
**IDENTIFYING CHINESE TOURISTS' EXPECTATIONS AND DEMANDS
IN NORWAY**

Hanna Elisabeth Lindland¹

¹Shanghai University, School of Economics, 266 Jufengyuan Rd, Baoshan, Shanghai, China

Abstract

The world is changing, new markets, target groups, trends and new technology require focus on a more targeted and cost-effective product development, distribution and marketing of Norway as a destination. With future uncertainty in relation to several of Norway's established industries, including the oil and gas industry, Norway needs better profitability and higher growth in traditional competitive industries. Norway is a nation that is largely dependent on revenues from oil and gas. These are non-renewable energy sources, i.e., energy sources that are used up and that we can run out of. Norway is a country with spectacular nature, and as a nation and destination it should be even more involved: as the opposite of oil, as a future for future generations, and as potentially one of the best holidays and tourist nations. Norwegian tourism is a natural counterpart to the precious oil. Norway has good prospects for success in a future national and international tourism markets.

Today China is the largest potential source market for tourism in the world. In addition to this, the Chinese travellers are also the ones in the world who spend by far the most money during a trip. In 2019 it was reported that Chinese travellers spent about 255 billion U.S dollars overseas, exceeding all other countries. The Chinese tourist market is a great opportunity for Norway, where the tourism industry will be able to contribute to increased employment and better economy. Europe has seen a rapid increase of Chinese tourism in recent years, where Norway is considered one of the main destinations in the Nordic country tourism. However, Norway does not attract a large share of the Chinese outbound tourism when compared with other European countries such as Germany, the UK or France. The most recent numbers shows that Chinese tourists accounted for only 4 per cent of all foreign guest nights in Norway first half of 2019.

The purpose of this research is to figure out how the Norwegian tourism industry can improve communication with Chinese tourists. The thesis will have a clear objective to explore how to increase satisfaction of Chinese tourists in Norway, in order to increase outbound Chinese tourism flows towards Norway. The research will focus on analysing the Chinese outbound tourist's satisfaction level in Norway, and understanding their satisfaction level, we can identify the expectations and demands of the Chinese tourist in different areas when travelling in Norway. The research findings will contribute to service providers discovering new information about this tourist group, and further understand which areas the Norwegian tourism industry needs to focus its attention on regarding destination branding and development.

Keywords: way, China, Chinese outbound tourism, demands, expectation and satisfaction, travel motivation and perception.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the study

According to The World Tourism Organisation, China is the world's leading tourism outbound market both in number of departures as well as in total expenditure. The Chinese tourism market has huge potential with its large volume, rapid growth and far outreach. The prompt development and vast potential of the Chinese tourism market have also been experienced in Europe (Chinavia, 2013). Although Norway is considered one of the main destinations in the Nordic country tourism, in comparison to other European countries such as Germany, the UK or France, Norway currently does not attract a substantial share of outbound Chinese tourism. There are various reasons for this. Subjective factors such as tourists' expectation, demands, behaviour, motivation and interests, and objective reasons such as spending capability, geographical distance, and entry and exit procedures.

For Norway, abundant access to energy has been crucial for economic growth and laid the foundation for jobs and a higher standard of living. It has also given the country a solid public economy. As an energy nation, Norway has a two-sided starting point and is a different country in an international context. The development of hydropower came at the same time as industrial development and prosperity development in Norway. Norway therefore did not go the fossil route in power production, and heating and cooking have taken place with emission-free energy carriers. Later came the development of oil and gas resources, which contributed significantly to the journey of prosperity the country has experienced over the past 50 years. Norway is a major power in the production and export of oil and gas.

There has recently been a green shift in society. For Norwegian business and industry, the consequences of the physical climate changes and the actual transition to a low-emission society present both challenges and opportunities. In Norway, there are many companies that want to be at the forefront of development. Most industries have been involved in preparing for green competitiveness - among other things through the roadmap input to the government's own expert committee. Building green competitiveness means cutting greenhouse gas emissions, increasing value creation and ensuring high employment.

The government has chosen to focus specifically on the tourism industry. This choice is made on the basis of the tourism industry's potential for further value creation, the natural benefits Norway has and the great importance of the industry as a district industry (Rosland, 2019). Norway has unique prerequisites for having good tourism products. Norwegian nature is unique and provides a basis for a rich offer of experiences. By using the natural competitive advantage and delivering unique experiences high quality, Norwegian tourism players will be able to defend the price level needed to increase profitability in the tourism industry. The government focuses on three essential goals within the tourism industry:

1. Increased value creation and productivity in the tourism industry.
2. More full-time jobs and more solid companies, especially in rural Norway.
3. Unique and high-quality experiences that attract more guests with a high willingness to pay.

The goals must be achieved through a long-term and effective investment in the tourism industry, investment in sustainable development and increased cooperation. The tourism industry shall be one of the industries Norway will live off in the future (Rosland, 2019).

The purpose of the thesis is to identify the satisfaction level of the Chinese outbound tourist in Norway. By understanding their satisfaction level, we can identify the expectations and demands of the Chinese tourist in various areas when travelling in Norway. Furthermore, discover which areas the Norwegian tourism industry needs to focus its attention on regarding destination branding and development. By establishing the Chinese outbound tourist's satisfaction level, Norway will additionally be better equipped and prepared for the Chinese tourism group. The knowledge investment is made to increase Chinese tourists' customer satisfaction, which in the long run can result in a higher number of Chinese tourists visiting Norway.

This thesis will examine Chinese tourists' culture and their demands and expectation to Norway as a destination, by exploring how the tourism industry communicate with Chinese tourists. By outlining this, we are able to examine how the current situation is, and furthermore understand how Chinese tourists' level of satisfaction can be improved in order to acquire a larger share of the Chinese outbound tourism. Hence, the main problem statement is "How to increase the satisfaction of Chinese tourists in Norway?".

1.2 Background

Norway is a country that mainly relies on oil and gas revenue, which is a non-renewable energy source. Due to future uncertainties related to mature industries in Norway, including oil and gas, and additionally a change in the market towards more green and sustainable development, Norway needs better profitability and higher growth than the traditional competitive industries. Tourism is identified by the government as one of the top industries with the greatest potential. There exist a lot of research respectively focusing on the Norwegian tourism and Chinese culture. However, there is a shortage of studies focusing on Chinese culture in Norwegian tourism. China is the largest market for outbound tourism, and it is likely to believe that the Chinese outbound tourism will continue to increase within the near future. In order to gain a decent share of this growing market it is important to market Norway and facilitate for Chinese tourism. The thesis will have a clear operative objective to find out how to increase satisfaction of Chinese tourists in Norway, in order to increase outbound Chinese tourism flows towards Norway.

1.3 Literature review

The Chinese outbound tourism market has only been presented as an attractive market recently. As a result, there is lack of previous research focusing on this area, especially research on the specific area on Chinese tourist's satisfaction level or how to attract Chinese tourism to Norway.

Within previous studies and research papers there are two research paper considered to be interesting and relevant. The first paper of interest is a PhD research paper by a senior researcher Sarah Holst Kjær, with University in Agder, Norway. This research is named "Scandinavian

Things and Chinese Taste Becoming China-ready in the Regional Tourism Industry” and was conducted in 2014. It was a strategic advice report with the objective of providing a knowledge base of the Chinese outbound tourism market, and the Chinese travellers in Scandinavia. Additionally, identify the potential of the regional market. The report results are not considered significant for the Norwegian tourism industry but recommend focusing on the individual travelling segments, as well as building strategies for being a destination for children. It also mentions the importance of presenting cultural heritage and storytelling. Finally, it compares Scandinavia’s natural resources with Australia and New Zealand where it is recommended to learn from these countries’ experiences in relation to nature-based tourism (Kjær, 2014).

Another paper of interest is a thesis from Victoria University in Australia named “Strategies for entering the Chinese outbound travel market”. The research was conducted in 2002 by Guo and presented great research efforts. The aim of the study was to investigate how Australian travel agencies should enter the Chinese market and attract Chinese travellers. The author focused on three major Chinese cities: Shanghai, Beijing and Qingdao. He then conducted 210 completely answered surveys for the travel agencies in the mentioned cities. The results of his thesis discovered that Australian companies could enter the Chinese tourism outbound market in various entry strategies, depending on the company’s capabilities (Guo, 2002). The framework and findings of Guo’s research paper is presented in table 1 below. In addition to similarities and differences to our research paper. In conclusion, as seen in the research of Australia, it is believed that some information could also be implemented in Norway. Particularly China’s market potential after entering the WTO.

1.4 Summary

This thesis will investigate Chinese outbound tourism to Norway from two perspectives: China, the source market, and Norway, the host market. The study is aiming at collecting data on Chinese tourists’ demands and expectations when travelling in Norway, as well as their satisfaction level. Research work is conducted based on the data from a quantitative research method. The research methodology includes the research setting and empirical research, describing the selection of respondents, interview and survey design.

2. Method

Due to the nature and purpose of the study we have chosen to conduct several interviews and a questionnaire in order to collect the data we need. Method is a strategy that should bring credible and valid information about reality. The goal is to gather empirical data that answers what you want to find out, and if the information is credible (Jacobsen, 2015). Empirics are experiences and observations from reality (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2010).

To achieve the research goal, data is collected through a qualitative method. This way we will achieve a deep and detailed understanding of the phenomenon. The sample for the qualitative study was five informants, and the interviews were conducted with qualitative individual interviews. The informants had either knowledge of the tourism industry and/or the Chinese tourist group. As for the quantitative study the sample was of 211 Chinese respondents who had

travelled to Norway at least once.

The choice of method in this research is a qualitative method. This was because of the choice of an inductive design and the desire to find out detailed depth information of my informants and understand how Norwegian tourism companies work with this customer group today. A lot of information on the research was necessary. The theme was to find out the needs and expectations of Chinese tourist and how the tourism companies in Norway could increase the satisfaction of Chinese tourists through correct and effective communication. The goal with the task was never to create statistics generalization, but rather to map how the current situation in Norway was.

2.1 Data collection

Informants were chosen according to their vast knowledge and information about the topic. Below is a list over the selection criteria.

The selection criteria:

- Information about Chinese tourists or the tourism industry
- Variation in sample: national, regional, local body or private individuals

The information criterion was chosen because of wanting a deep and detailed understanding and knowledge of Chinese tourists and the Norwegian tourism industry. Variety was prioritized in the selection because of concerns with a wide range understanding from different perspectives and levels in the tourism industry.

Relevant companies and candidates were contacted by phone and e-mail and arranged an interview. It was agreed upon to conduct the interviews on phone due to the pandemic not allowing to go to their office. The interviews were documented with a tape recorder and normally lasted about 45 minutes. The interview ended the interview when there was no new information and informed the informants that they can get in touch if they have any questions. When arranging the interviews, the informants were made aware that the conversation will be recorded, but that they will be anonymised.

2.2 Data analysis

In the data analysis, the researcher has collected everything from raw materials. The raw material will now be reviewed and structured so that the researcher can draw sensible conclusions of their findings. A data analysis consists of four phases. The first phase is documentation, the second phase is to explore data, the third phase is systematization and categorization, and the fourth phase is interconnection.

At this stage, the researcher cleans up all the raw data. This means that the researcher writes down interviews and other relevant additional information. Regarding the qualitative a new common Microsoft Excel document were created, where all the informants' responses were collected. This document contained different phases, of which seven were phases was: Problem statement and research question 1, 2, 3, 4, satisfaction and sustainability. While the last five the

phases contained summary tabs for the various research questions. The goal of this the document was to gather all the information per question in one place. This is what our work with to interpret the data afterwards much easier.

The coding was performed by reading through the material and linked the relevant answers to the correct research question. One of our research questions was: “What are the needs and wishes of the Chinese customer group?” The information relevant to this question was then copied and collected under the research question.

Then connections in the data are explored. The various research questions are reviewed and looked for connections between the various the informants. Possible similarities and differences are looked for, that can be used further in the discussion of the thesis.

2.3 Research Design

As previous knowledge of the Chinese tourism industry is limited, the thesis methodology focuses on an explorative design. The data is collected through both primary and secondary sources. Journals, websites, academic publications and databases were used. My primary data consists of in-depth interviews and a questionnaire. In-depth interviews provide rich, descriptive data without group influence. The fieldwork was carried out online due to travel restrictions caused by Covid-19.

“How to increase the satisfaction of Chinese tourists in Norway?” In addition to the problem, there is established four research questions. These questions should help to answer the problem better.

- 1) What are the needs and wishes of the Chinese customer group?
- 2) What challenges can arise with this customer group's visit to Norway?
- 3) How does the Norwegian tourism industry communicate with the Chinese outbound tourism market today?
- 4) How should the Norwegian tourism industry communicate with the Chinese outbound tourism market in the future?

3. Results

The general findings from the interviews conducted will now be presented. With a qualitative approach we achieve a deep and detailed understanding of the topic. The sample for the qualitative study is five informants, and the interviews were conducted through qualitative individual interviews. The informants had either knowledge of the tourism industry and/or the Chinese tourist group. First, the research questions and then relevant topics to help answer the issue are explained. The informants are made anonymously in terms of which informants tell what in presentation of findings and discussion. This is because we are not interested in what each informant believes, rather to focus on the whole and the common features of the findings.

3.1 The interview informants

One respondent within branding and marketing, are knowledgeable about branding and marketing of whole of Norway. The respondents within the tourism industry consist of people with knowledge and experience about Chinese tourists. One is China expert from Innovation Norway, that focuses on promoting Norway in different aspects and building a bridge between Norway and other countries. The final respondent is a Chinese person who frequently travel to Norway, which had a different background and starting point than the others.

Position	Company	Method	Date
Representatives from the tourism industry	Visit North Cape	Phone	February 12, 2020
Branding and marketing experts	Visit Norway	Phone	March 11, 2020
Frequent Chinese traveller to Norway	Private	Phone	October 10, 2020
Representatives from the tourism industry	LeeWay	E-mail	November 1, 2020
China tourism expert	Innovation Norway	Phone	November 25, 2020

3.2 Findings

The general findings from the interviews conducted will now be presented. With a qualitative approach we achieve a deep and detailed understanding of the topic. The sample for the qualitative study is five informants, and the interviews were conducted through qualitative individual interviews. The informants had either knowledge of the tourism industry and/or the Chinese tourist group. First, the research questions and then relevant topics to help answer the issue are explained. The informants are made anonymously in terms of which informants tell what in presentation of findings and discussion. This is because we are not interested in what each informant believes, rather to focus on the whole and the common features of the findings.

3.2.1 Research questions 1

Research question one is: "What are the needs and wishes of the Chinese customer group?" The most important answers received from the informants related to this question were that it is often separated between group travellers and individual travellers. These groups often have different

expectations and needs, which are important to know for tourism. Several informants pointed out that the Chinese group travellers often do not know the geographical boundaries of Scandinavia. Norway often goes under the name Northern Europe. Further explanation will describe wishes and needs.

Four of the informants said that the tourists want access to both Norwegian and Chinese food. They also want access to hot water and hot breakfast. One informant said that they are used to be able to share meals and facilitating this is desirable. Another informant mentioned that a lot of Chinese tourists often asks for different kinds of food or utilities for food related with their stay at different accommodations, for example chopsticks, soya sauce or noodles available in the hotel room, or a kettle available to quickly heat water or noodle soups. On the contrary, several of the informants mentioned that the Chinese are quite adventures regarding food experiences and wish to taste authentic and local food and beverages (push factors), and quite often ask for typical Norwegian cuisines.

All of the informants said that the nature and authentic experiences such as seeing aurora lights, are probably the most important attractions (pull factors). Some informants mentioned mountains, fresh air and beautiful, raw and untouched nature as important drivers (pull factors). The Chinese tourists wish for clean air, fresh air and relaxation are important motivations (push factors) for this travel group. It is mentioned that China experience air pollution on different levels throughout the country, which can be a reason for the motivation to travel to a destination with clean and fresh air. One informant also highlighted shopping as an important part of the journey and explained that the Chinese tourist group wants to shop luxury products (push factor). This is because Norway does not have a luxury tax on animal products (pull factor). These informants described Chinese society as preoccupied with materialism things, such as expensive watches and bags. One informant pointed out that regarding Chinese shopping pattern, they are not very price sensitive, but with accommodation or food, they are more willing to make cost reductions as long as the quality is decent. Therefore, other destinations in Europe may be more attractive.

Three informants pointed out the important subject of service. Emphasizing that the Chinese value genuine respect, a positive attitude and enthusiasm. One of these informants also mentioned that it is important to remember the diversity of Chinese tourists, depending on their age, where they live and their travel style. Another informant said that the Chinese way of approaching the service staff can be business like. With this, the informant means that the level of respect for service roles, will depend on their status. An example was shared where for example a doctor has a higher status than a waiter staff or a cashier. This is an important part of the service occupation, in terms of cultural understanding and not to take offence.

3.2.2 Research questions 2

Research question two is: "What challenges can arise with this customer group's visit to Norway?". Some informants described Chinese groups as loud. An informant explained that it can be challenging to get a Chinese group to associate with other tourist groups, due to large

cultural differences. Four informants pointed out that it can be difficult for Chinese tourists to be in Norway without access to Chinese food for a long time.

Three informants highlighted the lack of information in Chinese as a challenge. Two informants called for more signage. All of the informants considered the language barriers as major. This is because many of the Chinese tourists are older people who do not know English. Two informants pointed out that cultural barriers can be as big of a challenge as language. This is because it can be difficult to understand each other.

Three informants informed that the tourism industry has not enough knowledge about Chinese tourists. Some informants explained that it is important to have a balance between nationalities in hotels, so that one group does not become too dominant. One informant pointed out that many tourism companies are only interested in Chinese tourists for a short period of time. This is because they often book late, have a budget and generally leave little money on accommodation. An informant explained that the tourism industry seems slow in offering the basic things that the tourist group demands. Another informant explained that tourism seems poorly coordinated as the names of the fjords and mountains have many different translations in Chinese. The tourism industry often creates its own names for the nature attractions.

Several of the informants said that Norway lacks international recognition when it comes to being its own country and destination. It is quite common for foreigners in general, not only the Chinese tourists, to confuse Norway with Scandinavia. Although Norway is a part of Scandinavia, the informants pointed out that Norway lacks awareness of the particular country's existence. Further it was mentioned that this creates an obstacle for marketing Norway as a destination towards the Chinese market, if the Chinese people are not aware of the country's existence.

Three informants mentioned that there had been some news about mass tourism lately, where locals of the most attractive tourist destinations have complained about the need for taking care of the natural resources. Another informant mentioned that in their experience people and companies are really making an effort towards sustainable tourism. Two informants mentioned that there are a lot of other beautiful places that the Chinese tourists have yet to explore and said an idea could be to spread the tourism out, hence, market other attractions than the typical ones. The number of Chinese tourists will only grow as the opportunity for them to travel and explore is a new luxury for them.

Four informants described the visa process to be able to travel to Norway as complicated. This is because tourists must travel to a Norwegian foreign service mission to leave fingerprints. These stations are only located in three major cities in China. This increases the price of the trip considerably, as the visa process is quite expensive.

3.2.3 Research questions 3

The third research question is: “How does the Norwegian tourism industry communicate with the Chinese outbound tourism market today?”. Some examples of what the tourism industry does today to satisfy the tourists are:

One informant stated that major tourist organisations such as Visit Norway, Visit North Cape and Innovation Norway usually promotes Norway through Chinese travel agents and popular television programs. It was pointed out by several of the informants that Norway is in a learning stage. Companies still find it difficult to know which marketing strategies to use and that works on the Chinese market. This is probably the reason for using Chinese agencies for marketing purposes. In addition, several informants mentioned that because of this strategy, and not too much collaboration within the Norwegian tourism industry and the players involved, there is no common practice for how to market Norway as a destination. This is a challenge. It seems that the travel agencies are free to market however they prefer. One informant also mentioned that they have received feedback from Chinese people about too much marketing on television and discovery channels. The marketing of Norway as a tourist destination does not only cover tourism attractions, but different aspects of Norway, such as salmon is an important part of Norwegian brand image. Different marketing topics were mentioned but the most common ones were aurora lights in the North, salmon advertisement, fresh, clean and unique nature experiences (pull factors).

One informant was concerned about the activities their company offers are well informed so that the guests know what they are going for. Another informant said that all public transport in Oslo must be informed in both Norwegian and English. An informant's company offers a mini guide about Oslo in Chinese. A fourth informant said that their company only has brochures in English, because it is discriminatory to have brochures translated into only selected languages. One informant informed about an investment course in Chinese cultural differences and behaviour, the informant said that this course has created linguistic templates in Chinese. The templates can be used to reduce the language barrier between tourists and employees in the tourism industry.

An informant talked about a built-in fear in the tourism industry about how to treat Asian tourists. Another informant said that the tourism industry is not very future oriented. There is a lot of old-fashioned thinking in terms of how to facilitate. In terms of technology or payments, the tourism industry in Norway is quite old fashion, with limited usage of e.g., apps.

Another important mention was the Chinese wish to communicate with the local people (push factor), however, as there often exist language barriers and limited cultural understanding, local people struggle to connect with the Chinese tourist market, and vice versa.

One informant said that the tourism industry needs more market research and getting feedback from the tourists. Another informant also said that on the activity's booking confirmation the tourists find information about, for example, train and bus change. A third informant was concerned with training the guides on what one can and cannot do. A fourth informant said that some tourism companies have created an Asian corner at the breakfast buffet, to satisfy the

Chinese the tourists. Three informants talked about their collaboration with Innovation Norway about common marketing.

3.2.4 Research questions 4

The fourth research question is: "How should the tourism industry communicate with this the target group in the future?".

One informant mentioned the importance of the message being clear and simple, and that tourists use websites and that apps are popular among young people. The informant thought it was important for the tourism industry in the future to be present at the canals used by the tourist group. Examples of popular channels are WeChat and Weibo. Another informant said that all information should be in both Norwegian and English. People also believed that places with a lot of Chinese tourists should have information in Chinese. A third informant said that the tourism industry should carefully consider what kind of images are used in the marketing of the business or destination. The informant said that such pictures help to build up the brand Norway. It is important that the images correspond to reality. If this is not done correctly, expectations can be formed that are not met when Chinese tourists are in Norway. Several of the informants also mentioned that the tourism industry needs to cooperate more across companies and organizations, in order to promote the same message to the Chinese market and promote a more homogenous nation brand.

Three informants said that in the future it will be important to tailor and facilitate for the Chinese tourists. This is because this can create higher satisfaction which in turn can result in that tourists spend more money. Two informants described the importance of the tourism industry knowledge of the Chinese customer group. One informant said that it is crucial for a destinations success that tourism companies work together. If any company has special expertise in, for example, Chinese tourists, this should be shared with others in the industry. One informant thought it was important to know what the Chinese tourists are interested in. This is because such knowledge can increase the satisfaction of tourists.

3.2.5 Satisfaction

According to one informant, satisfaction varies between group travellers and individuals' travellers. It is mentioned by an informant that of those who travel in groups, approx. 7 out of 10 who visit Norway happy with the stay. The informant also told that the individual tourists often have other requirements which they are not happy with. They are used to a higher service offer than what Norway offers. Two other informants said that most people who visit Norway experience the country as positive and exotic, and mention to reason for visit is related to Norway's unique nature, especially in the North of Norway. One informant described uncontrollable factors, such as bad weather, as one factor that reduces satisfaction, and also mention that Chinese quite often struggle with the language barrier. The informant also suggested that the Norwegian tourism industry focus more efforts on improving the language barrier. Another informant said that the tourists are not happy with the food when they travel in Norway. I also asked the informants how far the tourism companies should go to satisfy the tourists. One informant said that tourism companies should do their utmost to satisfy tourists, but

it must not break the law. Another informant said that the staff and tourists must meet halfway. The person believes that tourists should try to understand Norwegian culture when they visit Norway. According to the results from quantitative and qualitative it is similar results in terms of Chinese satisfaction level in the different areas. They have a high overall satisfaction level when traveling in Norway. However, there are several aspects that should be paid more attention to. Such as food options, hospitality and service, information and language barriers.

4. Discussion

4.1 Discussion and suggestions

The thesis field of interest was Chinese outbound tourism in Norway, focusing the main attention on Chinese tourist's satisfaction level in Norway. China's economic growth leading to higher wealth, living standards and the increase of Chinese tourists travelling abroad, in addition to Norway's investments shift towards the tourism industry, are the main motivations for investing and work determinedly towards the Chinese outbound tourism market. In order to be successful in this complex market, it is important to obtain knowledge about the various features of this tourist group.

The thesis started with an introduction of the Chinese outbound tourism, China's economic development and increase of Chinese outbound travellers, showing the importance of the market for world tourism, and more specifically for Norway as a tourist destination for the Chinese market. The thesis aimed to answer the following problem statement "How to increase the satisfaction of Chinese tourists in Norway?", by answering the following research questions:

- 1) What are the needs and wishes of the Chinese customer group?
- 2) What challenges can arise with this customer group's visit to Norway?
- 3) How does the Norwegian tourism industry communicate with the Chinese outbound tourism market today?
- 4) How should the Norwegian tourism industry communicate with the Chinese outbound tourism market in the future?

With the main problem statement and our research questions, this study intends to figure out how Norwegian tourism companies can increase the Chinese satisfaction level when travelling in Norway, and furthermore acquire a larger share of the growing Chinese outbound tourism market. This research focuses on exploring how the Norwegian tourism industry communicates with this market today and identify the Chinese tourist satisfaction level in Norway.

These research questions lead to the choice of both a qualitative and a quantitative research approach, which seeks to investigate the current situation of the Norwegian tourism industry and Chinese outbound tourism market. It was chosen to conduct a survey questionnaire for Chinese tourists experience in Norway as it seemed to be the most optimal way to investigate their satisfaction level. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with relevant professional

people or companies representing the Norwegian tourism industry. This was important in order to get closer and explore their current strategies and initiatives towards the Chinese market.

So how to increase the Chinese satisfaction level in Norway?

It is recommended that the tourism industry employs people with the right attitudes. Businesses should have good training in how employees should deal with different cultures. It should also be one balance between what tourists demand and what the tourism industry fulfils, but companies must not forget that tourists keep the industry alive. It can be challenging for the tourism industry to have employees with an ethnocentric mindset. I believe that this can be solved by the company dealing with the problem before it occurs. It is important that the company is selective during the hiring process so that they can hire more people with more open cultural relativistic thinking. This mindset can help the tourism business to increase the satisfaction of Chinese tourists. This is because employees are likely to be more open and willing to communicate with guests.

Another way for the company to increase Chinese tourists' satisfaction is to train the employees in how the cultural filter model works. This will give the employees knowledge of where misunderstandings can arise in communication and what measures can be done to reduce the likelihood of misunderstandings. This can make employees better at communicating with other nationalities and cultures. If one company receives a large group of Chinese tourists, I believe it may be wise of the tourism industry to make a little extra for this tourist group. One surprising discovery was the Chinese tourists want for Chinese food as they travelled in Norway. As much as they enjoy local food, they also want Chinese food to be accessible. Another example of such facilitation may be that the company always has hot water available for this tourist group, as this is important to them.

In terms of information availability, it can be difficult to judge whether companies should translate information in Chinese. I think it may be wise to distinguish Chinese in the most popular Chinese attractions. I also believe that all information should be kept to a minimum English where tourists travel.

Another important factor for the tourism industry is that the employees are aware that they work for the tourists. The tourists pay to visit Norway, which is why it is natural that the tourism industry should go to great lengths to satisfy the Chinese tourists. The foreign tourists help to secure the Norwegian tourism industry financially. The tourism industry depends on satisfied customers to maintain jobs and beyond operation.

Technology can contribute to increased customer satisfaction through example use of an app. This can facilitate information retrieval for the Chinese tourists who travel in Norway in general. If the company provides the little extra to increase the tourist group's satisfaction, this can have positive ripple effects for tourism in Norway in the future. Off course, writing and updating information through these channels can be challenging. This is because the information is often in Chinese, but it will probably make it easier to communicate with the Chinese tourist group. The fact that the Norwegian tourism industry is willing to write in Chinese can result in higher

customer satisfaction. This, of course, presupposes that the industry spends time ensuring the quality of the information and ensuring that the translation is good. Another argument to make use of technology when communicating with the customer group is that many of social media channels such as We chat and Weibo are free to use. It will be a pity and to not take advantage of such opportunities. I think it might be a good idea for the tourism industry to collaborate to establish a common app in Chinese about Norway. The main purpose of this app is to tailor it with information that the Chinese tourists demand. It is important to gather all the information in one place. If different destinations each have their own app it can be confusing for tourists. Another point is that it is easier to market a common app rather than many local apps. The app should be downloadable so that the Chinese tourists have possibility to download the app in advance. Then the app can be used offline during the trip.

I believe that it does not take much to satisfy the Chinese tourists. And communicate willingness and kindness while providing service to the Chinese tourists can create good experiences. This is knowledge that employees should have before meeting with the Chinese tourists, and this does not have to be expensive for the companies. Although there is always a lot to do, it can be profitable for the company to provide that little extra. This is because it can create greater shopping pleasure among tourists at the same time as it spreads positively discussion about Norway and the company. Although the tourists who are in Norway today not necessarily travels to Norway again, they have great influence on influencing future tourists to visit Norway.

4.2 Limitations

Criticism of the thesis is that I should have interviewed more informants, Chinese tourists in particular. This would have given an even greater reliability attached to the findings. The tourism industry is complex, and it includes many different companies and industries. The assignment could be based on only a selected persons industry. For example, to only interview people who work in the hotel or hospitality industry. This could have provided the task with even more detailed information from a smaller part of the tourism industry.

4.3 Recommendations for further research

During the research I found different topics that I regarded to be noteworthy for further research. This thesis only maps how the tourism industry can understand the needs and expectations of Chinese tourists, in order to increase satisfaction through communication. I have not focused on making action plans where the findings are carried out. Therefore, further research may be to investigate how our findings can be implemented in tourism companies.

Another topic that would be interesting to investigate is Chinese tourism and ecological tourism. This topic is particularly interesting with regards to the presumed increase of tourism from China. Possible research questions are:

- How will increased outbound tourism affect the environment?
- What can be done in order to achieve ecological sustainability as the Chinese outbound tourism increase?

Acknowledgments

In the process of writing this, most of the process is my new experience and further experience. Confucius Said: "I heard, I forgot. I saw, I remembered. I knew, I understood." Life is not theory, but practice and experience. Through a philosophical perspective, we can explore and learn the story behind my success. In the process of my study, I was fortunate to be able to get help and encouragement from many people to varying degrees. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has guided and supported me, especially my supervisor, Professor Wang Hong. Her rich professional academic knowledge, serious and responsible work attitude, innovation and pioneering encouragement have all benefited me immensely. Here, I want to offer my deepest respect and sincere thanks. Without her respect to the teachings, there will be no future success for me. I would also like to thank the lectures and seminars conducted by the Shanghai University professors' team. Without the accumulation of these valuable knowledge, I would not have the ability to objectively and uniquely insight into things. Finally, I want to thank my classmates, friends, and family members who silently dedicated themselves to me.

I hope you can experience the fun and logic when reading this paper, thank you.

References

- The Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (2018). "Verden og oss. Næringslivets perspektivmelding 2018" [The world and us. Business perspective report 2018]. Retrieved from NHO: <https://www.nho.no/publikasjoner/p/naringslivets-perspektivmelding/>
- The Norwegian Government. (2017). "The government forwards a strategy for green competitiveness". Retrieved from: <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/the-government-forwards-a-strategy-for-green-competitiveness/id2575358/>