

# **An Exploratory Study of Chinese Tourists' Expectations and Preferences of New Zealand as a Travel Destination**

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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 (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), no material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

Signature of Candidate: .....

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## **ABSTRACT**

This research explores the Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences on overseas group tours. It highlights the value of customer expectations and preferences in destination planning for the Chinese outbound market and the importance of visitors' knowledge in facilitating marketing strategies. In particular, the basis of this research is to demonstrate the application of customer expectation theories in industry practice. In order to develop greater insight into the Chinese tourist market, the key focus of this study is to develop an applied model of Chinese tourist preferences and expectations of New Zealand as a tour destination.

The research uses a quantitative method to determine Chinese tourist expectations and preferences in New Zealand group tours. A questionnaire survey was used for data collection. With limited resources of time and money, a convenient sample of 100 Chinese tourists was drawn from Chinese visitors who were travelling in group tours in New Zealand in February and March 2012. The survey identified the general travel expectations and preferences of Chinese tourists on New Zealand group tours in five areas: accommodation, dining, activity, tour guide and itinerary. The findings offered particular evidence for improving service quality from the service providers, as complaints about tour guides showed up as a common cause of dissatisfaction in the survey. In addition, this research emphasized that culture is a key factor in building Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences.

To date there are limited studies conducted to investigate Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences for New Zealand as a destination, even though this is increasing. Understanding the Chinese tourists' preferences and expectations is the first step for delivering quality service and providing better visitor experiences. Thus, this study emphasizes not only the importance of tourist expectations and preferences in delivering superior service, but also the need for more research in this area for empirical and theoretical advancement.

**Keywords:** Chinese tourists; expectation; preference; New Zealand group tour; ADS

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

With the development of outbound tourism, China has grown from a relatively neglected tourist market to a global tourist-generating powerhouse. As expressed by the World Tourism Organization (2003 & 2006), China is an increasingly significant player as a country of origin and will fundamentally have an effect on the future development of international tourism. Increasingly, much of the world is eager to explore this market. China presents both opportunities and challenges for all tourist destinations that want success in this fierce market competition. How to derive benefits from this market to compete with other tourist destinations seems to be a recent issue for marketers. Apart from developing a series of effective strategies, a good knowledge of the target market and customers is extremely helpful to improve competitiveness. Therefore, understanding customers' expectations and preferences is a key factor and the driving force behind appropriate strategies.

Since understanding customers' expectations and preferences has been recognized as one of the crucial elements of tourism planning over the last few years, many academic studies consider determining customers' expectations and preferences in a variety of ways. In particular, this issue has been widely discussed in marketing strategies, because expectations and preferences can have a significant impact on visitor decision processes and consumer behaviours (Gnoth, 1997). Understanding what tourists expect and prefer is a prerequisite for delivering quality service and success in market competitions for industry practitioners. Kaczynski (2008) has considered them a starting point for all marketing efforts. If marketers do not have good knowledge or even misunderstand tourist needs and expectations, there will be serious problems for market development.

Moreover, many destination-based studies have been conducted on this issue for business practice because of a number of convincing reasons. The reliance on destination-based studies ensures the collection of detailed knowledge of tourists. It provides practitioners with insights into what tourists like and dislike about their intended destination in order to better fulfil the needs of customers. Coathup (1999) suggested that it was worth learning the target tourist market and current interest of



buyers in order to estimate demand potential. Thus, this research is expected to provide some useful information on the application of industry practice for marketers by studying Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences for New Zealand group tours, since the Chinese tourist market is important for the New Zealand tourism industry and the country's economy.

### **1.1 The Significance of Chinese Market to New Zealand Tourism**

The Chinese outbound market exhibits the key attributes of an economy to the New Zealand tourism industry. Since New Zealand received ADS (Approved Destination Status) approval as a travel destination for Chinese group visitors in 1999 (the New Zealand Tourism Board, n.d.), the Chinese inbound market has developed rapidly. After achieving ADS status, New Zealand has received many benefits from this emerging tourism market. Chinese arrivals increased from 13,119 in March 1998 to 129,564 in March 2011. At present, the Chinese market is New Zealand's fourth largest inbound market, with significant potential for the New Zealand tourism industry. Based on the Ministry of Economic Development's "International Visitor Arrivals" report (2011), New Zealand hosted 145,524 Chinese tourists in the year ended December 2011, which increased by 18.6% compared to the previous year. The number of Chinese arrivals in 2011 made up around 5.1% of all New Zealand's overseas arrivals for the year. This almost doubles that of the 84,000 Chinese tourists that arrived in 2005. Those Chinese tourists brought in a total of NZ\$457 million to New Zealand by the end of December 2011, with average spending of NZ\$3,448 per visit.

In 2011, the introduction of a more direct route linking the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou to Auckland has also substantially increased entry into New Zealand for Chinese travellers. There was a decline in Chinese tourist arrivals in 2010, due to the Christchurch earthquake, but it recovered in the following year. The Chinese market offers tremendous opportunities for New Zealand tourism in terms of creating jobs and generating foreign exchange earnings. In Zhang and Yan's research (2008), what attracted the destinations to develop the Chinese market was not only the large number of Chinese outbound visitors, but also the remarkable purchasing power that appealed to the destinations seeking to acquire economic benefits. The Chinese tourist market still

has the potential to grow strongly. As supported in 2012 by Frood, the general manager of Asia Markets from Tourism New Zealand, China is a significant target market for New Zealand and has the potential to overtake the United States (USA) to become the second largest international market in terms of tourist arrivals by 2014 (Tourism New Zealand, 2012a). Consequently, a better understanding of this target market will help to implement marketing strategies effectively.

## **1.2 Current Situation of Chinese Tourist Market in New Zealand**

While the Chinese outbound market presents enormous opportunities for all players in the international tourism industry, it also poses significant challenges. Prior to setting up any marketing plans, understanding what challenges it currently faces should be clarified. There are some concerns that the destination should know. First, New Zealand has been granted ADS approval for over twelve years, and the overwhelming majority of Chinese people have never been to New Zealand before 1999. New Zealand as a travel destination had widely raised its public exposure in China after receiving ADS approval. Thus, it is not surprising that the Chinese inbound market to New Zealand is experiencing a consequent rise, as Chinese travellers want to explore this new land. However, there are still large numbers of Chinese tourists that have not been to New Zealand to date. According to Tourism New Zealand (2011b), the majority of Chinese holiday visitors are first-time visitors to New Zealand, which may explain the large number of Chinese tourists travelling here. Consequently, the New Zealand tourism industry serving the Chinese market is still in a relatively early stage of development, and the rise of Chinese tourists at this stage is inevitable. Despite that, the New Zealand tourism industry should consider how this growth is set to continue in the future.

Next, the current number of Chinese visitors to New Zealand is quite impressive, and significant for the country; nevertheless it is comparatively small compared with the overall Chinese outbound tourists. According to the updated statistics released by the China National Tourism Administration (2012), the total number of Chinese travellers in 2011 was 70.25 million, an increase of 22% over the previous year. The Chinese visitors who came to New Zealand only represented 0.002% of the overall Chinese outbound travel market share in 2011. Similarly, the growth of Chinese outbound travel to New

Zealand is still lower than the overall level of China's outbound travel. On the other hand, the World Tourism Organization (1998) forecast that China outbound travel would keep its remarkable growth, and would give a record of 100 million outbound travellers by 2020. It seems that the New Zealand tourism industry has a considerable opportunity to capture a large slice of this market, which relies on careful planning and sustainable development.

Furthermore, with the increase of ADS destinations worldwide, Chinese tourists have more choice in travel destination. As a result, there is increasingly fierce competition among these destinations. For instance, some destinations simplified the visa process, which makes the entry process for Chinese tourists more convenient. The expansion of tourism products contributes to other strategic marketing competition, such as educational observation groups to overseas universities, shopping tours to USA and European countries, and tours for elderly people. These new products bring ADS destinations with competitive strength. Thus, it is critical for the New Zealand tourism industry to identify opportunities in order to attract more Chinese visitors.

Finally, it is necessary to note that maximising tourism potential is not just about boosting numbers. Success is determined by visitor satisfaction, leading to positive word-of-mouth recommendations to friends and relatives, which in turn bring in new customers. In addition, creating repeat customers to maximise benefits would promote economic sustainability. Therefore, marketers need to know what services and products to offer travellers in order to meet their increasing needs. Understanding tourists' expectations and preferences is essential for delivering the desired service satisfactorily. At the same time, popular modern marketing came up with the idea of knowing your customer, and then anticipating and meeting their needs (Swarbrooke & Horner, 1999). Clearly, understanding tourists' expectations and preferences is the key to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of marketing activities in tourist destinations.

### **1.3 The Significance of the Study**

Since Chinese outbound travellers and the market's contribution to the economy of destinations are increasing, there are a significant number of researchers devoting

serious concerns to this market in many countries. Destination-based studies of Chinese tourists tend to have the focus with the rapid growth of ADS destinations (Chow & Murphy, 2011; Agrusa, Kim & Wang, 2011; Wang, Vela & Tyler, 2008; Lu, 2011; Truong & King, 2009). For instance, Yu and Weiler (2001) studied the key factors affecting Chinese tourists' travel experiences and service evaluation in Australia, and reported that tourists' satisfaction level varied according to gender, educational background and the travel party. Similarly, Huang (2008) examined 55 expectations of 12 factors of Mainland Chinese tourists to Canada, and his finding proposed that the three expectation patterns among visitors were related to entertainment, variety seeking and health or low price. Based on the analysis of In-Flight survey data collected by U.S. Tourism Industries, Cai, Lehto and O'Leary (2008) studied the characteristics of the U.S.-bound Chinese travellers. By comparing three groups' trip characteristics, the most popular destination activities and attractions were identified as shopping; dining; city sightseeing; visiting historical places, amusement and theme parks, and national parks; and casinos or gambling.

Although different destination countries conducted many studies on Chinese tourists' behaviour, there have been somewhat limited studies to investigate Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences for New Zealand as a destination (Ryan & Mo, 2001; Zhao, 2006; Tian, 2008; Mohsin, 2008; Chan, 2009). On the other hand, some of the studies lack reliability and up-to-date data, which tourism marketers require. In order to have a deeper understanding of Chinese travellers, the New Zealand government has conducted some research in this market. According to the Ministry of Tourism, three research projects (Active Considerer Research; Visitor Experience Monitor; Product Development Research) have been undertaken from the following viewpoints:

1. Who they are, and what they look for in a holiday experience; how we talk to and connect with them.
2. How they found their holiday experience in New Zealand; what they enjoyed and what they thought we needed to improve on (Tourism New Zealand, 2011a).

The research evaluated and analysed the Chinese market from different perspectives. The studies found that there are 16.9 million Chinese Active Considerers located in China, who indicated that New Zealand is one of the next preferred holiday destinations

and they are willing to be here. To achieve increased visitor arrivals, Tourism New Zealand more closely focused its development strategies on considering actual visitors. Research also suggested that Chinese tourists are generally satisfied with their trip to New Zealand, but there are some areas where New Zealand can improve on its visitor experience for Chinese tourists. Particularly low satisfaction is shown in “service”, “food” and “accommodation”. These lower levels of satisfaction have been blamed partly on a tendency in the past for Chinese tour operators to cut costs on food, accommodation, and activities on tours, or to insist on shopping in order to obtain kickbacks (Tourism New Zealand, 2010; Weiler & Yu, 2006).

Findings from Tourism New Zealand’s research also show that the average length of most Chinese holidaymakers’ trips to New Zealand was 10.6 days in 2010, which is less than the New Zealand average for holidaying tourists. It implied that much of their experience of New Zealand is spent travelling between destinations, or having to visit attractions in a rushed and superficial way, which may reduce satisfaction with the experience (Weiler & Yu, 2006). The lack of satisfaction experienced by this market may also reflect a failure in the industry to fully understand Chinese visitors’ needs (Fountain, Espiner & Xie, 2011).

Therefore, in the New Zealand context, more studies on Chinese tourists are needed in order to better target the rapidly developing market. China is a diverse and distinctive market. Therefore, sufficient information about tourist behaviour is the basis for promoting strategic plans and the effectiveness of all marketing activities. The call for more studies on the Chinese market in New Zealand is based on the fact that practitioners will check if their plans oppose Chinese tourists’ actual travel expectations and preferences in order to develop the most desirable products for them. Hence, serving the Chinese market successfully requires studying the expectations of travellers to New Zealand and their actual preferences for New Zealand’s tourism products.

#### **1.4 The Objectives of the Study**

Gaining a deeper understanding of what tourists desire not only assists in increasing volume, but also increases competitive advantage and serves marketers to develop

effective marketing strategies and plans for the entire travel industry. To assist in this task, the purpose of this research is to clarify what Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences are on their New Zealand group tours, as well as what services and products New Zealand marketers should provide to Chinese travellers.

Therefore, the main objectives of this study are formulated as below:

1. To identify the Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences for New Zealand tours.
2. To establish an applied model of Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences of New Zealand as a tour destination.
3. To develop greater insight into the Chinese tourist market to New Zealand.
4. To enhance existing knowledge of customer expectations and preferences in destination planning and marketing strategy.

Understanding Chinese tourists' preferences and expectations is the first step in delivering quality service. Apart from this, the basis of this research is to provide a discussion on the application of customer expectation theories to business practice. Thus, this study emphasizes not only the importance of tourists' expectations and preferences in delivering superior service, but also the need for more research in this area for empirical and theoretical advancement. Meanwhile, it is expected that this study could have wider research use in Chinese market management, and could be adopted as a recommendation by local government and the wider tourism industry.

## **1.5 Methodology**

The methodology applied in this research is the use of a quantitative method to determine Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences. A questionnaire survey was used in order to obtain the information of 'fact' and 'opinion' from the respondents (Denscombe, 2010, p.156). Questionnaires can also obtain the necessary basic information and assess the respondents' opinions considering their attitudes, insights, beliefs, preferences reactions and values. A quantitative study is excellent at uncovering the types of activities visitors engage in, as well as exploring tourists' preferences for the different kinds of activities (Blichfeldt & Kessler, 2009).

In terms of sample design, the target population for this study was the Chinese tourists who were currently travelling in New Zealand. However, with limited resources of time and money, a convenient sample of 100 Chinese tourists was selected to participate in the survey. This sampling method randomly picks Chinese visitors who are the customers of a selected travel agent. With regards to the average number of customers for the company, 100 is around one third of their Chinese customers during the research period. Thus, a total of 100 surveys were distributed to derive an appropriate representative range of respondents.

The design of the questionnaire was originally in English with translation into Mandarin. Chinese staff from the travel agent office and postgraduate students in New Zealand assisted in the translation. In order to overcome ambiguity, a pre-test of the questionnaire was undertaken using ten respondents to ensure that the questions were understandable. After data had been collected, an analysis was made using statistical computer software packages (SPSS and Microsoft Excel). Descriptive statistics were summarized using tables and diagrams to illustrate the findings of the research.

## **1.6 Structure**

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. The first chapter draws an outline of the significance of the Chinese market to the New Zealand tourism industry, and the challenges that New Zealand tourism faces in developing the Chinese tourist market. It shows that understanding Chinese tourists is crucial in facilitating a marketing strategy. The chapter describes the research objectives, the importance of conducting this study and it gives the reasons for selecting the research method for data collection and analysis.

In Chapter Two, an intensive literature review of the existing body of work is used including studies of tourist satisfaction, consumer expectations and preferences, as well as cross-cultural aspects. It focuses on providing the conceptual background of tourist behaviour. In particular, it reviews the theories on tourist satisfaction along with service quality, which provides preliminary insights into tourist expectations and preferences. This is followed by a discussion on the application of customer expectation and

preference theories in tourism studies. Then, some practical studies on Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences are reviewed. Thereby, the gaps in existing research are identified, and the importance of this study is identified. Next, the chapter moves to an overview of Chinese outbound tourism, with regards to market development and potential for future growth. It also includes information about the ADS scheme, which is a significant system for understanding this distinctive market, along with Chinese tourists' behaviours and characteristics in New Zealand travel.

Chapter Three starts by giving a description of the research methodology used for the study. In addition, the chapter explains the reasons for adopting the research approach. Methods of data collection and analysis are also presented in this section. Lastly, ethical issues of this research are mentioned.

Chapter Four begins with the demographic information of respondents. Next, general travel expectations and preferences of Chinese visitors are presented from three aspects: accommodation, dining and activities. In order to identify detailed travel preferences, the chapter then gives a further analysis on the differences of accommodation, dining and activity preferences of Chinese tourists according to age, gender, education level and their New Zealand travel experiences. In addition, the levels of trust that the Chinese tourists have towards tour operators are discussed. Finally, the chapter presents a general summary on the motivations of Chinese travellers visiting New Zealand, the unsatisfactory issues of the trip, and expectations for future New Zealand group tours.

In Chapter Five, an analysis of the research findings is presented. Firstly, a detailed discussion of travel behaviour of Chinese tourists is provided, within the context of five areas: accommodation, dining, activity, tour guide and itinerary. This chapter points out some interesting findings that are supported by previous studies. Based on the data analysis, an applied model of Chinese travellers' expectations and preferences on a New Zealand group tour was developed, which represents the expectations and preferences of Chinese tourists in general.

The last chapter provides the conclusions of this study, together with some recommendations. Several contributions of this research are reported with practical and



theoretical perspectives. Accordingly, some suggestions are provided in the hope of assisting the operation of the New Zealand tourism industry. At the end, several limitations of this study are identified to provide insight for future research.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

One of the main purposes of this study is to develop an applied model of Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences for New Zealand as a tourist destination. Based on this, the research discusses what Chinese tourists expect and prefer in New Zealand and on the applications of behavioural theories into industry practice. To carry out this study, completing a critical review of current literature is necessary. There is a large body of literature on the nature of traveller behaviour, which provides the basis for the present study. Multiple information sources are used to conduct a selected literature review, including books, theses or dissertations, Internet resources; and professional journals.

To meet the objectives of the study, firstly, three main areas of literature are critically reviewed: tourist satisfaction, consumer expectation and preference, and tourists' expectations and preferences in a cross-cultural context. This critical review explores the connection between consumer expectation and tourist satisfaction. Relevant theories are reviewed to explain the nature of consumer behaviour in terms of satisfaction, as behavioural concepts lie at the heart of marketing strategies. Practical studies reviewed focus on two elements: the synthesis of Chinese outbound travellers' behaviour and the cultural factors that influence Chinese tourists' expectations. In sum, this chapter examines both theoretical and practical studies in the field of tourist behaviour.

### **2.1 Tourist Satisfaction**

Satisfying consumers in tourism is a precondition for survival in today's competitive business environment. From a practitioners' point of view, tourist satisfaction directly impacts on business development within all sectors of industry practice. It helps practitioners understand the travellers' perceptions of existing products and services, as well as how to improve in the future. Tourist satisfaction could lead to positive word-of-mouth recommendations of products to friends and relatives, or bring repeat customers. Consumer satisfaction is essential for long-term success. In spite of the problems associated with definition and measurement in industry practice, the concept continues to underpin tourism research and marketing planning.

Tourist satisfaction is considered inextricably linked to service quality. There are a number of models used in service industries in relation to quality and customer satisfaction. A widely cited theory of quality is the service gap concept introduced by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry in 1985. Five possible service gaps were identified based on the idea of dissatisfaction with services to provide the overall measurement of service quality. Among these service gaps, dissatisfaction arises by the discrepancy between customers' expectations for service and the perceived outcomes defined in Gap 1 – “differences between consumer expectations and management perceptions of consumer expectations” (Parasuraman et al., 1985, p.44). Laws (1991), in the application of this concept to the airline industry, reported that marketing activities should match realistic expectations. When the expectation for a level of service is beyond the ability of a carrier to deliver, dissatisfaction may result.

Upon this theory, one of the best known models is the SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry in 1988. The model consists of five dimensions, which are reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. It aims to offer an instrument for measuring service quality in general. Although the model has received various criticisms, the SERVQUAL technique has received considerable recognition in service marketing and has been widely applied to tourism services for measuring service quality, as well as customer satisfaction. For example, Fick and Ritchie (1991) tested the instrument in four tourism service segments (airlines, hotel, restaurant, and ski area services) and found that this quality management tool appeared to be useful for the service sectors within a similar market segment. Chang made another attempt to apply the technique in guided package tour services (2009). The results suggest that the SERVQUAL instrument can be used in the travel industry with modified dimensions of service quality. For example, the dimension of “tangibility” could be ignored, as it was less significant when compared with other dimensions in terms of customers' perception of service quality. Thus, it seems that customer satisfaction is strongly connected with the concept of quality.

Further, the lack of consensus on conceptualisations of the relationship between service quality and tourist satisfaction leads to an interdependent development in tourism and

marketing literature. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1991) argued that service quality and satisfaction could be used interchangeably - similar to Manning's research (1999, p.8), which pointed out "the principal measure of quality in outdoor recreation has long been defined by visitor satisfaction." Therefore, perceived service quality reflects the degree of tourist satisfaction to a certain extent. A higher quality performance in product and service provision may result in a higher level of satisfaction.

On the other hand, many researchers acknowledge that customer expectations play a certain role as standard points used to measure the performance of suppliers (Bolton & Drew, 1991; Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry 1994; Robledo, 2001). The understanding of customer expectations is frequently involved in the studies of service quality and customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, the most current accepted definition of quality is to meet customers' expectations (Reeves & Bednar, 1994). Juran and Gryna's study (as cited in Chiu & Liu, 2004, p.187) redefined the concept of quality as "meeting customers' needs." Therefore, it is clear that tourist expectation is a determinant for consumer satisfaction and tourists' needs are crucial for providing quality service to the tourist market.

## **2.2 Customer Expectation and Preference**

### **2.2.1 Customer Expectation**

It has been suggested that understanding customer expectations is a prerequisite for quality service delivery (Gilbert & Wong, 2003). Customer expectation is a key to assessing customer satisfaction. As mentioned by Rodriguez Del Bosque, San Martin, Collado and Garcia del los Salmones (2008), tourist expectation can influence satisfaction in two areas: assimilation and contrast. According to the assimilation theory (Sherif & Hovland, 1961), tourists would adjust the destination perception to their expectations. In regards to contrast, conflict can occur between the tourists' perceptions and expectations. In other words, when the travellers' expectations of products go beyond their perceptions, the discrepancy between perception and expectation leads to negative evaluative responses. In either of these two situations, it is clear that expectations fundamentally affect satisfaction evaluation.

A sufficient understanding of the nature, sources and all relevant aspects of consumer expectation is required for research and marketing practice, due to its importance. A great number of studies have addressed this issue in the tourism industry, and many researchers have attempted to define it in a variety of ways. Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1993) concluded that tourist expectation is a series of preceding beliefs measuring performance. They (1988) also categorized it into five dimensions: reliability, tangibles, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, in order to provide a model for quality identification. The meaning of customer expectation in quality literature, however, tends to be regarded as the ideal standard in customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction studies (Gilbert & Wong, 2003). Similarly, Oliver (1980) stated that expectation is a frame of reference to performance-specific expectation and expectancy disconfirmation. Accordingly, the level of perceived quality and customer satisfaction is directly determined by how many needs and expectations are to be learned.

In the famous five gaps framework of customers' perceived service quality, Gap 1 (differences between consumer expectations and management perceptions of consumer expectations) and Gap 5 (differences between consumer expectations and perceptions of the quality of the service received) are both related to customer expectations (Parasuraman et al., 1985, p.45). It seems that customer expectation plays a key role in consumer evaluation of desired service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988, 1991; Turner, Reisinger & McQuilken, 2001; Robledo, 2001; Chen & Chang, 2005). Thus, it is no surprise that many studies put both satisfaction and quality into a framework of standards for customer expectation management. For instance, Abdlla, Mohamed and Mekawy (2007) examined passengers' needs and expectations of the Egyptian airline service using qualitative and quantitative approaches. Their findings emphasized the importance of understanding the relationship between airline service quality and tourists' needs and expectations.

Although many researchers have acknowledged that the consequences of customer expectations can be examined by customer satisfaction and perceived quality, there is a lack of unified agreement on expectations as a major factor in quality and expectations as a determinant. It is argued that expectation is not concerned to appraise perceived

quality, and misleading information to be taken into account in the measurement of quality. Cronin and Taylor (1994) supported this by using the perception model to develop a framework for service quality evaluation. Their research emphasized that the perceptions of customers played a conclusive role in the assessment of service quality and satisfaction, rather than their expectations. Customers will perceive quality positively, which is only measured by their perceptions of performance.

On the contrary, Robledo (2001) compared two conflicting paradigms (the disconfirmation paradigm and the perception paradigm) with regard to the conceptualisation and measurement of service quality and discussed whether the concept of customer expectation is justified as a component of measure required. The findings showed that even though perception is obviously one of the important components in estimating of performance quality, service quality assessment largely depends on customer expectation. Since expectations are considered superior to other examined models in service evaluation, a series of strategic efforts are required to manage these expectations. The integrated study of Chinese tourists' expectations provides the basis of detailed knowledge to establish an applied model of their preferences.

### **2.2.2 Customer Preference**

Customer preference sometimes is considered to be structurally similar to customer expectations in the tourism industry. Both are in essence commonly described as what a tourist wants from travel destinations. However, they are still different. According to the Oxford Dictionary (2000, p.825), preference is defined as a greater interest or desire for something or someone. In the satisfaction literature, the phenomenon of expectation tends to be viewed as "predictive expectations" (Prakash, 1984, p.64) or "will expectations" (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin & Zeithaml, 1993, p.8), while preference tends to lay stress on the tourists' actual perceptions of destination attractiveness (Kim, Guo & Agrusa, 2005).

The review of the definition of expectation shows that it functions as a reflection of the opinion of tourists. Nevertheless, the nature of tourist preference is derived from the

view as a positive attitude leader (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999). Actually, tourist preference is not only different from expectation, but they correspond with each other. Expectation and preference are often incorporated in the studies of tourist behaviour, especially for service quality and consumer satisfaction research. A tourist's expectation refers to the perception of the object associated with the content of the preference. In other words, the discussion of tourists' expectations of the destination usually is based on the consideration of tourists' preferences.

In view of the function of tourist preference, Mayo and Jarvis (1981) believed that the more that tourists value their destination's attractiveness, the higher the possibility that the traveller would choose it as a future travel destination. Preferences that tourists have from destination attractiveness would affect visitors' choices (Chen & Uysal, 2002). To some extent, travel preference is also considered as actual tourist satisfaction (Mykletun, Crofts, & Mykletun, 2001), which could significantly influence the intentions of revisiting (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999). Therefore, understanding tourist preferences is extremely important and helpful in improving the quality of existing products and developing new ones.

There are several studies that have examined tourists' preferences for better understanding of their attitudinal and behavioural characteristics, and promoting future tourism development. For example, Pettersson (2002) used a stated preference method (Hensher, 1994) to find the most preferred potential products for the identification of the target market in order to establish marketing policies to increase repeat visits. Similarly, Kim et al. (2005) conducted a series of interviews with ten travel agents in Shanghai for mainland Chinese tourists' choices of tourism destination attributes. This study suggests some strategies for tourism demand forecasts according to tourist preferences. In another study, Batra (2008) investigated the specific preferences of wine tourists to understand the special interest tourism market and prepare the destinations to better meet their customers' needs.

### **2.3 Expectation and Preference of Tourist in a Cross-cultural Context**

In the views of Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell (2003, p.41), culture can be defined as “a group of people identified by their shared history, values and pattern”. Culture can shape people’s behaviour (Brislin, 1993); thus it could be regarded as an explanation of differences in the customer behaviour of different nationalities. In tourism marketing research, some studies cited different cultural backgrounds to explain the variety of consumer behaviour. According to Yuan and McDonald (1991), travel expectation and preference of tourists are different based on nationalities. In fact, culture has an influence on tourism consumer behaviour which is well documented (Armstrong, Mok, Go & Chan, 1997; Hofstede, 1980).

In Rosenbaum and Spears’ research (2005), they investigated planned products and service consumption patterns among US, Canadian, Japanese, Chinese, South Korean and Australian/New Zealand tourists in Hawaii. Their findings revealed significant cross-cultural differences in consumption patterns among international tourists. Studies focusing on strategic marketing have also identified the value of cultural knowledge in destination planning strategies.

Further, Keown’s study (1989) pointed out that Japanese tourists have characteristics of frequent shopping, the ubiquity of picture-taking, and shorter duration of tours than other nationalities surveyed. Yamamoto and Gill (1999) explained this behaviour by noting that the Japanese cultural values such as the concept of *kinen* (commemoration or souvenir) (Ahmed & Krohn, 1992), play a pivotal role in their engagement in shopping activity. Ziff-Levine (1990) further examined the characteristics of buying behaviour of Japanese tourists with reference to their cultural values. It is essential to acknowledge that the marked differences in tourist behaviour in different cultural groups should not be ignored.

Similarly, Pizam and Jeong (1996) investigated group tourists from three nationalities (Koreans, Japanese and Americans) and found that their perceptions of tour guides were different in the context of nationalities and cultures. The results showed that nationality and culture have a strong effect on tourist behaviour. These results further supported



Pizam and Sussmann's study (1995), which demonstrated that culture in fact has an effect upon tourist behaviour. Consequently, the understanding of cultural impacts can help to understand tourists' behaviour. More important is learning about specific visitors and knowing what they expect in their tour activities, in a cultural context.

Indeed, it is necessary to recognize that Chinese people, especially, are different from other ethnic groups because of their unique culture. This culture generally provides the norms of behaviour and guides individual Chinese preferences and actions. As suggested by Turner, Reisinger and McQuilken (2001), culture would impact on tourists' pre-travel expectations and post-trip satisfaction level. Therefore, understanding the influence of Chinese culture on the Chinese travellers can contribute to better knowledge of this market.

## **2.4 Expectations and Preferences of Chinese Tourists in a Cross-cultural Context**

Since Chinese outbound tourism has been recognised as a growing interest in recent years, many studies on Chinese tourists have been published. Studying Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences in a cultural context has also been explored, as the influence of culture on visitor behaviour cannot be neglected (Hofstede, 1980; Pizam & Sussmann, 1995; Armstrong et al., 1997; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005). In addition, China has a long history over thousands of years, and there is a widespread belief in the significance of cultural values on the behaviour of Chinese people (Vatikiotis & Daorueng, 1998). Because of China's unique cultural background, Chinese people are fundamentally different from Westerners (Doctoroff, 2005).

A recent study conducted by Agrusa et al. (2011) used a questionnaire survey to ask Chinese tourists to rate their expectations and preferences for visiting Hawaii. Research suggests that Hawaii tour operators should focus on introducing discount shopping to first-time visitors and that these visitors also have a high level of preference for a deluxe hotel. In Mok and Defranco's (2008, p.108) comprehensive review of Chinese culture, they stated that the "face" concept leads to a prioritising of consideration in terms of travel choices. Their findings also provide further explanations for providing deluxe

hotels, as any tourism products with “face enhancing” qualities would appeal to Chinese consumers. The association between cultural values and Chinese tourists’ expectations and preferences is particularly important and even a basic guideline for studying Chinese tourists.

In addition, Li, Lai, Harrill, Kline and Wang (2011) reported that food and accommodation are two main concerns of Chinese visitors when travelling overseas. Simoons (1991) related it to the Chinese food-centred culture, which is the reason for trying new local cuisine when Chinese tourists travel overseas. By conducting a qualitative research study and in-depth interviews of 20 Chinese diners, Hoare, Butcher and O’Brien (2011) identified face, trustworthiness and harmony as the three core values to explain Chinese tourist dining preferences overseas. They found that Chinese diners in an overseas context expect to be given face rather than table manners when served by a Chinese host. At the end, the study suggests that it is necessary to understand the harmony concept in Chinese culture and find channels to discover Chinese diners’ real perception of the restaurant in order to improve service delivery.

There are other studies concerning the significance of Chinese culture on the behaviour of Mainland Chinese people in a tourism context. Kwek and Lee (2010) conducted research that emphasized the notion of harmony that dominated the Chinese tourist’s behaviour, which explained why many Chinese trips were package tours. In Yu and Weiler’s (2001) full review of Chinese pleasure travellers to Australia, they identified that Chinese tourists presented a high level of interest in package travel because of convenience and reasonable price. Similarly, Guo, Kim and Timothy (2007) also supported the multiple destination choices involved in package tours based on Chinese tourists’ preferences.

Moreover, Reisinger and Turner (2002) studied the cultural differences between Asian tourist markets and Australian hosts, which demonstrated that gift-giving in Chinese society is an expression of appreciation, gratitude and remembrance. Thus, the suggestion was given to the marketers that advertising aimed at those tourists should focus on this tradition. Li, et al. (2011) added that most Chinese tourists highly

appreciate traditional values such as family duty and caring for children. For this reason, the Chinese tourists' consumption habits of purchasing gifts for seniors, children and friends must be understood in order to be well prepared to accommodate Chinese tourists' needs.

These previous studies indicate that Chinese travellers have their specific travel expectations and preferences for different travel destinations. Tourists, under different nationalities and cultures, can have substantially different behavioural characteristics, expectations and preferences. Most western tourism marketers have limited experience in dealing with Chinese customers. Therefore, studying Chinese tourists' behaviour is essential for destinations to target the growing Chinese market.

## **2.5 Overview of Chinese Outbound Market**

To be effective in tapping into the growing Chinese outbound market, destinations require more knowledge about target tourists' travel behaviours. Also, in order to assist in presenting favourable and competitive products to the target customer, practitioners and destinations need to learn more about this market. The development of China's outbound tourism has fallen behind its domestic tourism. It is because China's tourism industry has taken a different path from other developed countries in using the approved destination status (ADS) system to assist and control growing Chinese interests. Thus, an overview of the development of China's outbound tourism and the ADS scheme is necessary to assist in better understanding the system of Chinese outbound travel.

### **2.5.1 The Development of Chinese Outbound Tourism**

China's outbound tourism has experienced significant development over the past few decades. Today, opening up outbound destinations for Chinese citizens is still limited, but it does not reduce the enormous pressure for development from marketers and destinations. As a strong player in current international tourism industry, China's outbound tourism has gone through three stages (World Tourism Organization, 2006): (1) trial (1983-1996), (2) initial (1997-2001) and (3) development stage (2002-present). China's outbound market went through stages such as visiting relatives and friends in Hong Kong and self-paid tours to foreign countries (Du & Dai, 2005, p.1).

The first stage of outbound tourism covered the period from 1983 to 1996. Since 1983, mainland Chinese citizens have been allowed to visit Hong Kong and Macao. The Guangdong Travel Corporation tentatively organized tours just for residents of Guangdong Province to visit relatives and friends in Hong Kong. This was the beginning of Chinese outbound tourism (Qu & Lam, 1997). After that, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Russia, Mongolia and the Philippines were given approval as destinations for mainland Chinese tourists' travel. This stage is described as the visiting friends and relatives (VFR) and border area travel period. Along with the addition of more countries into the destination list, the Approved Destination Status (ADS) scheme was introduced by the Chinese government to assist and control the growing international travel.

At the second stage, self-supported outbound travel was launched in 1997. The rapid development of the national economy and the increasing amount of individual wealth stimulated the development of the outbound tourist market in China. The number of destinations listed in the Approved Destination Status (ADS) agreement increased each year, and the speed of granting approvals greatly accelerated. China became an official member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001. This indicated the encouragement of relaxation of travel restrictions. Chinese tourists could even travel further to foreign countries, rather than border areas. Meanwhile, the relative loosening of restrictions promoted growth in China's outbound tourism industry. From then on, it was a period of rapid development of Chinese outbound tourism. The outstanding features of this stage were a rapid growth of outbound destinations and a significant increase in outbound tourists. The World Tourism Organization's Tourism Vision 2020 Report forecast Chinese outbound trips would reach 100 million by 2020. In 2003, a new policy of Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) was introduced, which allowed Chinese residents to visit Hong Kong and Macau individually (Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2004). This opened China further and showed that Chinese outbound market became a more critical target market than others. It is acknowledged that Chinese outbound market will continually contribute to the world's tourist economy, along with the

increasing competition among the ADS destinations, which will face more challenges to maintain their market share of Chinese outbound tourism.

### **2.5.2 Approved Destination Status (ADS)**

The Approved Destination Status (ADS) system is based on a bilateral tourism agreement between the Chinese government and the destination's government. The countries or regions that were granted ADS approvals could receive Chinese leisure visitors in the way of organized group tours. In order to facilitate the growth of Chinese travellers, the Chinese government first implemented the ADS scheme in 1995. After that, Chinese citizens were allowed to travel overseas for leisure purposes. Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand were the first three countries to be granted ADS from the Chinese government. Australia and New Zealand were the first western countries with ADS in 1999. Then, Malta and Egypt were opened up to Chinese citizens in 2002. These were the first ADS destinations in Europe and Africa, respectively. Later on, Cuba became the first country in the Americas to receive ADS, in 2003. By this time, outbound destinations for Chinese travellers had spread over five continents. As the number of approved destinations increased Chinese outbound tourists had a wider range of choices. To date, a total of 140 countries and regions have signed the ADS agreement, and 110 of these agreements are already in effect (China National Tourism Administration, 2011).

### **2.6 Characteristics of Chinese Market in New Zealand**

The development of the Chinese inbound market to New Zealand as a travel destination is studied, together with the integration of Chinese tourists' characteristics in New Zealand group tours from the perspective of tourism experts. Although New Zealand is receiving only a small percentage of total Chinese outbound tourists, China is already the fourth highest visitor market for New Zealand. To plan the Chinese market, Tourism New Zealand has undertaken a range of studies of the development of the Chinese inbound market. These research projects are conducted from three aspects to deepen the understanding of Chinese tourists. The recognition of its importance and potential for continued growth has resulted in a series of research and planning activities by Tourism

New Zealand. The reason for New Zealand's interest in China is owing to the market characteristics.

Middle-aged and older tourists are the predominant purchasers for New Zealand group tours. They are aged from 30 to 60 years and account for nearly 69% of arrivals from China. They are generally considered stronger spenders than other age groups. Significantly, most Chinese holiday visitors are first-time travellers. This could mean great potential for repeat travel around New Zealand in the future. In addition, outbound travel from China is strongly seasonal at present. The most popular month for Chinese tourists travelling to New Zealand is February, which corresponds with the public holiday (Spring Festival) in China. New Zealand tourism has opportunities for selling winter (June to August) travel to Chinese tourists. This is because those months are the hottest months in China where the Chinese visitors could avoid summer heat through travelling around cooler New Zealand. Furthermore, for many Chinese, dual destination travel is common. Accordingly, a visit to New Zealand is combined with Australian tours and tends to follow an established itinerary. In addition, Auckland and Rotorua are two of the most popular destinations, so it reflects the development opportunities of a broader pattern of travel in New Zealand.

For New Zealand, tourists from China are a key potential target market; for Chinese travellers, New Zealand is a place that can provide a spectacular experience within its beautiful landscapes. How to meet a Chinese tourist's expectations and preferences to develop tourism sustainably becomes important for the New Zealand tourism industry. However, there is a lack of sufficient and up-to-date studies that systematically investigate Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences for New Zealand as a travel destination. In particular, the unique arrangement system and the cultures that lead to those Chinese travellers perhaps having distinctive travel expectations and preferences are not yet well understood by most of the marketers. Therefore, this research attempts to provide insight into the expectations and preferences of Chinese tourists to New Zealand. It is expected that this study will be a helpful resource for the tourism industry in New Zealand and provide some useful strategies for managing the Chinese market.

## **CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY**

This study seeks to explore Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences of New Zealand as a travel destination. The main purpose of this research is to establish an up-to-date applied model of Chinese visitors' expectations and preferences. It is anticipated that the knowledge generated from this inquiry will give new insights into the Chinese market in New Zealand. The methodology applied is a quantitative technique with the aim of 'building on, adding on, and refining insights from preceding phases' (Parasuraman et al., 1991, p.39), and producing knowledge for destination marketers (Blichfeldt & Kessler, 2009).

Limitations also arise with the use of qualitative research. Firstly, qualitative research is restricted to collecting more detailed information to justify alternative explanations for a variety of conclusions (Denscombe, 2007). Additionally, there is a limitation concerning the ability to manage the research environment making it complex to establish whether respondents are answering questions truthfully (Veal, 1997).

On the other hand, quantitative research is valuable for this study because quantitative data allows for a range of statistical techniques to use mathematical and probability principles, giving further credibility to the data and findings received (Denscombe, 2007). This method of research also assists in removing or decreasing the researcher's bias in terms of personal judgement (Veal, 1997), by enabling the researcher to adapt to larger sample populations, escalating the generalisability of findings and distinctiveness of minor variations (Veal, 1997). Furthermore, a large number of consumer studies in tourism are quantitative in nature and destination-based (Mehmetoglu & Altinay, 2006). Thus, a survey-based questionnaire was decided to be the most relevant approach for assessing Chinese tourist's expectations and preferences for New Zealand as a travel destination, with the purpose of obtaining the data of 'fact' and 'opinion' from the respondents (Denscombe, 2007, p.156).

### **3.1 Research Design**

The research instrument was designed to ask Chinese tourists to rate and present their expectations and preferences on their visit to New Zealand. In terms of sample design,

the target population for this study was Chinese tourists aged 18 years old or above, who joined an organized group tour to New Zealand. Currently, organized tour groups are the most common form of leisure travel to overseas destinations for Chinese residents based on the ADS system. Although tour groups are the main form of leisure travel by Chinese tourists, there is a range of optional activities offered to meet their variety of preferences. Research by Zhang (2005) expressed that, in spite of restraints on group tour itineraries, individual interests and expectations can still be provided for. Hence, a convenient sample of 100 Chinese tourists contributed to the survey instrument.

The questionnaire was designed originally in English with translation into Mandarin. In order to overcome ambiguities, an initial test using ten respondents was undertaken to ensure that the questions were understandable. The questionnaire contained three sections with 21 questions in total. The first section focused on demographic information, which identified the overall background of the respondents. The second section consisted of 27 statements that described the level of interest in the tourism and hospitality features of New Zealand under three categories of ‘accommodation’, ‘dining experience’ and ‘activities’ in accordance with the suggestions provided by the tourism marketing literature and Tourism New Zealand’s International Visitor Survey (IVS) (Tourism New Zealand, 2012b). According to the pilot test, “beach house” and “villa” could be a choice for Chinese tourists in New Zealand travel. Consequently, these two particular types of accommodation were included as options to explore accommodation preferences. Each characteristic was listed on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 5, where 1 represented ‘unimportant’ or ‘unattractive’ and 5 represented ‘important’ or ‘attractive’. The third section gathered information about individual travel-related behaviours, which included language learning experience, the nature of companions, additional activities, and service expectations for New Zealand travel.

### **3.2 Data Collection**

Questionnaires were used to identify Chinese tourist’s expectations and preferences of New Zealand as a travel destination. The survey was conducted during the period February to March 2012. This sampling method randomly picked Chinese visitors who



were currently travelling in New Zealand within groups during the time of the research data collection period to derive an appropriate representative range of respondents. Those respondents who were 17 and younger were not chosen because they were not independent enough to make decisions about the tours. Small souvenirs were utilized as a method of attracting visitors to participate in the survey.

By obtaining permission from the manager of a travel company, tour guides who were working for this company were recruited to distribute and collect the questionnaires after signing a confidentiality agreement. After picking visitors up from the airport, the tour guides distributed the questionnaires to the survey objects at the beginning of the tour, and collected them before the end of a journey. The tour guides were responsible for explaining the procedure for answering the questionnaire. The participants were asked to answer the questions in Section A and B at the beginning of the tour, which related to tourists' prior expectations, and to complete the rest after the tour started. Participants were required to put their completed questionnaires into sealed envelopes before returning them to the tour guide to ensure the confidentiality of answers to all questionnaire items.

In total, 71 out of 100 questionnaires collected were usable for data analysis. According to Dillman (1978), self-completion surveys without a researcher present with a return of about 30% were often considered satisfactory; thus this research's return rate can be regarded as high.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

The information obtained through the individual questionnaire subsequently formed the basis for the findings of this study. Collected data was analysed using descriptive statistics analysis, reliability analysis, multiple analysis of variance, correlation analysis and one-way analysis of variance by using the statistical computer software packages SPSS and Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics analysis is the discipline of quantitatively describing the main features of a collection of data (Mann, 2004). The importance of descriptive statistics is as a tool for interpreting and analysing data (Kessler, 2011). Hence, to learn the basic features of the sample in this research,

descriptive statistics were summarized using tables to illustrate the findings that encompass measures of central tendency (e.g. mean), measures of dispersion (standard deviation), and frequencies. For example, the overall sample size, demographic characteristics and the proportion of subjects of travel behaviour.

Furthermore, in order to rank the travel preferences of the Chinese tourists to New Zealand, the mean scores of the three categories of 'accommodation', 'dining experience', and 'activities' were calculated using SPSS. In conjunction with the mean, the standard deviation was also shown in the table, as another measure of dispersion for interval ratio scaled data, and the mean are the most common descriptive statistics (Sekaran, 2003, p.398). The higher standard deviation indicates the larger dispersion, whereas the lower standard deviation indicates the smaller dispersion. Accordingly, even though there is no further discussion about the standard deviation in this research, it was still listed to demonstrate whether the data distribution is approximately normal. Then, the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) was applied to test the reliability of the scale and the internal consistency of the 27 categories in terms of expectations and preferences for New Zealand travel, in the cause of helping to assess the "goodness" of the measure (Sekaran, 2003, p.398). Results showed a score of 0.81 for the Cronbach alpha coefficient. According to Cronbach and Shavelson (2004) a commonly accepted rule of thumb for describing internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.80. The data indicate an appropriate level of reliability to justify subsequent analysis.

To identify the tourists' preferences in relation to the products they experienced, frequency distribution was calculated. To further identify the difference in expectation and preference characteristics such as preferable food, accommodation, and activity in relation to age groups, gender diversity, education level and New Zealand travel experience, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) tests were undertaken. Several reasons exist as to why multivariate analysis of variance was selected. First, the MANOVA analysis has increasingly been applied for data analysis in the behavioural sciences and will be used frequently in the future (Bray & Mawell, 1985). Besides, the technique applied can be used with one-way, two-way and higher factorial designs involving one, two or more independent variables, which assist in understanding

relationships between groups on a range of different characteristics (Julie, 2001). In other words, the MANOVA analysis is appropriate to test the mean differences when there are more than two independent variables as well as independent variables within the model.

Next, the MANOVA analysis could circumvent bias by simultaneously testing all the dependent variables, reducing the effects of any intercorrelations among them (Sekaran, 2003). As analysis of variance (ANOVA) uses one dependent variable at a time, conducting multiple ANOVAs would increase the risk of biasing results when the dependent variables are likely to be interrelated. Therefore, multivariate analysis of variance reduces the error rate and saves steps in calculations compared with performing a series of univariate tests. In addition, a core concern in multivariate analysis is creating robust models that satisfy both mathematical and theoretical assumptions (Sweet & Grace-Martin, 2008). The figured outputs were demonstrated by the analyses, which could provide an example that facilitates further investigations of the differences of diverse groups with respect to characteristics of objects (Malhotra, 1996).

There are four multivariate measures in most of the statistical programmes used to calculate MANOVAs: Pillai's trace, Wilks' Lambda, Hotelling's trace and Roy's largest root. The difference between the four measures is the way of combining the dependent variables in order to examine the amount of variance in the data (Kaufman & McLean, 1998). However, Wilks' Lambda is the most frequently used measure for assessing statistical significance between groups on the independent variables (Crichton, 2000). As a consequence, the Wilk's Lambda multivariate statistic was used in this research to test whether there are differences between the means of identified groups (age groups, gender, education level and New Zealand travel experience) on the dependent variables (expectations and preferences of accommodation, dining and activity).

Further identifying the relationships between tourist interests and demographic characteristics, the Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. According to Sweet and Grace-Martin (2008), correlation analyses are useful for exploring variable distributions

that affect relationships. In other words, the method examines the association between two variables, and explains how significance tests apply to associations. For this study, this type of analysis can describe the direction and strength of the relationship between two variables, in order to further specify the characteristics of preferable tourism products.

Finally, to investigate if there were statistically significant levels of association between level of trust of tour operators by five age groups, the Kruskal-Wallis test was applied as it is ideal for data with ordinal (ranked) scales (Julie, 2001). Also, the Kruskal-Wallis test is a nonparametric alternative to the one-way analysis of variance. The mathematical concepts are simpler than that of parametric tests, which is called a quick and easy or short-cut technique and the test can be used under more general conditions (Lucey, 2002; Loveday, 1974). A 95% confidence level ( $p < 0.05$ ) is set which is conservative in any statistical claims.

### **3.4 Ethical Issues**

Participation in this survey was totally voluntary, and assurance of complete confidentiality of answers to all questionnaire items was given to the respondents. After completing the questionnaire, participants were required to pack it into a sealed envelope and returned it to the tour guide. The travel company and tour guides did not have access to any returned answers. Furthermore, with the assurance of absolute confidentiality, all the intermediaries and research assistants were asked to sign a confidentiality form before engaging in this survey. This research project was approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC, 12/11) on 21st February 2012.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESULTS**

### **4.1 Profile of Respondents**

The demographic information collected from the questionnaire showed that the sample comprised 27 male and 44 female respondents. The distributions of habitat and age are fairly even. Forty-three point seven per cent of these respondents come from south China and 56.3% come from the northern cities. The younger age group (18-29) was the largest proportion of the sample (32.4%) and people aged over 60 were the smallest group (11.3%). Among all respondents, 28.2% are manager/professional, and 22.5% are retired. The majority of the respondents in the sample had higher education. Tertiary qualifications represented 56.3%, and postgraduates represented 14.1%. With regards to the international travel experience, the respondents reported they had travelled overseas at least once (76.1%), which is in line with the result that only 23.9% of the respondents had never been to other countries for travel. In reference to travel experience in New Zealand, a large number of respondents reported this was their first visit to New Zealand (80.3%). This result was supported by the New Zealand Tourism Board (2011) report, which indicated that the majority of Chinese holiday visitors were coming to New Zealand for the first time. It was interesting to report that less than 20% of the participants chose New Zealand as a one-stop destination, and most of them had combined destinations with Australia (80.3%) (see Table 1).

Table 1 - Profile of Respondents

Items		Frequency	%
<b>Habitat</b>			
	North	40	56.3
	South	31	43.7
<b>Gender</b>			
	male	27	38.0
	female	44	62.0
<b>Age</b>			
	18-29	23	32.4
	30-39	16	22.5
	40-49	12	16.9
	50-59	12	16.9
	60 and above	8	11.3
<b>Occupation</b>			
	business owner	5	7.0
	manager/professional	20	28.2
	homemaker	10	14.1
	student	9	12.7
	retired	16	22.5
	others	11	15.5
<b>Education</b>			
	primary or below	4	5.6
	secondary	17	23.9
	tertiary	40	56.3
	postgraduate	10	14.1
<b>International travel experience</b>			
	yes	54	76.1
	no	17	23.9
<b>NZ travel experience</b>			
	yes	14	19.7
	no	57	80.3
<b>Tour type</b>			
	NZ tour only	14	19.7
	Australia-NZ tour	57	80.3

Table 2 displays the general information about participants in terms of personal preferences and travel behaviour for this New Zealand group tour. The distribution of English language ability before travelling to New Zealand is quite even, where 53.5% of respondents chose “No” and the rest of the respondents had English learning experience before this tour. However, it is noted that there were still many respondents whose English abilities were below a basic level, as a quarter indicated they were incapable of using the English language. In addition, a large number of respondents were found travelling with others including family, relatives and friends. Only 22.5% of the participants were taking a holiday alone. With regards to gift purchase, it was shown that the number of people buying gifts in this tour was 62, being over 80% of total respondents. These Chinese tourists showed a high level of shopping preference. The results are consistent with a high level of agreement on purchasing optional self-paid activities that were not included in the tour package. Regarding the respondent’s tendency to complain if there were some unsatisfactory issues or problems while on the trip, they showed a relatively high level of willingness to complain (73.2%). The Chinese respondents in this study also indicated a tendency to trust the tour operators, both in China and New Zealand, even though “totally trust” was 28.2% and “some trust” was 45.1%. However, it cannot be neglected that nearly 27% of participants showed a negative attitude towards the tour operators, which may affect their evaluation of tour quality.

Table 2 - Information of Personal Preferences and Travel Behaviour

Items		Frequency	%
<b>English ability</b>			
	incapable	19	26.8
	a little	12	16.9
	basic	19	26.8
	fluent	12	16.9
	very fluent	9	12.7
<b>English learning</b>			
	no	38	53.5
	yes	33	46.5
<b>Travel mode</b>			
	alone	16	22.5
	with family/relatives	33	46.5
	with friends	22	31.0
<b>Gift buying</b>			
	yes	62	87.3
	no	8	11.3
	missing	1	1.4
<b>Complain unsatisfactory</b>			
	no	16	22.5
	yes	52	73.2
	missing	3	1.4
<b>Self-paid activities' participate</b>			
	yes	37	52.1
	no	34	47.9
<b>Respondent's trust to tour operators</b>			
	totally	20	28.2
	some	32	45.1
	a little	14	19.7
	not at all	5	7.0



## **4.2 Expectation and Preference Characteristics with Accommodation, Dining and Activity**

The detailed travel expectations and preferences of Chinese tourists in New Zealand based on the mean scores for accommodation, dining and activity are reported in Table 3. The result demonstrates that the first two items with the highest mean score related to accommodation are “3-4 star hotel” (mean=3.59) and “beach house” (mean=3.34). On the contrary, “luxury hotel” (mean=2.94) stood at the lower end of the scale. In reference to dining, respondents revealed a high level of interest in “local cuisine” (mean=4.01). It was followed by “local famous restaurant” (mean=3.72) and “local drinks/wine” (mean=3.63) with both of them presenting relatively high mean scores. However, the respondents placed a low level of perception on the Chinese food over local food and drinks during their New Zealand group tour, with the mean of 2.70. With reference to expectations and preferences of activities in a New Zealand group tour, it was found “sightseeing” (mean=4.61), “taking pictures” (mean=4.39), “beaches” (mean=4.31), “farms/farm shows” (mean=4.24) and “national/state park” (mean=4.10) are the top five on the list. The mean scores of the respondents in the sample indicate that activity preferences are low with “sky diving/parachuting” (mean=2.55), “bungy jumping” (mean=2.56), “fishing” (mean=2.65), “golfing” (mean=2.68) and “skiing” (mean=2.83) occupying the lowest five places. This result is likely to arise from “challenging activities”, where Chinese tourists showed a high tendency to prefer leisure facilities and gaming during overseas travel (Mohsin, 2008; Kim & Prideaux, 2005). Lastly, it also should be noted that shopping does not seem to be an important activity which Chinese visitors are highly engaged in on a New Zealand group tour, with a mean score of 3.48.

Table 3 - Mean Scores for Expectations and Preferences of Chinese Visitors

		Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Accommodation:</b>			
	3-4 star hotel	3.59	1.116
	luxury hotel	2.94	1.157
	villa	3.15	1.051
	beach houses	3.34	1.206
<b>Dining:</b>			
	local cuisine	4.01	1.089
	local drinks/wine	3.63	1.186
	Chinese food	2.70	1.346
<b>Activity:</b>			
	beaches	4.31	.821
	farms/farm shows	4.24	.978
	national/state park	4.10	.958
	vineyard	3.85	1.064
	city	3.83	1.121
	Maori culture	4.07	1.046
	museum/gallery	3.06	1.132
	fishing	2.65	1.255
	golfing	2.68	1.392
	rafting/kayaking	2.86	1.397
	bungy jumping	2.56	1.360
	sky diving/parachuting	2.55	1.462
	hot pools/geothermal sites	3.61	1.368
	skiing	2.83	1.549
	bush walking/tramping	3.35	1.184
	shopping	3.48	1.094
	casino	2.87	1.383
	taking pictures	4.39	.948

### **4.3 Different Preferences for Accommodation, Dining and Activity by Age, Gender, Education and Experience**

A series of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to test whether the independent variables have any significant effects on the dependent variables. Usually, the MANOVA analysis is conducted as a two-step process. Firstly, it tests overall for no differences in the means for the groups. If this test is significant, the second step is to conduct follow-up tests to explain the differences (Bray & Maxwell, 1985). In this research, the MANOVA analysis tested the differences of accommodation, dining and activity preferences of Chinese tourists visiting New Zealand. Four demographic variables, including the respondent's age, gender, education level and their New Zealand travel experience, were determined as independent variables, and expectations and preferences of accommodation, dining and activity as dependent variables.

Prior to conducting multivariate analysis of variance, preliminary assumption testing was conducted to check for normality, linearity, univariate and multivariate outliers, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, and multicollinearity, with no serious violations noted. The results showed no significant association between the scale scores of accommodation, dining and activity for two of the four independent variables, including education level and the New Zealand travel experience of respondents.

Furthermore, the differences in accommodation, dining and activity characteristics of the Chinese tourists based on gender variables were assessed using a MANOVA procedure, as the analysis helps to explore the significant effects and the interactions among dependent or independent variables (Stevens, 2002). In this procedure, the multivariate tests table (Table 4) displays the multivariate values: Pillai's trace, Wilks' Lambda, Hotelling's trace and Roy's largest root. These are multivariate values for the model as a whole. However, the result of Wilks' Lambda statistics was used in this research only to measure whether there was a statistical difference between males and females on the combined dependent variables, because of its common utilization (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). As shown in Table 4, a Wilks' Lambda value in the row labelled with "gender" is 0.876, with a significance value of .030. This is less than 0.05 of Sig. value, which was set to be conservative. Therefore, the result indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between males and females in terms of their overall preferences.

However, to investigate further significance in relation to each of the dependent variables, males and females did not show significant differences on the two dependent variables: accommodation and activity. When further considering the results of gender for the dependent variables separately, no significance found ( $p < 0.145$ ) means that the gender groups did not differ significantly in their scores for activity preferences. This may be due to a Wilks' Lambda value of 0.876, with a significance value of 0.030 being on the margin of the significance level. Accordingly, the difference in the perception of activity between male and female was very small. As a result, there was no need to conduct further tests to identify whether differences are in the three categories of preferences based on gender.

Table 4 - The Multivariate Analysis of Variance for Identifying Association between Preferences of Chinese Tourists and Gender

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Partial Eta	Sig.
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.982	1237.461a	3.000	67.000	.982	.000
	Wilks'	.018	1237.461a	3.000	67.000	.982	.000
	Lambda						
	Hotelling's	55.409	1237.461a	3.000	67.000	.982	.000
	Trace						
	Roy's Largest	55.409	1237.461a	3.000	67.000	.982	.000
Gender	Root						
	Pillai's Trace	.124	3.160a	3.000	67.000	.124	.030
	Wilks'	.876	3.160a	3.000	67.000	.124	.030
	Lambda						
	Hotelling's	.141	3.160a	3.000	67.000	.124	.030
	Trace						
	Roy's Largest	.141	3.160a	3.000	67.000	.124	.030
	Root						

Another multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to compare the effect of three age groups on the perception of accommodation, dining and activity. In this procedure, the age group firstly was statistically divided into three equal groups (younger, middle and older) according to respondents' scores. The reason for using three age groups

rather than the original five age groups is to reduce variable extent, and the result can be simplified and easily understood. Through the analysis that examined the differences in three categories of tourist preferences by the three age groups, the results showed a significant effect (Wilks' Lambda = 0.73;  $F(6,132) = 3.73$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ). When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately, the only difference to reach statistical significance using a Bonferroni adjusted alpha level of 0.017 was the perception of accommodation:  $F(2,68) = 7.79$ ,  $p = 0.001$ , partial eta squared = 0.19; and perception of dining:  $F(2,68) = 7.95$ ,  $p = 0.001$ , partial eta squared = 0.19 (See Table 5). However, significance was not found on the preferred activity among the age groups. These results suggest that different age groups have different preferences for accommodation and dining. However, there is no significant difference in the preference of activity across three age groups.

Table 5 - The Multivariate Analysis of Variance for Identifying Association between Preferences of Chinese Tourists and Age

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
agegp3	Total activity	342.422	2	171.211	2.049	.137	.057
	Total accommodation	120.635	2	60.317	7.778	.001	.186
	Total dining	100.884	2	50.442	7.944	.001	.189
Corrected Total	Total activity	6023.549	70				
	Total accommodation	647.944	70				
	Total dining	532.648	70				
a. R Squared = .057 (Adjusted R Squared = .029) b. Computed using alpha = .05 c. R Squared = .186 (Adjusted R Squared = .162) d. R Squared = .189 (Adjusted R Squared = .166)							

Significant associations were examined further for an inspection of the perceptions of accommodation and dining on three age groups separately. The middle age group showed the highest level in the expectation of accommodation ( $M = 14.00$ ,  $SD = 2.34$ ),

while the younger age group showed the highest level in the expectation of dining ( $M = 15.05$ ,  $SD = 2.32$ ). The mean scores for the groups suggested that the older group had the lowest scores in relation to expectation of both accommodation and dining. While the actual difference in the two mean scores of younger and middle age groups was very small, the older group was significantly different from the others (see Table 6).

Table 6 - Overview of Accommodation, Dining and Activity Preferences of Chinese Tourists

Age 3 groups		Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Total accommodation	1.00	13.7949	2.64754	39
	2.00	14.0000	2.33550	12
	3.00	10.9500	3.25212	20
	Total	13.0282	3.04242	71
Total dining	1.00	15.0513	2.31640	39
	2.00	13.8333	2.32900	12
	3.00	12.3000	2.97534	20
	Total	14.0704	2.75849	71

When analysing the accommodation expectations of Chinese tourists among the three age groups, significance at the 0.01 level was found on two preferred accommodation items: villa and beach house. Respondents aged between 30 and 49 years indicated the highest tendency of preferring a beach house as the type of accommodation in visiting New Zealand (Mean = 3.583), and aged between 18 and 29 tourists preferred a villa as an accommodation than other generation groups (Mean = 3.462). In contrast, older tourists had the lowest expectations for these two types of accommodation in visiting New Zealand. The results are also shown in Table 7 that all three age groups have lower expectations of accommodation in a luxury hotel in general, with higher expectations of a 3-4 star hotel.

Table 7 - Difference in Accommodation Expectations of Chinese Tourists by Age groups

<b>Items</b>	<b>Age1 (18- 29)</b>	<b>Age2 (30- 49)</b>	<b>Age3 (50 above)</b>	<b>p value</b>
3-4 star hotel	3.462	3.833	3.700	.533
Luxury hotel	3.154	3.167	2.400	.044
Villa	3.462	3.147	2.400	.000
Beach house	3.178	3.583	2.450	.000

As previously reported, the results of a MANOVA found that the age level had a significant effect on the perception of New Zealand dining choice. Subsequently, a further analysis of the differences in preferred dining experience in visiting New Zealand was undertaken with three age groups. The significance scores were found on two items: “Local cuisine” and “Local drinks/wines” ( $p < 0.01$ ). Those participants aged 18 to 29 years preferred local cuisine the most (Mean = 4.385), whereas the preference for local cuisine of older people was the least (Mean = 3.250). Likewise, younger tourist groups indicated higher expectations to local drinks or wines than the other generation groups, with participants 50 years old and above showing lowest expectations (Mean = 2.600) (see Table 8).

Table 8 - Difference in Dining Expectations of Chinese Tourists between Age Groups

<b>Items</b>	<b>Age1 (18- 29)</b>	<b>Age2 (30- 49)</b>	<b>Age3 (50 and above)</b>	<b>p value</b>
Local famous restaurant	3.897	3.500	3.500	.346
Local cuisine	4.385	4.083	3.250	.000
Local drinks/wine	4.154	3.667	2.600	.000
Chinese food	2.615	2.583	2.950	.633

In addition, the statistical relationship in the sample was found between the age of respondents and the preferences of dining choice. Consequently, the Pearson correlation analysis was undertaken to further explore the “age” distributions that affect the relationships between age and dining expectations. The results showed that there was a strong, negative correlation between age and perceived local drinks/wine ( $r = -0.53$ ,  $N =$

71,  $p < 0.05$ ), which indicated that the older age group was associated with lower levels of local drinks or wines preference (see Table 9). According to Cohen's (1988), guideline for determining the strength of the relationship between variables, the findings also demonstrated that there was a medium correlation between age and perception of local cuisine ( $r = -0.47$ ,  $N = 71$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). It was suggesting that the elderly Chinese visitors have less expectation for local cuisine than the younger generation when travelling in New Zealand.

Table 9 - Pearson Product-moment Correlations between Measures of Age and Preferred Dining Choice

		Local famous restaurant	Local cuisine	Local drinks/wine	Chinese food
Respondent's age	Pearson Correlation	-.186	-.467**	-.532**	.205
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.121	.000	.000	.086
	N	71	71	71	71
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

#### 4.4 Differences in Trust Levels across Five Age Groups

To explore the impact of age on levels of trust in tour operators, a Kruskal-Wallis testing was conducted. A statistically significant difference at the  $p < 0.05$  level was found in trust levels for the five age groups ( $p = 0.01$ ). Regarding the trust level of tourists surveyed in tour operators in New Zealand and China, tourists 60 years and above reported the highest level of trust in tour operators (Mean Rank = 51.75). However, the age group of 18 to 29 demonstrated the lowest level of trust (Mean Rank = 28.78). According to the results shown in Table 10, it is likely that high levels of trust in operators were found in the older Chinese tourist group.



Table 10 - Trust Levels of Chinese Tourists in Tour Operators by Different Age Groups

Respondent's age		N	Mean Rank
Respondent's trust in tour operators	18-29	23	28.78
	30-39	16	30.97
	40-49	12	35.46
	50-59	12	46.58
	60above	8	51.75
	Total	71	

#### **4.5 Overview of Attitudinal and Behavioural Characteristics of Chinese Tourists**

This section describes the results for the opening questions in the questionnaire.

##### **4.5.1 The Motivations of Chinese Tourists Visiting New Zealand**

In regards to the reasons for visiting New Zealand, the responses from Chinese tourists were mainly focused on the natural environment and cultural customs. The majority of the respondents related their motivation to the natural scenery and the environment when answering this question. This is the main reason that most people choose New Zealand as a destination for their trip. Some of the comments referred to “experiencing pure New Zealand” as posted on advertisements by Chinese TV channels, magazines and newspapers. Others expressed expectations of going to the beach and watching volcanic sites.

The second important motivation for visiting New Zealand was reported by respondents as learning different culture and customs. Nearly a third of the respondents stated that they were particularly interested in local customs and traditions. Some of them said “western culture is quite different from ours, and we want to see these differences.” Three of the respondents indicated “because of my friends” recommendations about the friendly locals, “I consequently would like to spend my holiday here.” Actually, there

were five other respondents giving recommendations from friends as the reason for visiting New Zealand.

The next common reason for travelling to New Zealand was to discover life and learning about farms. There were slightly fewer respondents supporting this view than the previous one. Meanwhile, many participants showed an interest in purchasing wool products associated with exploring farm life. For example, one of the participants mentioned, “with the exception of experiencing farm life, I also can buy some natural wool products which usually are of better quality.”

Additionally, a small number of participants stated their motivation to visit New Zealand as “affordable”, which appeared to be one of the important factors for Chinese holidaymakers. For example, one respondent said: “Visiting New Zealand does not require a lot of money. Especially it is extraordinarily cheap for overseas travel.” Another responded “It was economical to visit two south pacific countries – Australia and New Zealand”. However, seven other respondents reported that the main purpose for this New Zealand trip was because of Australia. Among them, one respondent emphasized, “New Zealand looks like an additional benefit that the agent provided when I planned to travel around Australia.” The others stated that New Zealand is close to Australia, which has become the reason for them to visit here. Finally, it is interesting to note that only one respondent visited New Zealand for the second time because of previous travel experience.

#### **4.5.2 The Unsatisfactory Issues for New Zealand Trip**

The results show four main aspects that made participants enjoy their New Zealand group tour the least. First, sixteen participants complained about food during their tour. A very common complaint was concerned about poor quality of food and too much Chinese food. For instance, one respondent said “I have Chinese food every day, except breakfast.” Another respondent suggested “trying New Zealand food instead of Chinese”. Meanwhile, the respondents even complained “we have good quality and tasty Chinese food in China, but we do not have it here”. Also, a long wait for dining was mentioned in the responses. In contrast, only one Chinese tourist was dissatisfied

with a western breakfast every morning, because they were “uncooked or cold”. In general, participants who complained about food were mostly complaining about the quality of Chinese food.

The second issue that the Chinese tourists had while visiting New Zealand was the “itinerary”. Fifteen participants were dissatisfied with the arrangement of the tour in New Zealand. Some participants felt it was too rushed to go to each scenery spot. For example, one tourist said “travel was too rushed; as a result, I have not enough time to enjoy fully”. Similarly, some respondents suggested that they should stay longer in New Zealand instead of having such a tight itinerary. In contrast, several tourists declared: “we spent such a long time on the coach, which has shortened our stay in New Zealand.” Meanwhile, a few respondents stated that similar activities offered in Australia did not interest them too much in New Zealand. As a result, they stated four days in New Zealand was too long. Some complaints about activities were also connected to “unsatisfied itinerary” such as not enough landmark attractions.

Next, the complaints about tour guides were the third common issue. Twelve Chinese tourists surveyed had a negative attitude toward tour guides during their trip in New Zealand. Those participants were not satisfied with the tour guides in general due to the guide’s “unfriendly attitude”. Among them, one tourist even reported “lacking occupational quality for tour guide” but did not explain in detail. Others indicated that the guide’s attitudes began to deteriorate after the visitors refused to take part in self-paid activities. In addition, a respondent pointed out “I was unhappy with being forced to join a self-paid activity by the tour guide.” Several respondents commented that their unsatisfactory experience was related to being compelled by their tour guide. Examples include: “Tour guide recommended too many activities at our own expense.” “Guides took unpleasant way that pushed the whole group to participate in optional activities.”

Similarly, some respondents complained about the tour guide’s performance associated with shopping activities. For example, they “shop too long,” “too often” and some tour guides have “a covert act of forcing shopping.” Some of the statements even directly connected the complaint of shopping to the tour guides, such as forced shopping. On the

other hand, it was interesting to point out that one participant related the negative experience of shopping in New Zealand to “less choice”. Finally, there are also other unsatisfactory issues that a few respondents mentioned such as “inconvenience of transportation when eager to go out by them”, “not easy to exchange currency”, “late night arrival” and “accommodation was not as good as a 4 star hotel.”

#### **4.5.3 Chinese Tourist’s Expectations for Future Travel in New Zealand**

There were only a few participants who commented on their expectations for future travel in New Zealand. These comments mainly concentrated on tour activities in the South Island which are not available on the current trip. Fifteen tourists expressed a willingness to travel around the southern cities. The other four participants expected to visit Kiwi families, and the same number of participants required more free time in future tours. Also, three visitors indicated that they want to include tasting local food and wine in the itinerary. Likewise, another three respondents expected to visit a vineyard next time. One tourist expected to “see the sheep shearing”, “see penguins” “have a higher standard accommodation”, “extend stay”, and “visit the place for the film named the Lord of the Rings.”

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION**

The main purpose of this research was to identify what the Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences are for New Zealand group tours, to establish an applied model of those detailed characteristics, and to achieve an insight into the Chinese tourist market. This chapter sets out by discussing the travel expectations and preferences of Chinese tourists within the context of the five areas: accommodation, dining, activities, tour guides, and itineraries. Then, an applied model is summarized through the discussions of Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences.

### **5.1 Chinese Tourists' Perception of New Zealand group tour in Five Areas**

#### **5.1.1 The Expectations and Preferences of Chinese Tourists for Accommodation**

The findings from this research showed that high cost accommodation tends not to be considered in accommodation expectations by most Chinese tourists. Regardless of their demographic profile, the low rated scores of a luxury hotel revealed a low interest in experiencing high-priced accommodation. In general, 3-4 star hotels are the most popular choices of accommodation when travelling in New Zealand. Actually, this is the minimum criterion of optional accommodation for ADS groups in New Zealand. According to the New Zealand Tourism Board (Tourism New Zealand, n.d.), the qualified ADS tour operators should arrange Qualmark 3 star hotels and above for Chinese ADS tour groups during their stay. Thus, it may partly explain why Chinese tourists prefer this type of accommodation. Chinese visitors have a tendency to stay at an economical hotel instead of an expensive one, which may be explained by price or value consciousness. This is in line with the previous studies that most Chinese tourists are typically sensitive to the "price – value relationship" (Li et al., 2011, p.747), and value for money is a very important consideration for Chinese visitors choosing their travel products (Chow, Lau, Lo, Sha, & Yun, 2007). It is, therefore, not surprising that when considering this issue among the three age groups, all groups showed a preference for 3-4 star hotels.

Moreover, the expectation mean scores of the Chinese tourists by three age groups showed that they expressed strong interest in a "beach house", which is the second

popular choice of accommodation. Interestingly, younger age groups did not regard a “beach house” as more important accommodation than “luxury hotel” or “villa”, when travelling in New Zealand. The young people also showed equally high expectations for the villa as for 3-4 star hotels. It is understood “villa” and “beach house” are not common types of accommodation in China (Zhang, Song & Liu, 2011). Chinese tourists consider this unconventional accommodation as the second highest preference because Chinese travellers seem to become interested in experiencing something new. This suggestion is supported by Mohsin (2008) that the Chinese are more interested in discovering new ideas and places. Also, it may be due to the influence of the recent promotion of popular island tourism such as Maldives and Phuket in China that “beach house” has become an interesting type of accommodation for some Chinese tourists travelling overseas.

Although the findings did not show a high level of dissatisfaction with accommodation, improvement in this area should be considered for better serving the Chinese tourists. Previous study conducted by Tourism New Zealand (2011a) found that Chinese tourists had relatively lower levels of satisfaction on accommodation than the average visitor markets in New Zealand. Accommodation in this survey was ranked second lowest among the other items, and the so-called 4-star hotel was not meeting Chinese visitor’s expectations. This result in the study perhaps gives direction to which aspects should be improved for further development in terms of accommodation quality.

Furthermore, preference for accommodation was differentiated between age groups. Thus, New Zealand tourism practitioners should try to develop strategies aimed at the different age groups. On the other hand, in this study preferences for accommodation in New Zealand did not indicate significant differences by gender, education level or New Zealand travel experience. This suggests that most Chinese group tourist’s expectations and preferences for accommodation are relatively homogenous apart from age.

### **5.1.2 The Expectations and Preferences of Chinese Tourists for Dining**

The high expectation ranking of local meals and dining experience confirmed the importance of New Zealand cuisine in the Chinese visiting experience. As this study

and other studies have indicated, Chinese tourists desire to taste new cuisine, in particular local food, and take part in cuisine-related activities (Wong & Lau, 2001; Chow & Murphy, 2008; Tian, 2008; Chan, 2009; New Zealand Tourism, 2010). Moreover, there is a significant relationship between local dining and age level. In other words, younger Chinese tourists are more likely to try local food, taste local drinks and wine, or dine out at local famous restaurants. As the old Chinese saying goes: “to the people, food is heaven”, food has a strong influence on Chinese life (Chow & Murphy, 2008, p.75). China has a food-centred culture the importance of having gourmet food (Simoons, 1991). Thus, it is not surprising that Chinese like to try new cuisine and dine out when travelling overseas.

While the result reveals an interest in experiencing local cuisine, Chinese tourists seem to have a low impression of Chinese food in this study. The findings appear not to support previous research on the positive perception of Chinese food. Research by Chan (2009) argued that Chinese tourists favoured eating their own cultural dishes rather than experiencing food offered in the destination being visited. Also, Tian (2008) in her survey examined Chinese travellers’ expectations and requirement for meals in New Zealand travel and concluded that Chinese tourists just need Chinese food for lunch and dinner. However, in the analysis of the degree of preference for Chinese food, most Chinese tourists were less interested in having Chinese food when visiting New Zealand.

Further supporting the view of Chinese food as not being “very important” when visiting New Zealand, some detailed explanations can be summarized from travellers’ expressions on the unsatisfactory issues. Unsatisfactory issues in New Zealand group tours for this survey concentrated on food, especially Chinese food. Those complaints came from Chinese tourists’ negative attitudes in having Chinese food of poor quality and repetitive menus. Although these answers may partly explain the low demand for Chinese food during New Zealand travel, the higher preference for local cuisine implies that Chinese tourists want local cuisine in New Zealand rather than Chinese food.

Last but not least, it should be pointed out that there are differences between the optional dining items across the three age groups. In general, the older visitors prefer

local food and dining in famous local restaurants, but they do not like to try local drinks and wine. They even have low expectations about Chinese food, which totally differentiates them from the younger and middle age groups. It is vital for New Zealand tourism marketers to understand this diversity when working out a series of marketing strategies.

### **5.1.3 The Expectations and Preferences of Chinese Tourists for Activities**

Several interesting findings emerged from the results of Chinese travellers' expectations and preferences for activities in New Zealand. First, among all the nineteen activity items, sightseeing, taking pictures, beaches, farms/ farm shows and national/state park appear to be the favourites among Chinese holidaymakers. It is not surprising that Chinese tourists enjoy the activities associated with leisure, which were investigated by a number of studies (Mohsin, 2008; New Zealand Tourism, 2010; Chow & Murphy, 2011). In China's domestic tourism report from the Tourism Green Book of China's Tourism 2011 (Zhang et al., 2011), sightseeing tourism was still the main section of domestic tourism. It is clear that Chinese tourists desire to get close to nature, thereby escaping from their daily routines. New Zealand's natural scenery and the clean, green environment exactly meet Chinese tourists' needs and have become the main reason for most Chinese travellers visiting here. As a result, it is suggested that New Zealand needs to integrate its marketing advantages with trends in China's domestic tourism development in attracting the Chinese outbound market.

The results showed the similarity of travel products in Chinese group tours between Australia and New Zealand. Past and current studies indicate that many New Zealand visits by Chinese travellers are combined with Australia tours. There are not only advantages, but also disadvantages in this travel pattern. Australia is one of the most popular ADS destinations for Chinese outbound tourists. With the large number of Chinese visiting Australia, New Zealand tourism at the same time can reap benefits from this because of the short distance for these two countries. Despite that, how will New Zealand tourism compete with other ADS destinations if some day there is not many Chinese tourists travelling to Australia?



Additionally, a New Zealand group tour is sometimes regarded as an additional reward included in the Australian tour. Evidence for this showed up in this survey as “I visited New Zealand in passing on the way to Australia, and that was the reason I came here”. Chinese tourists usually enjoy this reward very much, because they are mostly value-conscious. However, this may put New Zealand tourism to some extent in a disadvantageous position for the Chinese tourist market. This is due to the fact that apart from their geographical proximity, New Zealand and Australia share common historical, cultural and political ties (Hall, 1997). They sometimes provide similar activities for visitors, such as farm tours, and the diverse tourism products Australia offered are likely to be more attractive to Chinese travellers. The question is why should Chinese tourists visit New Zealand if they could have a similar travel experience in Australia? Also, if they have to pay extra money when travelling to Australia, why would they want to stop in New Zealand? These are severe challenges that the New Zealand tourism industry faces, thus industry practitioners need to give immediate attention to promoting competitiveness by developing products with its own features.

Next, it is interesting to note that taking pictures was considered the second most important thing Chinese tourists do while travelling in New Zealand. Actually, most tourism research does not identify “taking pictures” or “photography” as a separate activity to identify visitor preferences for activities. However, the second top score for the photography statements emphasised that marketers should not neglect it. A reason probably contributing to confirm the importance of taking photos in visiting is that few respondents were disappointed by the lack of landmark attractions in New Zealand for them to take pictures for memories. Chinese tourists’ demand and the desire for ample photo opportunities while travelling, especially overseas, suggest that marketing campaigns embrace this feature to enhance the attractiveness of the destination.

Third, although past research has found differentiation of activity preferences across age groups (New Zealand Tourism, 2010), no significant differences were found between preferred activities and age groups in this study, and very little distinction of preferences for activity products was found in different genders. In general, New Zealand as a

destination could promote its pristine beaches and uniqueness, in order to offer chances for Chinese tourists to experience the unique local lifestyle, customs and environment.

Fourth, a comparison of the perception statement between shopping preference ranking and actual purchasing behaviour shows a significant difference. While participants expressed a relatively low level of expectation of shopping on the tour, only listing 10% of the expected activities, over 87% of respondents indicated they bought gifts during the tour. According to the results from several previous studies on Chinese tourists travelling in New Zealand (Tourism New Zealand, 2007, 2008; Mohsin, 2008), Chinese tourists showed a high tendency for preferring shopping activity. Also, most Chinese visitors travelling to New Zealand do so for purposes of shopping (Tian, 2008). This contradicts the viewpoint suggested by the low ranking of shopping preferences in this study. In Mohsin's analysis of Chinese travellers' attitudes toward New Zealand holidays (2008), he mentioned that Chinese visitors did not show high levels of expectation for shopping because of language difficulties. However, the fact is that most Chinese tourists surveyed in this research indeed shop. If the language barrier were an issue, there would not be so many tourists buying gifts. Therefore, it implies that most Chinese tourists subconsciously prefer shopping, but they are not willing to express it. When it comes to the practice of commission (Chan, 2009; Tourism New Zealand, n.d.), the tour guides are more likely to be concerned about their profits rather than the value of the products. As a result, the tourists are unwilling to magnify their shopping desires.

The most obvious reason for this may be due to tourists' perception about tour guides in connection with commission practices. Usually, tour guides lead tourists to a shop that provides them with commissions, since the commission practice is a regular feature of group travel (Dwyer, King & Prideaux, 2005). However, the key point is that some tour guides rashly use the shopping desires of tourists to set traps. They force tourists to go shopping or cheat tourists, which causes mistrust and antagonises tourists. Past research has found a sharp increase in actual shopping compared with intentions (March & Woodside, 2005); therefore, caution must be used when interpreting the shopping intentions of the sampled tourists (Chow & Murphy, 2008).

On the other hand, the “gift giving” in Chinese cultural values can be a main contributor to explain Chinese shopping behaviour. In Chinese culture, a gift is regarded as a symbol of friendship, and even a deeper relationship (Yau, Chan & Lau, 1999). Chinese tourists usually buy gifts for their families, relatives and friends when travelling overseas (Du & Zhang, 2003), and purchasing gifts for seniors, children and friends is almost an obligation (Li et al., 2011). It was found that New Zealand gifts were preferred by Chinese travellers overall, especially among locally featured souvenirs. So marketers should understand Chinese tourists’ consumption habits. This characteristic should be taken as an important and unique opportunity for New Zealand tourism, and should be fully exploited to achieve greater spending power.

#### **5.1.4 The Expectations and Preferences of Chinese Tourists for Tour Guides**

This study shows that tourists in different age groups trust tour operators to varying degrees. It seems that older Chinese tourists trust tour operators much more, while younger tourists trust them the least. Perhaps language difficulties are a factor that causes older visitors to rely heavily on the tour operator, because they appear hardly capable of speaking English. Another reason contributing to the low level of trust among younger travellers may be that the younger generation is more likely to be travelling independently (Fountain, Espiner & Xie, 2011), making them less likely to rely on tour operators. With frequent use of the Internet, the younger generation is better informed about destination features and travel information than their elders. However, in general, the Chinese group tourists surveyed in New Zealand showed a relatively high level of trust in tour operators.

In contrast, some complaints related to tour guides were voiced by the surveyed subjects, which were often linked to shopping activities. This finding offered evidence for improving service quality not only for the facilities, but also the service providers. As mentioned in a previous study (Li et al., 2011), tourists quite often rely on tour guides during their travel overseas, and expect tour guides to be friendly, professional and knowledgeable and not concerned for their own profit. Furthermore, unfavourable impressions of a tour guide can lead to a bad influence on future visitors, because Chinese tourists usually rely on families and friends for travel information, which can

influence their decision on where to travel (Hsu, Kang & Lam, 2006; Sparks & Pan, 2008). Reports of forced shopping by tour guides on TV, the Internet and in newspapers seriously damage the relationships between tourists and tour guides. If these Chinese visitors tell their family and friends about a negative experience with tour guides or shopping in New Zealand, it will have a negative effect on their desire for future travel.

At present, one of the vital and challenging issues affecting tourism marketing is to improve service quality and satisfy customers. It is acknowledged that how to standardise the service of tour guides has become extremely serious, since tour guides are the key people who deliver service to tourists. They are sometimes considered a vehicle for services provided. They, as a result, seriously influence a tourist's perception of all service providers for that trip, including the destination as a whole. In other words, travel group without professional tour guide probably produces perceived quality problems. Therefore, further research is necessary in assessing the role of tour guides in building customer satisfaction.

#### **5.1.5 The Expectations and Preferences of Chinese Tourists for an Itinerary**

In general, Chinese ADS group tours follow a well-established itinerary during their journey, though another common complaint in this study was related to itineraries. For example, one respondent commented "much of the time we had spent on the coach, so we always rushed to each activity". In addition, the attractions were found less enjoyable because of the tight schedules. Hence, some participants in this study considered that the schedules were not always properly arranged, as the itinerary was too tight to allow them to spend enough time at attractions. As Chow and Murphy (2008) stated, relaxation was one of the most important features for Chinese outbound travellers. What is more, it is interesting to point out that tourists purchased the tour package, which means they had agreed with the itinerary provided by the travel agent. However, the results of this study show that the participants were not satisfied with the predetermined itinerary that they paid for prior to departure. It is clear that some of the actual performance of scheduled activities did not meet the Chinese tourists' needs.

Notably, some Chinese tourists expressed high expectations for staying longer, and exploring South Island attractions. Moreover, other respondents suggested the tour itineraries should have fewer scheduled activities and provide more free time. On the other hand, over half the tourists surveyed participated in self-paid activities, which were not included in their tour packages. According to Tourism New Zealand's survey (2012a), the average length of stay for Chinese holidaymakers was 6.1 days, which is slightly less than the New Zealand average for holidaying tourists. Hence, one of the urgent marketing strategies not only focuses on increasing returning visitors, but also the duration of stay in New Zealand as a destination.

## **5.2 An applied model of Chinese Tourists' Expectations and Preferences for New Zealand as a Travel Destination**

Through exploring the Chinese visitors' New Zealand travelling experience, some interesting travel behaviours were found. Though some of the answers were not explained in detail, the characteristics of Chinese tourists' expectations can be generalised. Based on the above discussion, the general travel expectations and preferences of Chinese tourists to improve New Zealand as a travel destination can be summarized as: a customised schedule which includes more South Island time for exploration; to be guided by professional and knowledgeable tour guides who also have excellent attitudes and operational skills; to enjoy high quality accommodation with a local style but being economical; tasting more local cuisine, increasing dine-out opportunities at locally famous restaurants, and having good quality Chinese meals but in balance; participating in leisure activities with more opportunities for photography, and enjoy free shopping that is not forced, and with more choice of product. As a result, an applied model of the travel expectations and preferences of Chinese outbound tourists is outlined as below:

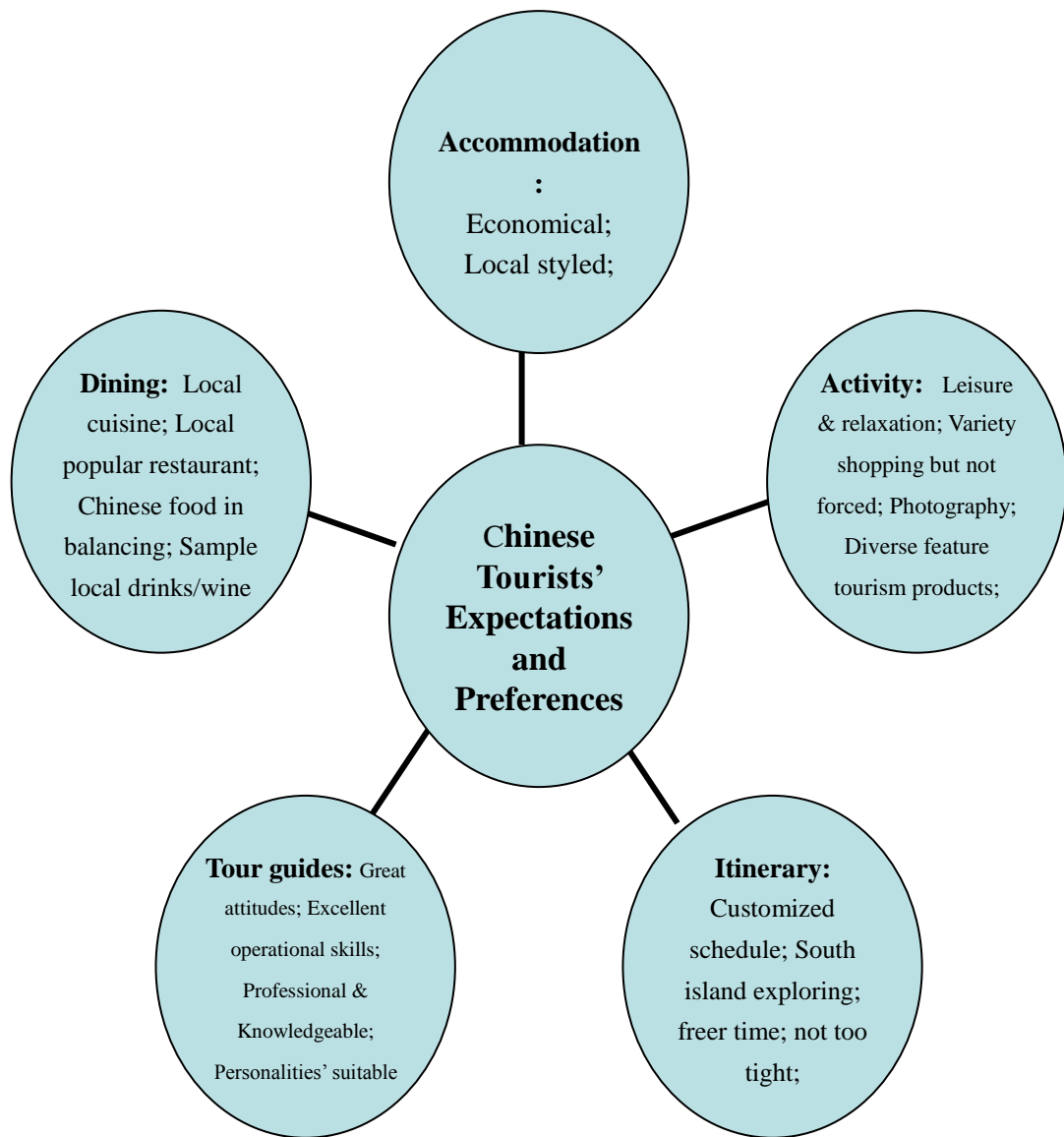


Figure 1 - An applied model of Chinese Tourists' Expectations and Preferences of New Zealand as a Travel Destination

This applied model represents the sampled Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences in general. Although their desires could be divided into more detailed segments, five basic aspects of visitors' travel experience that destinations should focus on are accommodation, dining, activity, itinerary and tour guide. Since many complaints are concerned with dining and tour guides, the New Zealand tourism industry should take this as a priority for service quality improvement. Furthermore, if New Zealand wants to maintain a reputation as a quality destination in the Chinese outbound tour market, it is necessary to ensure that all tour-related suppliers are performing at a

standard level of quality. Meanwhile, to create the most desirable product and service, policymakers, planners and service providers should check their plans against tourists' actual travel expectations and preferences.

Being a country that has had ADS approval for over 12 years, New Zealand needs to be better prepared for the growth of Chinese group visitors by providing the services and activities that this tourist market is expecting. There is no doubt that the Chinese market holds huge potential for the New Zealand tourism industry. However, how to take advantage of this market becomes one of the most important and challenging tasks. Those working in the New Zealand tourism industry should be prepared not only to meet visitors' needs, but also to exceed the expectations of Chinese visitors to New Zealand. It is necessary to tailor tourism products with a destination style that will enhance New Zealand's competitive advantage. For example, Chinese tourists have a strong passion for food, therefore designing a Kiwi or Maori cuisine in the package could attract more Chinese visitors to New Zealand.

Furthermore, this applied model not only identifies the travel expectations and preferences of Chinese outbound tourists for New Zealand group tours, to some extent, it also indicates which aspects of tour operation need to be improved. The industry should execute its strategies based on the Chinese market feedback to determine how well the industry is meeting the target market needs.

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION**

### **6.1 Summary and Recommendations**

With the increased competition among ADS destinations for the Chinese outbound market, a better understanding of the target object issues has become crucial. In particular, Chinese tourists' travel behaviour is subject to unique factors such as ADS arrangements and the Chinese culture, which make them different from other tourist markets. This research seeks to provide more insight into the Chinese outbound market with a detailed analysis of expectations and preferences for Chinese travel to New Zealand. The main contribution of this study is to identify the detailed travel expectations and preferences of Chinese tourists on New Zealand tours in five areas: accommodation, dining, activities, tour guide and itinerary. In this regard, the current expectations and preferences of Chinese tourists for New Zealand travel are characterized in a structured applied model. It can assist New Zealand inbound operators in preparing products and services for the Chinese market.

In addition, it reports its practical findings with respect to marketing strategies. For example, while 3-4 star hotels are the most popular accommodations, many Chinese tourists have shown an interest in beach houses. Thus, it seems crucial to understand accommodation preferences of this market in order to put it into practice. The high expectation of tasting local cuisine was a primary dining preference. Industry practitioners interested in serving Chinese tourists should be prepared to offer more locally styled dishes to take advantage of the Chinese market growth. Further, relaxation and photo-taking are popular features in the choice of activities. New Zealand group tour operations providing unique tourism products that fit this description may have more opportunities for winning Chinese tourists among their competition.

Theoretically, this research not only aims to expand theories of tourist satisfaction and expectations of service quality, but also emphasizes cultural impacts on tourists' expectations and preferences. Firstly, tourists' expectations reflect their satisfaction and performance quality. This research identified the difference between Chinese visitors' expectations and the actual scheduled itinerary. A possible reason for dissatisfaction is



that the majority of Chinese tourists in New Zealand have international travel experience. Another contributing factor is that destination marketers underestimated the traveller's actual expectations due to insufficient understanding of the components of their expectations and preferences.

In addition, the findings have shown the crucial role of tour guides in the delivery of the tourist experience. While tourists travelling in a foreign environment frequently rely on tour guides, they expect tour guides to be professional, knowledgeable, with excellent operational skills, and great personalities. This study also confirms that culture is a key factor in building tourists' travel expectations and preferences. In particular, in the food-centred Chinese culture, practitioners could promote gourmet food and wine to attract Chinese tourists. The Chinese tourists' consumption habits in specific cultural contexts should be understood. Furthermore, the media influences tourist expectations and satisfaction. For example, news about other ADS destinations associated with forced shopping would affect tourists' perception of the destination. Indeed, this study shows that New Zealand tourism could have problems of image damage in the Chinese tourist market unless forced shopping is eliminated.

In conclusion, this study has reached the research objectives based on the findings. For example, the literature review presents the existing knowledge of customer expectations and preferences and the Chinese outbound market. The established applied model of expectations and preferences identifies what the Chinese tourists' needs are for New Zealand group tours. This research also provides some recommendations in terms of the strategies of ADS tour operation based on the characteristics of the Chinese tourists.

## **6.2 Limitations and Future Research**

In brief, China's outbound tourism will keep on growing. Many destinations are queuing to become a favourite destination for Chinese outbound tourists. How destinations could better implement their marketing strategies requires a full understanding by treating China as a diverse and individual market. The knowledge outlined in this study provides some pointers to the implications of marketing plans and cross-cultural understanding. However, this study has some limitations that should be

noted. The first limitation is the convenience sampling approach used because it was difficult to reach respondents from the widespread location during the research period. Also, the tourists' data collection was dependent on the travel company's cooperation, which might have resulted in the loss of relevant information.

Additionally, collecting data during the New Zealand tourism high season could be a limitation. Although some questions about travel expectations were supposed to be completed before the tour, the respondents may not have followed up the instruction, which could have influenced the answers provided. Therefore, this study cannot claim to be completely conclusive in light of the limited sample size and subjectivity in responses. Future research with larger sample sizes is recommended.

In addition, this research mainly studied Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences. However, there is a limitation in identifying why those expectations and preferences are formed. Although the study preliminarily provided explanations (such as cultural influence), it is believed that more research is necessary to explore the cultural context.

Further, more studies could be undertaken to explore the growing Chinese FIT market, with regards to extending knowledge of the Chinese outbound market. Accordingly, a comparison between other forms of outbound travel and group travel would be helpful in identifying the motivations of Chinese visitors to New Zealand. It is also necessary to undertake research to explore the distribution channels of ADS Chinese market and business practices in New Zealand. In conclusion, if China continually develops as a tourism powerhouse, more research will be needed to provide greater understanding of this growing market.

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## **APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET (ENGLISH)**



# **Participant Information Sheet**

## **Date Information Sheet Produced:**

09/11/2011

## **Project Title**

An exploratory study of Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences of NZ as a travel destination

## **An Invitation**

My name is Hailu Long, and I am a Master student in Tourism studies at the Auckland University of Technology (New Zealand). Currently, I am conducting a research on the Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences of New Zealand as a travel destination. This questionnaire research aims to gain a better understanding of Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences in overseas group tours. Your participation will contribute to the development of New Zealand's tourism industry, and help me to obtain the Master degree of tourism studies. Certainly, the participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw yourself or any information that have provided for this project at any time before the completion of data collection without being disadvantaged in any way.

## **What is the purpose of this research?**

This research is designed to improve our understanding of Chinese visitors' expectations and preferences on overseas group tours. It highlights the importance of customer expectations and preferences in marketing planning and strategy. Especially, this research is based on the discussion of customer expectations theories into business practice. In order to know more about the Chinese tourists, this study finally will try to sum up an applied model of Chinese tourists' preferences and expectations of New Zealand as a tour destination.

## **How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

You are invited to participate in this research as a Chinese tourist travelling in overseas group tours to New Zealand.

## **What will happen in this research?**

Questionnaires are going to be distributed by the tour guides, who work for Queens Travel Ltd. Completing questionnaire will take about 10 to 15 minutes. However, you are required to put your finished questionnaire into a sealed envelope before returning to the tour guide. The tour guide will collect the questionnaire at the end of your tour.

## **What are the discomforts and risks?**

There may be some embarrassment when participants answer some of the questions that are personal experiences.

## **How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

You may withdraw yourself or any information that have provided for this project at any time prior to the completion of data collection without being disadvantaged in any way. You do not need to answer a question if you do not wish to do so.

## **What are the benefits?**

The research provides a better understanding of Chinese tourists' preferences and expectations on New Zealand's tour, and attempts to provide some marketing strategies that will assist in the development of New Zealand's tourism industry. It is expected that this research could have wider study use in this area for empirical and theoretical advancements. The research would also help me to obtain the master degree of tourism studies.

## **How will my privacy be protected?**

By completing this questionnaire, you are giving consent for the information you provide to be only used in my Master's dissertation. All information collected will be anonymous. Data received from the questionnaires will be treated as confidential, stored in a safe place, and destroyed 6 years after the completion of the project. If you withdraw from this research, all relevant information will be destroyed.

## **What are the costs of participating in this research?**

There is no cost to participate in this survey. However, we need your valuable time about 10 to 15 minutes to complete this questionnaire.

## **What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

You can consider whether to participate in the survey when the tour guide hand out the questionnaire.

## **How do I agree to participate in this research?**

If you agree to participate in this survey, simply complete the questionnaire and hand it back to the tour guide.

## **Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

If you wish to receive a copy of the results, please contact me via email.

## **What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Concerns regarding the nature of this project were notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr. Claire Liu, and Email: [claire.liu@aut.ac.nz](mailto:claire.liu@aut.ac.nz), +64 9 921 9999 ext. 6431.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research were notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTECH, Dr. Rosemary Godbold, and Email: [rosemary.godbold@aut.ac.nz](mailto:rosemary.godbold@aut.ac.nz), +64 9 921 9999 ext. 6902.

## **Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

### **Researcher Contact Details:**

Hailu Long, Masters of Tourism Studies student, School of Hospitality & Tourism, the Auckland University of Technology, 55 Wellesley Street East 1010, Auckland, New Zealand.

Email: [aurora5956@hotmail.com](mailto:aurora5956@hotmail.com)

### **Project Supervisor Contact Details:**

Dr. Claire Liu, Senior lecturer in Tourism Studies, School of Hospitality & Tourism, the Auckland University of Technology, 55 Wellesley Street East 1010, Auckland, New Zealand.

Email: [Claire.liu@aut.ac.nz](mailto:Claire.liu@aut.ac.nz)

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 21-2-2012, AUTECH  
Reference number 12/11.**



## 调研通知

信息页填写日期:

2011 年 11 月 9 日

研究课题:

关于中国游客对新西兰旅游之期望和喜好的探索研究

邀请函

您好！我叫龙海璐，是奥克兰理工大学旅游专业的硕士研究生。目前正在做一项关于中国游客对新西兰旅游之期望和喜好的市场问卷调查。此项调查的目的是为了增强对中国游客在国外旅行中之期望和喜好的了解。您的参与将有助于新西兰旅游业的发展。同时也帮助我获得旅游研究方面的硕士学位。当然，您的参与完全是出于自愿的。您可以在此次调查结束前，撤消和取回任何您提供给此次调查的信息而不会有任何的损失。

研究目的

本研究旨在探讨中国游客在外国旅行的期望和喜好。它在市场规划和营销策略中起到重要作用。特别是，本研究是建立在理论和实践相结合讨论的基础上。最后，为了深入理解中国游客市场，本研究尝试总结出一个关于中国游客对新西兰旅游之期望和喜好的知识框架。

邀请参与此次调查研究的原因及对象

参加新西兰团队游的中国游客，会被邀请作为调查对象参与此次调查。

此次调查研究怎样进行？

调查问卷将由群星旅游公司的导游分发到您手中。完成此问卷调查需要 10 至 15 分钟。问卷填完后，务必把问卷放进密封的信封后，再交还给导游。导游会在您的行程最后收回问卷。

此次调查研究会出现什么样的不适和风险吗？

当调查对象回答关于个人经历方面的问题时，或许会感到尴尬。

怎样减轻这些不适和风险

您可以在此次调查结束前，撤消和取回任何您提供给此次调查的信息而不会有任何的损失。您也可以不回答您不愿意回答的问题。

此次调查研究的益处

本研究提供了对中国游客在新西兰旅游中之期望和喜好的进一步理解，并且尝试总结出一些营销策略，从而促进新西兰旅游业的发展。希望此研究为其他研究提供实证和理论基础。此外，该研究也将帮助本人获得旅游研究方面的硕士学位。



## 隐私将如何受到保护？

此调查问卷中, 您所提供的资料只用于在我的硕士论文研究中。所有的资料将以匿名形式收集。所有收到的问卷资料将在保密原则下, 保存在一个安全的地方, 待此研究项目完成的六年后才把它们销毁。如果您退出此项问卷调查, 所有的相关信息也将被销毁。

## 参与此项调查是否有花费

参加此项调查无需任何花费。我们只需要您宝贵的 10 至 15 分钟时间来完成一份问卷。

## 如何对待此项调查邀请？

当导游分发调查问卷时, 您可以考虑是否接受参与调查。

## 如何参与此项调查研究？

如果您同意参与这个调查, 只需填写完成问卷并把它交回给导游。

## 是否会收到此项调查研究的结果？

如果您希望收到此项调查的结果, 请通过邮件联系我。

## 如果对此项调查有疑问, 该怎么做？

如果对此项调查研究的性质有疑问, 请联系研究项目导师, 克莱尔博士。  
邮箱: claire.liu@aut.ac.nz, 电话: +64 9 921 9999 分机 6431.

如果对此项调查研究的操作有疑问, 请联系执行秘书, 罗斯玛丽博士。  
邮箱: rosemary.godbold@aut.ac.nz, 电话: +64 9 921 9999 分机 6902.

## 关于此项调查的其他联系人

### 调查员联系信息:

龙海璐,

新西兰, 奥克兰理工大学, 旅游酒店学院, 旅游研究硕士研究生, 奥克兰韦尔兹利东大街 55 号。

邮箱: aurora5956@hotmail.com

### 导师联系信息:

克莱尔博士,

新西兰, 奥克兰理工大学, 旅游酒店学院, 旅游研究高级讲师, 奥克兰韦尔兹利东大街 55。

邮箱: Claire.liu@aut.ac.nz

奥克兰理工大学伦理道德委员会审核批准日期: 2012 年 2 月 21 日, AUTECH 参考号: 12/11.

## APPENDIX C: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

# Confidentiality Agreement



*Project title: An exploratory study of Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences of NZ as a travel destination*

*Project Supervisor: Dr. Claire Liu*

*Researcher: Hailu Long*

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- ☐ I understand that all the material I will be asked to record is confidential.
- ☐ I understand that the contents of the questionnaires can only be discussed with the researchers.
- ☐ I will not keep any copies of the information nor allow third parties access to them.

Intermediary's signature: .....

Intermediary's name: .....

Intermediary's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
.....  
.....

Date:

Project Supervisor's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....  
.....  
.....

*Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 21 February, 2012.  
AUTEC Reference number 12/11.*

## APPENDIX D: QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH)



# Questionnaire

## Research on Chinese tourists' expectations and preferences of New Zealand as a travel destination

Completion of this questionnaire is voluntary, and will be taken as indicating your consent to participate.

After completion, you are required to put your responses into a sealed envelope, and then return to the tour guide at the end of the tour.

### SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Which city do you come from? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your gender?  
☐ Male ☐ Female
3. What is your age?  
☐ 18-29 years old ☐ 30-39 years old  
☐ 40-49 years old ☐ 50-59 years old  
☐ 60 years and above
4. What is your occupation?  
☐ Business owner ☐ Manager/ Professional  
☐ Homemaker ☐ Student  
☐ Retired ☐ Other (Please specify \_\_\_\_\_)
5. What is your education qualification?  
☐ Primary or below ☐ Secondary  
☐ Tertiary ☐ Postgraduate
6. Have you travelled internationally excluding Macau and Hong Kong?  
☐ Yes ☐ No
7. Have you visited New Zealand before this trip?  
☐ Yes ☐ No
8. Did you come to New Zealand as a single destination or a combined tour with Australia?  
☐ Single destination ☐ Australia – NZ tour

**SECTION B: PREFERENCES & EXPECTATIONS FOR THE NZ TRIP**

Please indicate by circling the appropriate number.

9. Please consider your expectation about New Zealand as a destination and rate the following statements as they apply to the accommodation:	Unimportant                  Neutral                  Important				
To have 3-4 star hotel accommodation	1	2	3	4	5
To have exclusive luxury hotel accommodation	1	2	3	4	5
To have villa accommodation	1	2	3	4	5
To have beach houses	1	2	3	4	5

10. Please consider your expectation about New Zealand as a destination and rate the following statements as they apply to the dining experience in NZ:	Unimportant                  Neutral                  Important				
To dine out at locally famous restaurants	1	2	3	4	5
To try the local cuisine	1	2	3	4	5
To have local drinks/wine	1	2	3	4	5
To have Chinese food during the trip	1	2	3	4	5

11. Please consider your preference about New Zealand as a destination and rate the following statements in terms of activities:	Unimportant                  Neutral                  Important				
To go on sight seeing	1	2	3	4	5
To visit beaches	1	2	3	4	5
To visit farms/farm shows	1	2	3	4	5
To visit national/state park	1	2	3	4	5
To visit the vineyard	1	2	3	4	5
To walk in the city	1	2	3	4	5
To experience Maori culture	1	2	3	4	5
To visit Museum/Gallery	1	2	3	4	5
To go fishing	1	2	3	4	5
To go golfing	1	2	3	4	5
To go rafting/kayaking	1	2	3	4	5
To go bungy jumping	1	2	3	4	5
To go sky diving/parachuting	1	2	3	4	5
To visit hot pools/geothermal sites	1	2	3	4	5
To go skiing	1	2	3	4	5
To go bush walking/tramping	1	2	3	4	5
To go shopping	1	2	3	4	5
To gamble in casino	1	2	3	4	5
To take pictures	1	2	3	4	5

## SECTION C: PERSONAL INTERESTS AND TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR

12. Please rate the following statements as they apply to your language ability:	Incapable					Very fluent				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
English ability										

13. Did you learn some English before traveling? Please explain.

☐ No, and why? \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Yes, and why? \_\_\_\_\_

14. On this trip, are you travelling \_\_\_\_\_?

☐ Alone

☐ With family/relatives

☐ With friends

15. Did you buy any gifts for your families and relatives?

☐ Yes

☐ No

16. Will you complain if there were some unsatisfactory issues during the trip?

☐ No, and why? \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Yes.

17. Did you participate in all self-paid activities?

☐ Yes

☐ No, and why? \_\_\_\_\_

18. How much do you trust the tour operators in China and New Zealand?

☐ Totally

☐ Some

☐ A little

☐ Not at all

19. What are the 3 reasons for you to visit New Zealand?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

20. What 3 aspects of your visit to New Zealand did you enjoy the least?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

21. What else do you expect to do that are not included on this trip?

\_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you very much for your assistance with our research project by completing this questionnaire.**

## 问卷调查

### ‘中国游客对新西兰旅游之期望和喜好的相关研究’

此次问卷调查是自愿填写, 完成这份问卷表示您同意参加此调查。问卷填完后, 务必把问卷放进密封好的信封, 在行程结束时再交回给导游。

#### 第一部分: 基本信息

1. 您来自哪个城市? \_\_\_\_\_
2. 您的性别?  
☐ 男性 ☐ 女性
3. 您的年龄?  
☐ 18-29 岁 ☐ 30-39 岁  
☐ 40-49 岁 ☐ 50-59 岁  
☐ 60 岁以上 (包含 60 岁)
4. 您从事的职业?  
☐ 企业主 ☐ 经理/专业人士  
☐ 家庭主妇 ☐ 学生  
☐ 退休人员 ☐ 其他 (请注明 \_\_\_\_\_)
5. 您的教育程度?  
☐ 小学或以下 ☐ 中等教育 (中学/高中等)  
☐ 高等教育 (大学/大专等) ☐ 研究生以上
6. 您是否到过国外旅行 (澳门、香港除外)?  
☐ 是 ☐ 否
7. 您在此之前是否来过新西兰?  
☐ 是 ☐ 否
8. 在此次旅程中, 你参加的是新西兰一地游还是澳洲新西兰两地游?  
☐ 新西兰一地游 ☐ 澳洲新西兰两地游

## 第二部分：新西兰旅游的期望与喜好

请圈出适当的答案数字。

9. 请根据您在新西兰的旅游经历，做出关于住宿方面的评价：	不重要                      中立                      重要				
三-四星级酒店住宿	1	2	3	4	5
特别豪华的酒店住宿(五星级)	1	2	3	4	5
别墅类型的住宿	1	2	3	4	5
海滨度假屋	1	2	3	4	5

10. 请根据您在新西兰的旅游经历，做出关于餐饮方面的评价：	不重要                      中立                      重要				
在当地有名的餐厅用餐	1	2	3	4	5
尝试当地美食	1	2	3	4	5
享用本地饮品/葡萄酒	1	2	3	4	5
在旅程中享用中国美食	1	2	3	4	5

11. 请根据您的喜好，给出新西兰各种活动项目的评价：	不重要                      中立                      重要				
游览观光	1	2	3	4	5
海滩游玩	1	2	3	4	5
参观农场/观看农场表演	1	2	3	4	5
参观国家/州立公园	1	2	3	4	5
参观葡萄园	1	2	3	4	5
城市中漫步	1	2	3	4	5
体验毛利文化	1	2	3	4	5
参观博物馆/画廊	1	2	3	4	5
钓鱼	1	2	3	4	5
打高尔夫球	1	2	3	4	5
乘皮艇/漂流	1	2	3	4	5
体验蹦极	1	2	3	4	5
参加跳伞	1	2	3	4	5
体验温泉/地热	1	2	3	4	5
滑雪	1	2	3	4	5
灌木丛中散步	1	2	3	4	5
购物	1	2	3	4	5
去赌场	1	2	3	4	5
拍照	1	2	3	4	5

### 第三部分：个人喜好和旅游行为

12. 请评价您的语言能力：	完全不会					非常精通				
英语能力	1	2	3	4	5					

13. 请问在此次旅行前，您是否有学习一些英文？请解释原因。

☐ 没有，因为 \_\_\_\_\_

☐ 有，因为 \_\_\_\_\_

14. 此次旅行，请问您是跟谁一起来？

☐ 自己 ☐ 家人/亲戚 ☐ 朋友

15. 请问您是否为家人或亲戚购买礼物？

☐ 是的 ☐ 没有

16. 如果旅程中遇到不满意的地方，请问您是否会投诉？

☐ 不会，因为 \_\_\_\_\_

☐ 会。

17. 请问您是否参加了所有推荐的自费项目？

☐ 是的。

☐ 没有，因为 \_\_\_\_\_

18. 请问您对旅游从业人员（包括中国的和新西兰的）的信任度？

☐ 完全相信 ☐ 一些 ☐ 很少 ☐ 完全不相信

19. 请列举出三个来新西兰旅游的原因？

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

20. 请列举出此次新西兰旅游最不满意的三个方面？

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

21. 请问还有什么您希望去做，却未包含在此次新西兰旅程中？

\_\_\_\_\_

非常感谢您的参与！