

Chinese outbound tourism in Europe: An analysis of tourist travel motivations

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years the issue of Chinese outbound travel has drawn greater attention on the world's news agenda. Between 1994 and 2014, the number of outbound trips by Mainland Chinese citizens rose from 6.1 million to 107 million (WTO, 2015).

China is not only the world's fastest growing source market, but now the largest source market in terms of both visitation amount and travel spending.

This research aims to investigate the travel motivation of Chinese Tourists in Europe, identifying the key Push and Pull factors of the motivations.

2. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This study aims to clarify the reasons that push Mainland Chinese tourists that travel with organized groups for travelling to Europe. In 2013, 7.5 million Chinese visitors arrived in Europe (ETC, 2014).

Studies concerning tourist motivation have been changing over time. The earliest studies tended to identify single traits as to define the travel desire of tourists or an assumed search for authenticity (MacCannell, 1976).

Another view was discussing regarding the distinction of push factors (psychological and personal reasons) and pull factors (specifics of the destinations) (Kim *et al.*, 2003).

3. METHODOLOGY & DATA SOURCE

FIRST, PULL FACTORS

In this study two research methodologies are applied. First, we analyzed and clarified which are the main destinations of Europe for Chinese tourists and what features and attractions are defined by analyzing product offers from leading Chinese tour operators.

Data source

Leading tour operators with Head Office in Beijing, according to ETC & UNWTO (2012: 93).

- China Travel Service - www.ctsho.com
- China Comfort Travel - www.cct.cn
- China Youth Travel Service - www.aoyou.com

Explored on 1th December 2015.

SECOND, PUSH FACTORS

By conducting and analyzing a series of brief questionnaires in the city of Barcelona, we intend to investigate the personal factors, that is to say, the psychological reasons that push travelers to the destination.

Data source

Surveys were conducted in November 2015 to Mainland Chinese travellers.

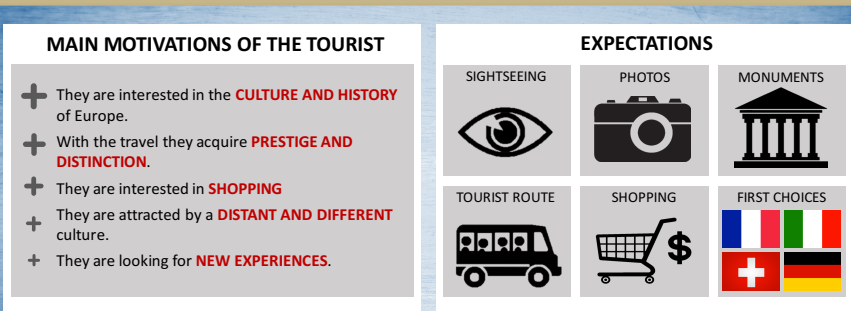
- 50 Questionnaires conducted
- In the city of Barcelona, Spain
- November 2015

4. FINDINGS: PULL FACTORS

Main attractions of the destination



5. FINDINGS: PUSH FACTORS



6. CONCLUSIONS



7. REFERENCES

- ETC & UNWTO (2012). *Understanding Chinese Outbound Tourism*. WTO, Madrid.
- ETC (2014). *European Tourism in 2013*. ETC, Brussels.
- Kim, S.S. *et al.* (2003). "The influence of push and pull factors at Korean national parks". *Tourism Management*, 24, 169-180.
- MacCannell, D. (1976). *The tourist*. Schocken Books, New York.
- WTO (2015). *2014 Tourism Highlights*. WTO, Madrid.

Chinese outbound tourism in Europe: An analysis of tourist travel motivations

Aureli Lojo

Department of Geography

Autonomous University of Barcelona

Email: Aureli.lojo@gmail.com

Gemma Canoves

Department of Geography

Autonomous University of Barcelona

Email: Gemma.canoves@uab.cat

Abstract: 200 words

Over the past few years the issue of Chinese outbound travel has drawn greater attention on the world's news agenda. Nowadays, China has become the first outbound tourism market in the world, which has already surpassed the United States. This research aims to investigate the travel motivation of Chinese Tourists in Europe, identifying the key Push factors (psychological and personal reasons) and pull factors (specifics of the destinations). Two research methodologies were applied. First, we analyzed and clarified which are the main destinations of Europe for Chinese tourists and what features and attractions are defined by analyzing data offers from leading Chinese tour operators with trips to Europe. Second, one questionnaire was designed and categorized. By conducting and analyzing a series of brief questionnaires in the city of Barcelona, we intend to investigate the push and personal factors, that is to say, the psychological reasons that push travellers to the destination. This study gives a better understanding of the phenomenon of Chinese tourism in Europe. Besides, the research findings show the important links between push factors and pull factors. In addition to the academic developments, there are several crucial implications for destination managers.

Keywords: *Chinese Tourism, Europe, motivations.*

Introduction

Over the past few years, the issue of Chinese outbound travel has drawn greater attention on the world's news agenda. Nowadays, China has become the First Outbound Tourism Market in the world, which has already surpassed the United States. The number of Chinese tourists travelling abroad increased by about 19.49% between 2013 and 2014 which has reached more than 100 million.

The spending capacity, the greater permissiveness in obtaining visa and the increasing vacation have give rise to these phenomena. Moreover, the appreciation of the RMB has encouraged tourists to consume more abroad. According to the China National Tourism Administration, China's expenses foreign travel reached \$164.8 billion in 2014. Thus, since 2012, China has reached the first place in the global outbound tourism market in terms of expenses.

As in the majority of the world's source market, outbound travel from China heads predominantly to regional destinations (ETC & UNWTO, 2013). Asia and Pacific accounted for 91% Chinese trips. In addition to destinations in Asia and the Pacific, Europe will be the next big destination for Chinese, followed by the United States. Europe has been receiving over 3 million visitors in 2011 and almost 4 million in 2014 (ETC, 2014), while in US, the number rose from 1.38 to 1.96 million

Theoretical Foundation / Review of the Literature

According to the World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCTF, 2014), the cities most visited by Chinese tourists outside the Asia and the Pacific are Paris (France), London (UK), Rome (Italy), Berlin (Germany), Washington (USA) and Los Angeles (USA). Whilst, the cities where higher consumption occurs are London (UK), Paris (France), Berlin (Germany), Zurich (Switzerland), Athens (Greece) and Barcelona (Spain) in Europe, and Los Angeles (USA), Toronto (Canada) y San Francisco (USA) in America.

This study aims to clarify the reasons that push tourists and Chinese companies organized groups for travelling to Europe. Studies concerning tourist motivation have been changing over time. The earliest studies tended to identify single traits as to define the travel desire of tourists (Gray, 1970), or an assumed search for authenticity (MacCannell, 1976). Another view was discussing regarding the distinction of push factors (psychological and personal reasons) and pull factors (specifics of the destinations). “The push factors approach aligns tourism researchers' work with that work of psychologists, while the pull factors are often motives as defined by marketers” (Wu & Pearce, 2014, p. 23).

According to Chen *et. al.* (2009, p. 241), “the mentioned models suggest that decision-makers exhibit rationalistic behavior or reasoned action in their choices among alternative destinations”. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the motivations behind their choices, which will be analyzed by the greatest utility of one destination (pull factors) and individual or social constraints (push factors).

Research Methodology

In this study two research methodologies are applied. First, we analyzed and clarified the main popular destinations in Europe and what features and attractions are defined by analyzing data from leading Chinese tour operators with trips to Europe —China International Travel Service (CITS), China Comfort Travel (CCT), China Youth Travel Service (CYTS), and JinJiang Travel (JJTravel) (ETC & UNWTO, 2012, Lojo & Cànoves 2015a; Lojo & Cànoves, 2015b). Thus, we intend to investigate the pull factors —the specifics of the place that attract tourists.

Second, a questionnaire was designed and categorized. By conducting a series of brief questionnaires in the city of Barcelona, we intend to explore the push and personal factors, that is to say, the psychological reasons that push travellers to the destination. With this additional methodology, we try to understand the motivations from a holistic point of view.

Research Findings

Our research in the major tourist travel motivations elicited some remarkable findings. Firstly, the Push Factors are internally based and the core motivations are related to individual travel history. The main push factors are: novelty seeking, the fun and difference of Europe, relationships, the pride (travelling far from China), personal interest in architecture or Europe brands and culture.

The Pull Factors include the specific characteristics of the destination. These factors tend to be more diversified and helpful in new marketing activities. To sum up, the economy of Europe, the symbolic meanings of the “Old Continent”, the monuments and sights of the famous cities, and the European sports are some of the most mentioned factors, according to the results.

Conclusions and Implications

This study gives a better understanding of the phenomenon of Chinese Tourism in Europe. Besides, the research findings show the important links between push factors and pull factors.

This research examined a new phenomenon: the travel motivation of Chinese tourists in Europe. Moreover, we offer more dynamic accounts of how motives of travelling change for groups and individuals over time. In addition to the academic developments, there are several initial implications for destination managers.

References

- Chen, M. C., Chen, S. H., & Lee, H. T. (2009). The Influence of Service Performance and Destination Resources on Consumer Behavior: A Case Study of Mainland Chinese Tourists to Kinmen. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 11, 269-282.
- ETC & UNWTO (2012). *Understanding Chinese Outbound Tourism – What the Chinese blogosphere is saying about Europe*. World Tourism Organization, Madrid.
- ETC & UNWTO (2014). *Chinese Outbound Travel to Middle East and North Africa*. World Tourism Organization, Madrid.
- ETC (2014). *European Tourism Portfolio Analysis*. European Travel Commission, online.
- Gray, J.P. (1970) *International Travel – International Trade*. Lexington: Lexington Books.
- MacCannell, D. (1976). *The tourist: A new theory of the leisure class*. New York: Schocken Books.
- Lojo, Aureli, & Cànoves, Gemma (2015a). El turismo chino en Barcelona. Elementos clave de un fenómeno reciente. *Documents d'Anàlisi Geogràfica*, 61(3), 581–599. <https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/dag.267>

Lojo, Aureli & Cànoves, Gemma (2015b). *New tourism trends in Barcelona. Chinese tourist experiences and local perceptions*. Paper presented at 5th International Conference on Tourism between Spain and China ICTCHS2015. Nankai University. Tianjin (China).

Wu, M.Y., & Pearce, P.L. (2014). Chinese recreational vehicle users in Australia: A netnographic study of tourist motivation. *Tourism Management*, 43, pp. 22-35.

WTCTF (2014). *Market Research Report on Chinese Outbound Tourist (City) Consumption*. World Tourism Cities Federation & Ipsos, Beijing.

Funding:

Grant FPU014/03436

Grant CSO2013-41374-R

This is an Abstract for a poster presented at:
***3rd World Research Summit for Tourism and Hospitality and
1st USA-China Tourism Research Summit: Transforming Partnerships***
December 15-19, 2015
UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management, Orlando, Florida, USA

		<p>3rd World Research Summit for Tourism and Hospitality and 1st USA-China Tourism Research Summit</p> <p>Transforming Partnerships</p> <p>December 15-19, 2015. UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management, Orlando, Florida, United States of America</p>
---	---	--

To cite this poster/paper:

Lojo, Aureli & Cànoves, Gemma (2015). *Chinese outbound tourism in Europe: An analysis of tourist travel motivations*. Poster presented at 3rd World Research Summit for Tourism and Hospitality and 1st USA-China Tourism Research Summit: Transforming Partnerships. UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management. Orlando, Florida (USA).