance of this study's findings lies in their marketing implications. The findings indicate that the most appropriate marketing objectives a tourist destination (ie, China, in this case) could employ in the market place appear to be three-fold. First, the creation of a positive image of the destination at the initial stage in the tourists' home country is very important, to encourage people's travel purchase. Secondly, information sources and cultural factors have different roles and functions in the pre-visit and during-visit stages, which should be taken into consideration when implementing a marketing strategy. Thirdly, the concept of "culture" related to destination, can apply not only at the national level, but also at regional levels. Therefore, an in-depth understanding of cultural values is necessary for segmentation.

5.4.1 PRE-VISIT IMAGE IS IMPORTANT

Most of the tourists from Beijing and Guangdong agreed on the importance of creating a positive destination image in China, which would increase their intention and motivation to travel to New Zealand. As discussed in the literature, Gunn (1978) has put destination

image formation into context and developed a seven-phase model of travel experience. He also argued that the first three phases are considered to be the most important in the tourists' consumer behavior process, because a tourist's image is generally very resistant to change once it has been formed. He also noted (1988) that the initial image formation stage, before the trip is actually taken, is the most important phase in the destination decision-making process. A numbers of researchers (Gartner, 1993; Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 2001; Peterson and Sautter, 2003) have emphasized the essential role of creating a positive image for people who are selecting destinations for travel. Based on the findings of this research, the importance of pre-visit image is not influenced by sub-regional culture (Beijing and Guangdong in this case) which can be treated as a general theory applied to different countries and cultures. Based on the fact that tourists usually have a limited knowledge of tourist destinations they have not previously visited, image fulfils an important function insofar as destinations with strong, positive, discriminatory and recognizable images have more probability of being chosen by the tourists (Beerli and Martin, 2003, Hunt, 1975; Goodrich, 1978; Pearce, 1982; Woodside and Lysonski, 1989; Ross, 1993). The findings also suggested that the images, which individuals in the marketplace have of a destination, have a crucial role in a destination's marketing success. One good example to illustrate this was that tourists from both Beijing and Guangdong were more willing to go to Australia, as they have a better impression and image of Australia in their minds. This occurs because the decision maker acts upon his/her image, beliefs and perceptions of the destination rather than his/her objective reality of it. This implies that marketers should put more effort and time in building up New Zealand's brand and distributive image, in order to make New Zealand more appealing and attractive to Chinese tourists before-visitation, as this image during the information collection stage, will have a great influence on tourists' decision making for travel.

5.4.1.1 More Information Provided, More Image Portrayed

However, based on the findings from interviews with Chinese tourists, New Zealand's current destination image is very vague, and has always been overshadowed by the much stronger impression made by Australia. This is due to the limited amount of information available on New Zealand for Chinese in contrast to Australia's heavy promotion in China.

Goodall (1991) indicated that a destination image could only be regarded as successful if tourists see it as attractive and unique, and the only way to make the image appeal and be perceived as attractive is through effective marketing and promotion of both organic and induced images. Chon (1992) suggested marketers of a destination should firstly understand how tourists form the image, and what factors influence this formation process. This has been further supported by Yoon and Kim (2002) as a way to enhance destination attractiveness and market competitiveness. In order to promote a destination's image successfully, a clear understanding of tourists' behaviors in terms of their information searching before traveling is very essential. Therefore, and the more information provided by the destination, the more information available for tourists to find, the more positive the image portrayed to tourists will be, and the more willing they will be to travel. This reflects a need to promote New Zealand through as many channels as possible, in order to provide as much information as possible to introduce tourists to every aspect of New Zealand, in order to reinforce and strengthen New Zealand's existing image. Some obvious ways this can be achieved - which New Zealand has not tried yet - include setting up a more thorough and detailed website in the Chinese language, giving out brochures and pamphlets, eye-catching pictures and road shows, TV documentary programmes, as well as newspaper advertisements, and communicating relative facts about New Zealand on radio stations.

5.4.1.2 Culture influences selected information source and image

Although both tourists from Beijing and Guangdong will search for information using a variety of channels before traveling overseas, each market has its preferred information channel. Based on the findings from interviews, Beijing tourists have indicated that they trust the destination's official website, newspapers, "real-life discovery programmes" and documentary books. In turn, Guangdong tourists are most in favor of using "word of mouth" information from colleagues, friends, and relatives. Both markets prefer non-tourist focused images, which is what Gunn called "organic" images, or person-determined image according to Stabler (1988). It implies that even in the same country, tourists from different regions and cultural background have different perceptions about information collected and used for overseas trips. Recognizing their differences will also help destinations to promote their image through different channels, in order to create

the image effectively and efficiently. Gunn (1988) suggested that the goal of an image-building endeavor should be the modification of the induced image. In this case, destination image in China should also focus on building up images that are trustworthy and based on reality, otherwise, too much commercial and fake information marketed to consumers will result in a negative image once tourists find out about the reality. To a certain extent this can be seen in Australia's case. Australia has been promoting itself through all possible media, trying to produce an image that is as attractive as possible. However, it was found in the interviews that tourists felt they were "disappointed with Australia" and it was "not as good as they thought", a result of the differences between destination image and they reality, caused by too many commercials.

Reynolds (1965) described the image formation process as based on a few impressions chosen from a flood of information. The flood of information is "information sources", from where people get the impressions of the destination, including TV, books, brochures, word-of-mouth and so on. Research findings show that Beijing tourists were more likely to be impressed and attracted by reputation and political stability as well as by something famous and remarkable, while Guangdong tourists were attracted mostly by the relaxing atmosphere and unpolluted nature. This finding reinforces the existing theory that destination image should be promoted with consideration given to market segmentation and specification. Kotler (1991) has already suggested that to be successful in building up a distinctive and competitive destination image, marketers should decide carefully about the selected image being promoted to selected market segments. Ashworth and Voogd (1990) suggested that the image and branding for destinations should be specific to their target segments. In doing so, the target market or segment market should be carefully analyzed and studied in order to understand its needs and wants, so as to create an image that can fulfill those needs (Prentice, 1992).

Another implication for image building in Guangdong was through students studying in New Zealand, who have real-life experience in the country, and whose words have more weight in terms of travel recommendations to their parents, relatives and friends in China. Promotions should also consider the market segment, by providing some special packages

for students as well as their parents. Beijing tourists are concerned about anything related to China's political situation, and international relationships with China. Therefore, building up New Zealand's destination image for the Beijing market can also involve positive political issues.

5.4.2 DESTINATION IMPRESSION IS ALSO IMPORTANT

5.4.2.1 "Nature Purity" Is New Zealand's Selling Point

Although visitors have different value systems and interests, which influence their impressions of New Zealand, certain interpretations emerge almost universally. The value system that assigns virtue to rural and natural environments, and negative ratings to urban settings prevails cross-culturally. This finding corresponds to Ateljevic's (2001) research on different nationalities and New Zealand's image. The findings from interviews among Chinese tourists confirmed that New Zealand's biggest competitive advantage is the country's beautiful nature. Both Beijing and Guangdong tourists were impressed a lot by New Zealand's natural environment and how well it is maintained. New Zealand as 'clean, green, fresh, and peaceful' and 'unpolluted, natural, beautiful landscape' as well as 'friendly people, low population', were the most common responses. These comments have two layers of meanings: people from Beijing and Guangdong live in highly populated urban areas, thus having difficulty in finding open space, and the dream for freedom, and finding unpolluted nature are key motivations for them to come to New Zealand. They are coming for things they cannot see or experience in their hometowns. Another layer of meaning consistently emerged, and that was the fear of environmental destruction and deepening social alienation caused by urbanization and industrialization. In this context, tourism becomes an overarching structure through which it is possible to experience a romanticized appreciation of nature (Lash and Urry, 1994; Milne, Grekin and Woodley, 1998). Previous researchers such as Ateljevic (2001) showed that in cultures with highly developed technologies nature and society have become increasingly separated, the everyday environment has become increasingly unhealthy and crowded and members of society have become more alienated. Therefore, the opportunity for temporary escape from urbanization to gaze upon those things in the lost industrialized world, form the major cultural context for how New Zealand as a destination is appreciated by tourists. The

finding from this research reconfirms that New Zealand's pure and clean image has not only been appreciated by different sub-markets in China, but will also become attractive to those countries with growing materialization and industrialization, such as India, where people are scared of losing the original natural environment. With natural beauty and environment quality, New Zealand will provide a more competitive and distinctive image.

5.4.2.2 Cultural factors influence shopping behaviors

Tourists from Beijing and Guangdong, due to the differences in geographical location, climate, social values, and lifestyle have different preferences when purchasing souvenirs in New Zealand. Research findings show that Guangdong tourists prefer deer products but do not like sheepskins or wool products; Beijing tourists prefer buying wool products, such as wool duvets, wool cushions, sheepskins as well as wool jumpers and jerseys. Most Guangdong tourists like buying New Zealand's cosmetics made from local ingredients, such as lanolin, placenta, collagen creams, and mud masks. Beijing tourists normally buy health products, such as propolis, honey and royal jelly. Moreover, Beijing tourists are more interested in buying Maori carvings and paua products. Both markets are very concerned about where the souvenirs are made, trying to avoid anything made in China.

The implication from the findings is that the climate and cultural differences between these two sub-regional markets have a great impact on their shopping behavior, which confirms previous research and studies. According to Ackerman and Tellis (2001), shopping activity is a social event whose meaning is likely to be even more closely tied to culture than the meaning of the product. Cultural orientation may have an effect not just on product meaning after acquisition, but on the actual process of shopping. Douglas and Craig (1992) echo these sentiments when they state that "the increasing mobility of consumers across national boundaries together with increased exposure to international communications suggests a need to pay greater attention to examining the impact of such trends on consumer values, attitudes, preferences and purchasing patterns." In this case, Beijing tourists are interested in products either with social meanings, such as Maori crafts, or products they can use to keep warm, such as sheepskin; Guangdong tourists like buying products that are good for beauty and health maintenance, such as placenta, masks, deer

velvet and so on. Furthermore, neither Beijing nor Guangdong markets have a clear knowledge about New Zealand's brands, especially good brands for souvenirs, such as Lanolin brand for cosmetics, Pure Source brand for masks, Bowen brand for sheepskin, and Comvita brand for honey and health products. Appreciation of the differences between markets, and providing products that best meet tourists' needs will definitely help the destination to promote its image. Furthermore, including different product information in the promotional packages, such as on the websites and through travel brochures in different markets in China, would provide tourists with a better understanding of the product as well as the destination.

5.4.2.3 Familiarization still plays an important role for the Chinese market

Although Chinese tourists have different opinions on several products and issues, there seem to be two things all Chinese have in common when traveling overseas, namely, they require Chinese food and Chinese speaking guides. For Chinese tourists, food is one of the most important things in life, and the quality of food is considered one of essential factors to achieve satisfaction. This behavior can be explained by the familiarity concept applied by Burch (1969 in Chen, 2003). The familiarity theory assumes that individuals who enjoy particular activities or behavior will go to extremes to participate in the same activities or behavior. In this case, Chinese tourists are familiar with Chinese food and language; therefore, they are constantly seeking activities which enable them to continue their familiar routine, especially Chinese food and Chinese tour guides. Many studies conducted in Western countries have confirmed that Asian Chinese tour groups traveling in a western country always stick to the familiar cultural routine and prefer to take most meals in Chinese restaurants (Australian Tourist Commission, 2004; Canadian Tourism Commission, 2003-2004; Chen, 2003; Guo, 2002; Pan and Laws, 2001; Scandinavian Tourist Board, 2002). Master and Predeaux (2000) also found that the availability of Chinese cuisine during a vacation is ranked as one of the important attributes of a satisfactory holiday by Chinese visitors to Australia. This issue of cultural familiarity not only applies to Chinese visitors, but also to other Chinese speaking visitors, such as Taiwanese, Malaysian Chinese, Singapore Chinese, as well as people from Hong Kong

(Chen, 2003). Ateljevic (1999) even found that tourists from the United Kingdom were attracted to New Zealand because it offers them cultural familiarity.

Familiarity with a destination has appeared to be a significant determinant of destination image (Baloglu, 2002), and this can be proved by a number of studies on the relationship between destination image and the familiarity concept (Pearce, 1982; Phelps, 1986; Dann, 1996; Hu and Ritchie, 1993; Milman and Pizam, 1995). Baloglu (2002) concluded that familiarity with a destination has a positive effect on the travelers' image, in other words, the more tourists can find things they are familiar with in the destination, the better the image they will have of the destination. This implies that in order to create a good image of New Zealand, and a successful impression while Chinese tourists are traveling in New Zealand, provision of good Chinese cuisine as well as trained Chinese speaking guides are necessary and important, to increase the tourists' level of cultural familiarity. This not only applies to China, but to Western countries as well, and based on previous research; destination image will become more and more attractive if tourists become more and more culturally familiar with the destination through food, language and other activities.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented two categories of findings, New Zealand's destination image tourists held while in China, and their impressions while in New Zealand, in other words, before and during visitation. The findings imply that the pre-visitation image is of great importance, having significant influence on the way people perceive New Zealand. This is common to both the Beijing and Guangdong markets. To create a positive pre-visit image, marketers must pay great attention to providing sufficient information, as people develop a destination image only through secondary data. Cultural factors do have an impact on tourists' information search behavior, resulting in the different channels used for collecting information. Furthermore, tourists with different cultural backgrounds will be attracted by different destination image. Therefore, marketers need to consider sub-national factors in image development and future marketing to China.

The destination impression is also important; it leads to customer satisfaction and positive “word-of-mouth” after going back home. Information source in this period is mostly based on personal experience, therefore, cultural factors have a great impact and influence on how people behave and react to the products and activities in the destination. For example, different climate backgrounds can lead to different reactions to the weather and environment of a destination as well as different shopping patterns. Different lifestyle and personal values can result in different perceptions of the social environment of the destination. Different economic and political environments can also influence responses to the local culture, and the formation of opinions about the lifestyle of the destination. Findings from this research confirm, in some respects, the assumption that differences do exist between sub-national markets. In terms of destination image, information sources are influential factors before visitation, and cultural factors are the most important factors that result in different perceptions and experience of a destination’s image during and after visitation.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Understanding the heterogeneous nature of the Chinese outbound tourist market, specifically the similarities and differences between the Beijing and Guangdong markets, has been the main focus of this research. Following from the conceptual framework, Chapter One discussed the research background and structure of this study, and Chapter Two reviewed previous literature and studies on destination image and the factors influencing it (information source and culture). Chapter Three discussed the methods used for this research. Chapter Four and Five have revealed interesting insights and identified important issues that need to be addressed from both secondary and primary research. Finally, to bring everything together, this chapter will discuss the main similarities and differences between the Beijing and Guangdong tourist markets in relation to destination image. Also, in this final chapter, the recommendations for both markets and future research that have emerged from the findings of the study are presented.

6.2 CHINESE OUTBOUND TOURISM MARKET

New Zealand has experienced a rapidly growing number of Chinese outbound tourists during the last decade, which has been mainly due to China's economic growth, the improved standard of living and desire for travel of Chinese people, and the relaxation of laws on outbound travel restrictions by the Chinese government. Through May, 2005, 63 countries have attained Approved Destination Status (ADS); these can be visited by Chinese outbound travelers for leisure and private purposes. Despite the efforts of the newly opened destinations, the highest market share of Chinese outbound market is still in South East Asia, mainly Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand. This is due to the ease of travel, the proximity to China, similarities in cultural background, and fewer visa requirements and political issues. The Chinese outbound market is still at an initial stage, and due to deficient information sources, there are not enough references available in China for tourists to search. Although there are still some difficulties facing

China's outbound market, the World Tourism Organization and PATA have estimated the number of Chinese outbound travelers will reach approximately 100 million by 2020, ranking China the fourth biggest market among the tourist-generating countries. Since China is continuing to open its door to the rest of the world, more and more countries will benefit from its outbound market both in market size and in expenditure, and more destinations will be interested in having a share of the cake.

6.3 DESTINATION IMAGE

The aim of this study was to uncover similarities and differences in images of New Zealand as a destination that are held by tourists from different sub-regional markets, and how cultural factors and information sources influence the image formation process. Some of the commonly shared opinions and variations between markets have been uncovered in this research project through face-to-face interviews. Participants in the study confirmed that destination images held before the trip are very important, and influence their travel decisions and destination selection choices. For Chinese outbound tourists, traveling to Australia and New Zealand is a very big event, due to the large cost and longer flight, as well as because of lack of previous overseas travel experience. Although the pre-visit image is important, many respondents noted that they had only a vague image of New Zealand due to the lack of information source about New Zealand available in China. Both Beijing and Guangdong tourists preferred getting "organic" information to form an image about New Zealand before the actual trip; however, their preferred channels for getting information were different. As a "culture and political center", Beijing has the biggest number of newspaper readers in China (Xinhua News, 2004). Beijing tourists make choices based on reading materials from information sources, such as newspapers, books, as well as TV documentary programmes; Guangdong tourists make choices based on "word of mouth" suggestions by friends and relatives.

6.4 BEIJING AND GUANGDONG MARKETS

In terms of experience in New Zealand and perception of New Zealand's image during visit, research findings show that there are many aspects Beijing and Guangdong tourists have in common; for these both regions can be treated as one market, implementing the same set of strategies. The natural environment in New Zealand is appreciated and highly rated by both markets, due to the fact that both Beijing and Guangdong tourists were from highly developed industrial regions, where nature is getting further away from daily life. Both markets also mention their demands for nightlife, as both have busy and modern lifestyles, where nightlife is very popular with a variety of entertainment provided after work. Due to the demographic character of the tourists, both markets prefer Chinese-speaking guides, as they feel it is easy to communicate and feel more secure having a Chinese guide. Chinese food is preferred and required by both Beijing and Guangdong tourists, as most of the tourists are used to the taste of Chinese food, however, with different requests for taste and cooking styles. All of the above similarities mentioned above could be taken into consideration when doing marketing and promotion, by using one approach. These characteristics may also apply to other regions of China, and can be further researched.

There are also differences existing between these two regions that marketers need to pay attention to, in order to avoid marketing failures. In terms of climate differences, Beijing has four distinct seasons, with a cold winter and hot summer, and lack of rainfall, while Guangdong is located in tropical and sub-tropical areas with a climate marked by high temperatures and plentiful rainfall. The different climates result in their preferred food and eating behaviors, to be specific, Beijingers eat wheat and Guangdong people have rice, Beijing residents are more towards Northern China, where people prefer meat to other food, and quantity is more important than the appearance of the food; Guangdong residents, however, prefer seafood and vegetables, and the appearance of the dish is of great importance. In terms of lifestyles and attitudes, Beijing people are politically sensitive, news-hunters and information gatherers; Guangdong is a free economic market, where people are more concerned about economic and technological

development, paying very little attention to politics. The way they treat traveling is also different. Beijing residents use tourism as a way of expressing their status, gaining more life experience and knowledge, but Guangdong tourists consider travel as a way to get away from work, stress and pollution, a way to gain relaxation and freedom. These various factors have a great influence on tourists' perceptions and impressions of New Zealand, as well as tourists' behavior in New Zealand. Knowing these differences will encourage the New Zealand tourism industry to improve the experiences provided, as well as service standards, in order to meet demands and needs, which will ultimately enhance New Zealand's destination image in China. These differences were reflected in respondents' perceptions of New Zealand's lifestyle and living environment, as well as in their attitudes towards the shopping and information search behaviors. Furthermore, cultural differences also lead to different perceptions about the tour arrangements, activities and attractions in New Zealand, and acquisition of "authenticity". In general, Guangdong tourists are more open-minded and flexible about change, demanding "authentic" experience and willing to get closer to the local community. Beijing tourists are more conservative and slow to adopt changes and new things, in order to maintain their own culture. Recognition of these regional differences can result in a better understanding of the sub-markets of China, as well as the different expectations between regions. Specific products and tour experiences can be developed for the special demands of different markets.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAGE ONE (PRE-VISIT IMAGE)

6.5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BOTH MARKETS

Based on the findings, tourists from both markets give a very high rating to New Zealand's beautiful nature and un-polluted environment. This, in turn, reflects that Chinese tourists from both North and South have a desire to live in an ideal environment, where people can get closer to nature. This demand has been proved through tourists' comments, such as "*I think people can definitely live longer in New Zealand with less pressure and less pollutions*"; "*It is a heaven for living, this environment can not be found easily*". This can be one of New Zealand's selling points

not only in China, but in all highly-developed countries where the environment is badly destroyed and polluted. Currently, New Zealand is perceived to be a similar country to Australia by people in China, however, the actual impression is that New Zealand is more “natural” “cleaner” “purer”; tourists from Beijing and Guangdong confirmed this by saying that “*Oh, New Zealand is definitely better and more natural than Australia...*”, and “*the grass is greener, the sky is more blue*” than Australia. From the buyer behavior of Beijing and Guangdong tourists, there is no doubt that both regions are very conscious about “health” issues, wanting to have a longer and healthy life. Therefore, New Zealand could become a paradise for “clean and fresh air”. Theme tours such as “breathe pure air” and “natural sanatorium” could become sample products, attracting rich people who want to escape the pollution, noise and artificial world, enjoying the last “100% pure land” in the world, not only for leisure, but most importantly for a body treatment to enhance health and resistance to illness. This type of tour would last longer, made up of a range of treatments, such as beach activities, therapies, massage, spas, with healthy food and activity arrangements. To promote this, Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) can provide more information about the importance of air quality, and the negative impact of pollution on human body. This will be a distinctive feature of New Zealand, as well as a competitive advantage over other destinations.

6.5.2 RECOMMENDATION FOR BEIJING MARKET

For the Beijing market, it is recommended that providing travel information through public media sources (including newspapers and books) would be good to help tourists to form a clear New Zealand image before traveling. Newspapers, such as “Beijing Daily” “Beijing News” “Beijing Times” are among the top popular ones that people from Beijing people like, therefore, they can be used to provide information about New Zealand. Images of New Zealand’s key features such as Maori culture, blue sky and beautiful scenery are the most important things Tourism New Zealand should focus on for its promotion in China. It is also recommended that the geographical, cultural, historical, and political environment of New Zealand could reach Beijing people through TV, especially in the report related to consumer rights and market products, as

well as news and documentary programmes. Although TV programmes are very expensive, they would be very impressive and effective, and the great impact of motion pictures on destination image formation has been supported by a number of prominent culture geographers in their studies of popular media and place promotion (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Kim and Richardson, 2003; Beeton, 2004). It is recommended that New Zealand provide a variety of advertisements and posters in a number of places, in order to achieve a large-coverage in those regions. The more things people see about New Zealand, the better the impressions and positive images they will gain, which will result in more interest and willingness to travel there. This has been confirmed by Australia's experience. Tourists all commented that they had clearer image of Australia, as it is very easy to see, to read and to hear something about Australia. Australia's image can be accessed easily through magazines, books, TV, radios, travel agents, and even schools, therefore, the image people have about Australia will get stronger and clearer.

According to Joppe, Martin, and Waalen (2001), destinations should focus on the key attributes that will ensure that the destination can meet or exceed the visitors' expectations and therefore ensure his or her return. Images for the Beijing market should focus on "culture" or "social background between European and Maori people" or something specific for delegation groups, such as agriculture, education and forestry. As image perception is influenced by a number of factors, creating images that best meet tourists' needs and preference will undoubtedly create positive images for a destination. In Beijing's case, tourists are mainly in favour of "learning different cultures" "experience western lifestyles" as well as "exchanging some professional knowledge on agriculture and education systems, images relating to these issues should be emphasized.

6.5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GUANGDONG MARKET

For the Guangdong market, promotion and marketing activities of New Zealand are recommended to continue to focus on the people, the positive word-of-mouth recommendations, as well as the authenticity of the commercials. As tourism is an

intangible product, it cannot be tried before buying; therefore, people from Guangdong are more than likely to ask opinions and suggestions from family members, relatives, and friends who have travel experience and knowledge, as these people are believed to provide the most trust-worthy recommendations about the destinations. Guangdong is a province of China with the highest number of people living overseas. Most Guangdong people have some relatives living in the destination, therefore, their opinions and suggestions are ranked as the most valuable and useful sources. Apart from the word-of-mouth information, travel books and official Internet websites of the destination are also considered to have a high level of trustworthiness.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IN-DESTINATION IMAGE

6.6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BOTH MARKETS

Based on the research findings, both markets prefer reading in Chinese language, this can be linked to the “familiarization” theory as defined by Baloglu (2001) where increasing the level of familiarization of a destination to the tourists through both information and previous experience has positive effects on their perceptions and impressions of the destination. Although Chinese tourists are looking for new things and different experiences, they still demand something that they are familiar with and have some knowledge about, therefore, provision of Chinese language signs in accommodation facilities, information brochures, attractions and restaurants will be appreciated by to Chinese tourists, increasing their level of security and familiarity with a destination, which ultimately increases their positive image about the destination. A Chinese version of the room and facility instructions and available services would be much appreciated and helpful for Chinese tourists; hotels with a large number of Chinese tourists could also think of training some Chinese-speaking staff to work in the reception area for inquiries and problem-solving.

Most Chinese tourists complain about the lack of activities at night while they are in New Zealand, therefore, travel agents and inbound operators should focus on the arrangement of tour itineraries that will satisfy their curiosity and request to get

involved in some kind of “night experience” and “local nightlife”. As most of the tours will stay one night in Rotorua, it is recommended that Maori cultural concerts could be arranged for tourists, followed by Polynesian Spa treatment. Otherwise, dining at Skyline on top of the Mountain in Rotorua followed by a visit to a local supermarket can also fulfill tourists’ demand to experience real kiwi life.

6.6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE BEIJING MARKET

Beijing tourists care very much about the skills and knowledge of the tour guides, therefore, training quality tour guides is important and necessary. Inbound operators and travel agents should appoint relatively professional and more experienced tour guides for Beijing tourists, especially delegation groups, in order to be able to answer all possible questions they want to know. In terms of tour arrangements, it is recommended to include a one-day theme tour of “New Zealand Culture” in Rotorua; this tour could start with a Western breakfast in the morning, followed by a visit to the Maori Art and Craft Institute (Te Puia), and a visit of the actual Maori villages and carving sites. Lunch could be arranged in a local lunch bar, where tourists could have typical New Zealand sandwiches and soup. Tourists could be taken to the Buried Village that was destroyed in the 1886 Mt. Tarawara eruption. Professional guides at this attraction can provide Beijing tourists with historical information about ancient Maori lifestyles and volcanic eruptions; a Maori hangi and concert can be arranged for dinner and evening entertainment. This full-day experience of New Zealand’s Maori culture will fulfill Beijing tourists’ knowledge-gaining desires, as well as their curiosity about Maori culture and history.

In terms of shopping, Beijing tourists prefer brand products, such as LV, Channel, Polo, Gucci, and so on. Most of the inbound operators have already arranged for tour guides to take tourists to Auckland’s Gallaria Duty Free Shop, where all kinds of brand products can be purchased at a cheaper price. However, not many of New Zealand’s own brands have been introduced to the tourists; therefore, New Zealand made products should also be promoted in China, especially some famous brand, such as

Comvita, Pure Source, Health 2000, and different products range using New Zealand lanolin. Souvenir shops should also inform staff to introduce more products related to Maori culture and New Zealand's history, products made of natural materials, or with special meaning are all in great demand. It is also recommended that Tourism New Zealand could put some souvenir information on their travel websites in Chinese language, with links to culture or special events.

6.6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GUANGDONG MARKETS

In terms of the tour arrangements, Guangdong tourists prefer a flexible and relaxing tour experience. Instead of rushing to a number of attractions, they like going to attractions with a relaxed atmosphere, where no pressure and stress can be experienced. They are also interested in experiencing everything about New Zealand and are willing to try something new and special, which cannot be found in Guangdong. Therefore, a “Kiwi experience” theme tour or an afternoon with a Kiwi family would be a good change and a treat for Guangdong tourists, enabling them to experience the cooking style, gardening, architecture, and interior decoration style of New Zealand people, and satisfy their curiosity about this unfamiliar destination.

In terms of shopping, Guangdong tourists prefer buying New Zealand's natural products, and the more they know about the products, the more likely they will be to purchase the product. Souvenir shops, in order to push sales, should provide adequate information and brochures in Chinese language, as well as having Chinese-speaking sales staff to assist the tourists. Gift packs for tourists to give away when they go back to China should be arranged and pre-packed for convenience. Wrapping bags or product tags with “made in New Zealand” are very essential for Guangdong tourists when they select products, as they avoid anything that is not made in New Zealand.

Concerning Chinese food, some seafood dishes could be added for Guangdong tourists, in order to fulfill their desire to try “fresh seafood” in New Zealand. As most of them emphasized, “We don't care about the extra dollars, as long as the food is delicious”.

Therefore, inbound operators could arrange some special dinner or lunch options for Guangdong tourists, such as driving to Taupo for fresh prawns and fish if the tour schedule allows.

6.6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POST-VISITATION IMAGE

According to Gunn (1988), tourists will only consider visiting a destination if they perceive the image positively. One-way is to promote visuals through advertising, which is considered of paramount importance in successfully creating and communicating an image of a destination. Pictorial stimuli are better recalled and affect both positive and negative brand product beliefs and attitudes (Edell and Staelin, 1983). Tooke and Baker (1996) believed that repeated viewing reinforces the initial effect, enhancing interest in the destination. Therefore, in order to strength tourists' image of New Zealand, as well as to provide some new images for those people who have not been to New Zealand, it is recommend that activities related to visuals and pictorial stimuli could be conducted in both markets.

A photo/ picture competition could be arranged by Tourism New Zealand China Office, starting in one city such as Beijing and spreading into other major cities, such as Shanghai and Guangdong. Travel agents would inform tourists who could send their selected photos taken in New Zealand to enter a competition. Several winners could be chosen every month, with prizes such as a trip to New Zealand, New Zealand souvenirs, or free accommodation in New Zealand and so on. This type of activity would enhance tourists' enthusiasm to catch the most beautiful and remarkable features while in New Zealand, and increase motivation to go to New Zealand. All the photos could then be arranged into brochures and categories and sent to fashion magazines, travel books and newspaper, to catch the attention of mass consumer groups. Because all the pictures would be taken by tourists, there would be no commercial element involved in, therefore, people would trust them while at the same time, gaining a more positive image of New Zealand.

If pictures and photos can provide tourists with a visual image, written articles can provide a more in-depth, more specific, concrete image of New Zealand. Therefore, Tourism New Zealand could also make use of newspaper and radio stations to hold this type of competition with similar prizes to the ones in the pictures competition. Tourists' writing about their experiences in New Zealand could be sent to newspapers and radio stations, and the best article be selected will be awarded with gifts or incentives. Selected articles could be printed in magazines, or read out on radio stations, in order to increase people's awareness of New Zealand, therefore, creating a more positive image of the destination. This activity could be tried out in Beijing first, as people in this market are, in general, better educated, and more cultural, as well as being more likely to participate in such a competition.

6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

So far there has been very little research in destination image based on sub-regional markets, and in no research topic has grounded theory as a methodology ever been used. This study has made an important start, but there is much to do. Firstly, with regard to issues of methodology, the purpose of this research was primarily to identify any similarities and differences existing between sub-markets, rather than measuring them on a scale. Hence to extend the use of these results in a wider area, it is recommended to apply more quantitative methods in future research. Increasing sampling size and adopting random sampling to test all the similarities and differences statistically is also recommended. Secondly, it is recommended that further exploration of tourists from other regions, and further breaking down of the segments would also be useful to advance the knowledge of differences in travel behaviors. Thirdly, this research has ignored a number of other factors, such as the type of travel, education and age factors of the tourists; it is recommended that further research could also take these factors into consideration, to enhance understanding of the Chinese market. Fourthly, destination image is a process, ranging from pre-visit, in-destination and post-visit images, therefore, the ideal research in the future will be an ongoing one, in which interviews will be taken both in China before the trip, in New Zealand during the trip and in China

again after the trip, to get a more thorough and in-depth result. Finally, this kind of research could be expanded to other markets, both Asian and European markets, in order to achieve a thorough picture of emerging markets for New Zealand.

6.8 SUMMARY

The growth of the Chinese outbound market in the tourism field has been very remarkable to the world during the last two decades, and is significant for the New Zealand tourism industry. As China is predicted to be the top source country in terms of providing large overseas tourist numbers, there is a great potential for further development, and it is important for New Zealand to conduct more in-depth research to analyze this market so as to further expand the market share. Therefore, having a good understanding of this market, and the needs, and preferences of tourists is essential in satisfying tourists and enhancing tourists' experience, which in turn will create a good destination image among other Chinese tourists to boost the further development of New Zealand's tourism industry.

Information source has been considered one of the most influential factors in tourists' destination image formation process, which has been demonstrated in both empirical studies and academic research (Gartner, 1993; Alhemoud and Armstrong, 1996). However, for the Chinese market, cultural influences also have an important effect on travel behaviors and reactions. Beijing and Guangdong, as two representative markets for North and South China, were always treated as homogenous markets. However, this study has confirmed that differences in the way tourists perceive New Zealand do exist between the two regions due to information sources and cultural factors, and these differences have not been recognized or studied previously. Being aware of the heterogeneous nature of the Chinese market and the importance of cultural factors in destination image can assist a destination to promote itself more specifically to a targeted market. There is no doubt that New Zealand will create a world-class image as a destination to China, as well as to the rest of the world in the near future.

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APPENDIX A :CONSENT FORM

Consent to Participation in Research

Title of Project:

The Outbound Chinese Travel and New Zealand’s Destination

Image: A Comparative Study between Beijing (North) and Guangdong (South) markets.

Project Supervisor: Dr. Charles Johnston, Senior Lecturer, Auckland University of Technology

Researcher: ChengchengZhao, Auckland University of Technology

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project (Information Sheet dated _____)
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that the interview will be audiotaped and transcribed.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research: Yes No

Participant signature:

Participant name:

Participant Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on _____

AUTEC Reference number _____

APPENDIX B: INFORMATION SHEET

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced: 11.03.2005

Project Title:

The Outbound Chinese Travel and New Zealand's Destination Image: A Comparative Study between Beijing (north) and Guangdong (south) markets.

Invitation

This research is being undertaken as part of a Master in Business degree, and you are invited to participate in the above outlined research project. I would appreciate any assistance you can offer to me for this research. I would like to conduct an interview with you, however, you are under no obligation to answer any or all my questions. The interview will last no more than 30 minutes and would be terminated at any time you wish to do so.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to examine the inter-relationship between destination image and regional difference of China's outbound travel markets. This study will also provide an opportunity to explore the perception differences between Beijing and Guangdong markets.

How are people chosen to be asked to be part of the study?

Tour guides: through personal contact with people who have been guiding for years
Tourists: through a random selection, in specific, the first ten group from both Beijing and Guangdong markets to the Agrodome will be the sample, and every two people within each group will be chosen as participants.

What happens in the study?

Participants will be involved in an in-depth interview with the researcher. The interviews will take approximately 30 minutes and will be audio-taped. Data will be kept confidential and participant will remain anonymous in the outcome from the research.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There is a small degree of ethical risk that participants might consider if certain information is culturally sensitive. However, the interpretation in the thesis will not be directly associated with particular attraction or business in New Zealand but rather translated in a general sense. Hence, no individual name of the participant or the business that participant mentioned will be identified.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

Participants will be informed about the aim of the research project and assured that none of commercially and culturally sensitive information will be revealed. Moreover, they'll receive a detailed Participation Information Sheet, which states that any information obtained from them will be kept confidential to researcher involved in the study and would only be included in researcher's thesis, since the research is being done for a master's degree.

How will my privacy be protected?

Under the Privacy Act 1993 the researcher undertakes that the information supplied by the participant will be held securely. Information about individuals will be confidential to researcher involved in the study.

How do I join the study?

By participating in an in-depth interview (approximately 30 minutes)

What are the costs of participating in the project? (Including time)

There are no costs of participating apart from the informants' time (30 minutes' interview)

Opportunity to consider invitation

An invitation will be considered at the point when we set up the meeting for the interview

Opportunity to receive feedback on results of research

Every participant who is willing to receive feedback will be provided with a free copy of research report. Besides, this thesis will be available at the AUT library.

Participant Concerns

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz , 917 9999 ext 8044.

Researcher Contact Details: Chengcheng zhao, Auckland University of Technology, ph:0212998952 , email: chezhaa8@aut.ac.nz

-Project Supervisor Contact Details: Dr. Irena Ateljevic, Associate Professor, Auckland University of Technology, ph. 64-9-917-9999 ext. 5830 or e-mail: irena.ateljevic@aut.ac.nz

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on AUTEK Reference number

APPENDIX C: Chinese Version of Consent Form

同意参加调查书

调查项目课题：中国出境旅行和新西兰的形象：北京和广东市场之间的一项比较研究

调查者： Zhao Cheng Cheng, Auckland University of Technology

调查项目监管人（导师）：Dr. Charles Johnston, Auckland University of Technology

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- 我阅读同时了解了有关调查项目提供的一些信息
 - 阅读后的一些疑问得到了解答
 - 我同意会谈内容用录音机录音和转录
 - 在数据收集完成之前, 我明白我可以随时随地从调查中撤出,同时也可以不回答任何问题。我所提供的任何信息也可以随时收回,对我不会造成任何损失或者是负面影响。.
 - 如果我中途撤离, 所有有关的磁带和抄本或者其中的部分都会被删除和销毁.
 - 我同意参加这次调查
 - 希望获得来自调查的报告的一份复件吗 希望 不希望

参与者的签名:

参与者姓名:

参与者联系方法:
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.....

日期:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on _____

AUTEC Reference number _____

此表已经被奥克兰理工大学道德协会批准

APPENDIX D: Chinese Version of Participant Information Sheet

关于调查项目的有关资料和信息

表格完成日期: 11.03.2005

项目标题

中国出境旅行和新西兰作为旅游目的地的形象: 关于北京(北方)和广东(南方)市场之间的一项比较研究。

邀请

尊敬的游客, 我很荣幸的邀请您加入到我的调查项目中, 这次调查的目的是为了完成我的商科硕士学位毕业论文, 所以非常希望您能给予我支持和帮助。在这个调查中, 我会和您进行一次关于新西兰形象问题的会谈调查, 你不需要全部回答我所提出的问题。会谈将不超过 30 分钟, 您有权利随时中止会谈。

研究的目的是什么?

这项研究的目的是找出新西兰的形象和中国境外旅行市场之间的关系。这项研究也将提供一次探索北京和广东旅游市场地区差异的机会。

参与者是怎样被挑选的?

导游: 通过和导游在工作上的接触和沟通

游客: 具体来说, 是从到 Agrodome 农场来观光的北京和广东团体中进行选择, 每个团体将会有四个人将被选择为调查访问对象。

调查方式如何?

参与者将跟调查人员一起进行一次深入会谈。会谈大约 30 分钟左右, 谈话内容会用录音机录音然后纪录。所有数据和调查的结果会对外保密。

会谈中会出现的问题

有些参与者可能不习惯接受采访时被录音, 也会有一些参与者认为某些问题很敏感或者是涉及个人隐私问题, 不愿意回答。

怎么处理这些问题?

参加者将告知调查项目的目的并保证所有信息不会对外公开。

怎样保护游客的隐私?

根据 1993 年研究隐私法案, 研究人员会担保所有信息的隐密性, 同时担负所有责任。

游客怎样参加调查

和调查者进行一次面谈(大约 30 分钟)

参加项目的费用是什么

除了被访问者时间没有任何其他费用（30 分钟会谈）

参加项目的好处？

每位参与者会获得一份纪念品，同时愿意获得反馈的每名参加者将被提供调查结果的复印件。

如果对于此项调查的内容和想法有任何疑问和不满，请及时联系项目监管人。

如果对于此项调查的形式和方法有任何疑问和不满，请及时联系 AUTECH 奥克兰理工大学道德协会高级秘书， Madeline Banda, Madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz ,电话： 0064-9-9179999 转 8044

研究人员联系方法： Chengcheng zhao, ph:0212998952 的奥克兰科技大学，电子邮件：chezhaa8@aut.ac.nz

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项目监管人联系方法： Charles Johnston 博士，高级讲师。电话： 64-9-917-9999 或者电子邮件： Charels.johnston@aut.ac.nz

被奥克兰大学技术道德规范委员会赞同

AUTECH 查询号码：

