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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to find out what motivates Chinese tourists to choose Barcelona as their holiday destination instead of gravitating towards another option. It will evaluate if Chinese tourists are authenticity-sensible when visiting the most well-known tourist attractions in the city.

In addition, it aims to provide recommendations to both academics and researchers in order to improve the city's attractions and their adaptability to the Chinese market, which has been proven to lack on a few aspects such as language translations.

In order to achieve these results, a focus group was carried out. A group of five Chinese students in Barcelona during their academic program for six months were involved in the process. In addition, throughout this dissertation knowledge is constructed by an inductive approach used to analyse the evaluation of the qualitative data collected.

Following an analysis of the data, it is shown that the tendency of Chinese tourists is slightly changing in terms of grouping when travelling yet the majority agrees when ranking the main reasons why they chose Barcelona are: shopping, safety, security and modernism. As reports forecast, in the following years, Barcelona will have to redesign their marketing approach since more and more Barcelona will be receiving young intercultural Chinese tourists, with different priorities, and with this, different motivations to travel.

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There is a rather large amount of people who have made this undergraduate dissertation possible and I would like to thank them for always giving me the strength to carry on and research about this topic of interest.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The Chinese community has rapidly increased the number of visits to Barcelona. In the past year, there has been an increase of 16% Chinese tourists visiting Barcelona. Moreover, according to Lojo (2016) 73,000 of them stayed in a hotel located in the city. Along with this, it has also been increasingly difficult to define their reasons for choosing this city as their holiday destination. Barcelona benefits from this increase of Chinese visiting the city since their spending tends to be quite high, boosting the economy of the city. Their expenditure can be up to 2,024€ per day per person regarding a family with middle-class economic power, according to Lojo (2016).

This dissertation aims to fill a substantial social lacuna by critically analysing how Chinese visitors perceive Barcelona, assessing their behaviour and what drives them to make a choice when deciding on a destination. In addition, this research will analyse their motivations and the key offers that Barcelona has for this community. For this reason, the research question of this dissertation is: What motivation do Chinese tourists have when choosing Barcelona (Spain) as their holiday destination?

This dissertation also evaluates if Chinese tourists are authenticity-sensible when visiting the well-known tourist attractions in the city. Indeed, with the collection of all of these theories, some potential marketing strategies to Barcelona's DMO will be proposed.

Examining the inflection point between Barcelona's image and Chinese tourist's motivations when traveling will prove useful when studying this target market and their choices. That may lead to an understanding for what they look for when choosing Barcelona as one of their most-visited destinations.

As everyone is well aware, authenticity has become more and more determining these past year and it seems to be the ultimate concept which integrates economics, politics, culture and geography, all together, which leads to far-reaching implications all across the globe. In addition, Cohen (1988) states that due to these implications, creating authentic experiences for tourists is becoming tough. Since it is a very up-to-date concept, it is a good key point to introduce in this research in order to verify its importance and how far the consequences can reach.

Costumer Behaviour becomes another solid focus for the research since it adds value to it. Examining the choices of travellers and the processes they use to choose can be regarded as a useful tool as well to determine marketing strategies for Barcelona.

In order to answer the research question, the following objectives will be examined:

1.- To understand theoretical concepts related to destination's authenticity, destination image and tourist's motivations and how these factors influence the consumer behaviour.

2.- To explore the reasons why Chinese tourists choose Barcelona as a holiday destination through a focus group.

3.- To make recommendations to tourism professionals working with the Chinese Market.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Consumer Behaviour

Understanding the subject of consumer behaviour is certainly essential in order to determine how tourists make their decisions and chose a specific tourism product or destination out of all the other array of options. According to Swarbrooke and Horner (2007) researching about tourist's behaviour patterns will provide the knowledge needed to not only successfully approach them, but also intervening to reach the results that we want, detecting their needs and persuading them towards choosing one particular product.

According to Wright (2006), we currently live in a global world, which means we are surrounded by millions of people with different origins who have grown up in different countries and with that, we all differ in behaviour. However, one's culture might influence the consumer behaviour and with that, how tourists select and purchase one product, service or another. It is for that reason that consumer behaviour, existing believes, attitudes and reasons for product purchasing will be prominent.

Setting the scene and trying to figure out the relationship between a market economy, the role of marketing and why the need of understanding each stage that customers go trough while making the decision of buying or not that one product is essential. Companies will usually try to influence on costumer behaviour using the integrated marketing mix as the main tool. Trough the manipulation of product, place, price, and promotion, a company will be able to constantly offer benefits to the increasing changing needs of the costumers (Wright, 2006).

Thus, many factors can influence on the decision to choose a destination. The following sections will provide in depth information on some of them.

2.2   Image of a Destination

Correlated with Bansala (2004) approach of the driving forces when choosing a destination, lays the relevance of a studying a destination's image. Each destination has an image, and some can have a stronger image than others. In fact, the image tourists have of a destination is highly important that can ultimately influence the final choice or behavioural intention (Chen & Tsai, 2007).

In order to develop a competitive position, it is important to create a favourable image remarkable for tourists in target markets. The destination marketers need to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their tourism area, as it is important to the travellers' images of that destination. Makarand Upadhyaya (2014) explains that the experience that travellers get out of a trip can vary depending on the image the destination wants to showcase. For that reason, pre conceived expectations from tourists coming to a specific destination is probably one of many motivation they had when choosing their destination and it is what they are expecting to see and visit once they reach that place hence why they selected that area to be visited.

With that being said, what many cities are trying to do is create a nice and vibrant image for tourists to feel the need to travel to that destination, offering some appealing attractions they might feel hooked to. No matter how beautiful the location is, the image shown to the potential visitors has to be easy on the eye for them so they find a reason to pack their bags and travel long distances and still believe the move was worth it (Wang, 2010).

In order to create the destination's image, it is important to focus on customer behaviour as well since according to Fonga (2007), the customer's purchase decision-making process is no longer based on the examination of functional products attributes but also with the image of the destination. Meaning that these images that tourists make up in their minds should appear as symbolic and functional; symbolic so every tourist refers to a stereotypic image consumers have of that specific destination and functional referring to the physical benefits associated with the product.

Although prior customer behaviour studies mainly involved the measurement of functional attributes of a destination, using a model that integrates both symbolic and functional factors with a congruity model of self-concept theory, which consists of the inflecting point between a tourist's self-concept and his or her satisfaction with the destination which shows the relationship the tourist has had with the destination (Li, 2010).

Since the definition of destination image can be quite vast and with that, quite vague as well, Jenkins (1999), expresses that the image that tourists have of a destination is subject to the message that destination marketers have developed over one place and the story telling they have created in order to attract a specific market of tourists. The destination images projected by tourism promoters and also the destination images held by individuals should be measured so tourism marketers can later on analyse these approaches.

Measuring this destination image can sometimes become a challenge for many marketers; however, there can be some preferred methods. Jenkins (1999) continues to discuss that although there exists a preference for structured methods, there is the need of an individual to subjectively rate a set of pre-determined attributes.

These attributes might come across as unreliable to many researchers, according to Athena (2012) who states that there is a considerably large lack of visual techniques applied to the research process, which has to be solved. There are many advantages as well as disadvantages of using a structured or unstructured method when measuring the image of a destination from a tourist point of view. There are two methods in order to research the image of a destination: one is named structured and the other one unstructured.

The structured is based on capturing the characteristics of each destination, standardizing them in order to come up with different profiles of tourists. The unstructured is based on compiling impressions of a destination based on surveys that are later on ordered in categories to determine the destination's dimensions. Regarding the techniques of the structured system, average ratings are applied. In terms of the unstructured, focus groups are the methodology used later on transferred to a repertory list (Lingyun, 2011).

The most relevant advantages of the structured method are easy to administer, simple to code and results are easy to be interpreted. That allows an easy comparison between destinations. The advantages of the unstructured method are the analysis of the holistic components and the reduced interviewer bias. Regarding the disadvantages of structured method is that it does not give you a specific dimension. The disadvantages of the unstructured method is that the level of detail provided is not high enough in order to get specific conclusions enhancing the difficulty to compare with other destinations (Li, 2010).

Added to this, regarding Jenkins (1999), to conduct a destination image research, it complies two stages: the first one is the qualitative phase with the help of unconstructed methods. The second phase draws upon the results of the first phase and measures the image quantitatively.

This method is divided into two parts: the qualitative and quantitative phase. The purpose of the qualitative phase is finding the population's opinion regarding a destination image. The methods used are interviews in order to find out people's opinions about the destination images (photo elicitation). Once the first phase has come to end and the researcher has extracted the mot relevant ideas, the second phase starts which involves a quantitative study. The purpose of this phase is to measure tourist destination's image according to relevant results. Two rating scales are required; the evaluative preference of the destination and the construct preference (Jenkins, 1999).

After using multiple methods though, researchers jumped to the conclusion that with the use of this simple descriptive analysis from tourists they could actually provide more useful information for marketing use, such as the stereotyped images that individual tourists hold in their minds and put that information into use for marketing objectives (Jenkins, 1999).

2.3   Destination Authenticity

It is of great importance, however, to assess whether the destination's authenticity plays a role in terms of shaping the destination's image and moreover, if that authenticity is perceived as a relevant element to take into account when choosing the holiday destination.

Due to that, Cohen (2010) suggested that there is a type of authenticity that could be interesting to be examined during the dissertation which is called existential authenticity and it focuses on the process of being aware of one self's identity so then you can live your life according to who you are. That theory is used in order to distinguish and examine authenticity of a destination as well as a method to group people so it is easier to create the kind of experience they will buy depending of how sensible to authenticity tourists are.

In fact, according to Mac Cannell (1973), tourists are those who feel alienated from the routine life of both industrialized and modernized societies, being in a constant quest for authenticity elsewhere from their home cities.

Mac Cannell (1973) states that "staged authenticity" is the only reachable authenticity for tourist's consumption, being this one of the widest debated theoretical concepts in regards of the tourism studies carried out so far. Adams (1990) critiques Mac Cannell's (1973) proposition of "staged authenticity" and states that there is a blurry line between culture in tourism and culture in real life. Thus, local cultures as well as local identities and rights have aroused from the culture produced in tourism, which is nowadays part of the essential cultural expressions for many communities. That is highly related to one of the issues of authenticity since it is important for a culture to carry on exhibiting only its real heritage and traditions.

Tourism has continued to produce and reproduce cultural impacts both on hosting countries as well as on the tourists. Taking into account that tourism culture can be both authentic and inauthentic (depending on the tourist's believes and their sensibility to authenticity) at times, it is essential to contend that Chinese tourists, specially, are not particularly sensible to authenticity as described by Mac Cannell (1973).

Added to this, different markets can perceive authenticity in a different way. For instance, Jogaratnama (2005) mentioned that Chinese Tourists don't perceive authenticity as a concern when choosing their holiday destination, neither do they rank authenticity as one of the primarily areas of interest of a specific destination.

Thus, markets can perceive authenticity of destination in different ways. Chinese tourists for instance would be on the hunt for "naturalness" and a purer form of life since they do not feel the need to deeply communicate with locals in unfamiliar places. One of the many barriers could be the language, taking into account that most of them don't speak other languages apart from their own and they don't feel comfortable talking with strangers (Chan, 2006).

2.4   Motivations to travel

Pizman (1999) explored the consumer behaviour linked to the tourism activity and came to the conclusion that the concept of needs is the basis of any motivated behaviour. It is assumed that Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs' theory is the first attempt to discovering people's needs and the best way of fulfilling these. See figure below:

Figure 1: *Hierarchy of Needs.*
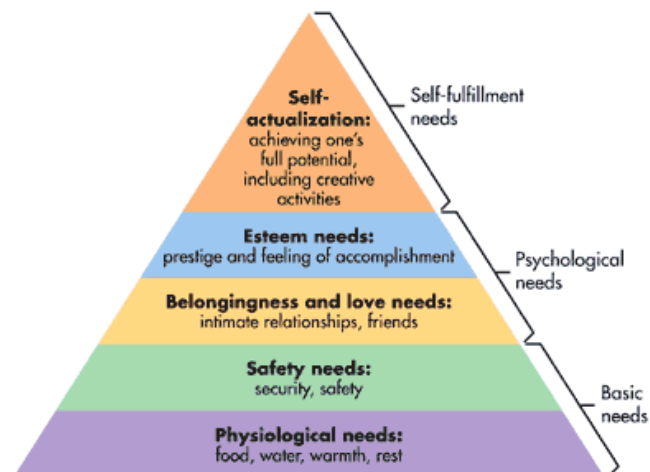
Source: Maslow (1943)

Although Maslow's theory was originally developed around the clinical phycology field, it has also been proved to serve for many other distinctive areas such as industrial and organizational psychology, counselling, marketing and tourism. Maslow (1943) argues that the lowest needs (the physiological ones) would dominate behaviour, only if none of the needs in the hierarchy were satisfied. In addition to that, if these physiological needs were satisfied, they would no longer be a motivation force and the individual would move up to the next stage of the hierarchy, safety needs. Right when these were satisfied, the individual would go up to the next level working up the hierarchy as the needs were satisfied (Pizman, 1999).

Added to Maslow's theory, there are other authors that try to explain human motivations (Pizam, 1999). Pizam (1999) suggests that tourism motivators can basically be divided into the push factors and the pull factors; the two key main factors in a decision to travel. The push factors being those that make you want to travel and the pull factors those that affect where you travel. Following the same lines Ying (2010) stated that push factors (e.g. inexpensiveness) can usually become the differentiators when making a decision. The pull factors (e.g. leisure interests) though, still play a big role when making a decision yet are placed in a secondary frame.

Pizam (1999) later on proceeded to lay out seven categories of travel motivators. The first category is the desire to travel in order to find what one is lacking on. The following category encompasses the destination pull as a response to motivational push. Another one would be the motivation as a form of fantasy followed by the motivation of a specific purpose such as visiting friends and relatives.

How attractive a destination is, is evaluated by the benefits that the tourist is looking forward to receiving. With that being mentioned, if we focus on the motivations that the group of tourists a destination wants to attract have, a better understanding will be met of what suits them best. After that process, it will be important to proceed to adjust the marketing to whatever culture we are targeting as our main focus (Binh Nghiem Phú, 2014).

It is therefore crucial as well to examine the personal values of individuals in order to assess what encourages consumers and travellers to choose a particular destination, easing the job of many marketers trying to attract a specific target. Hudson (2010) agreed to demonstrate the usefulness of profiling visitor segments so that the tourism destination's criteria could be attributed to a specific segment. He concluded that when a visitor is given freedom to choose, the personal factors such as motivations would be the ones determining the vacation destination.

Being Spain ranked the third overseas destination they dream of travelling to, according to Andreu, Claver and Quer (2014), the patterns continues to grow in the direction of Chinese Travellers searching for democratic cities with a completely different cultural background than China. Long historical background, safety and security and beautiful scenery are as well key factors that influence their final choice. Andreu, Claver and Quer (2014) also add exotism and folklore, being a shopping Paradise, good tourism facilities and entertainment and leisure supply to the list. Regarding Ip et al (2010) research, results concluded thus that Australia, Nepal and Spain gather all of these factors that a city needs to have so they feel the trip was worth it for Chinese tourists. One of the reasons why they chose Australia in the first position could be the clear environment as well as their 10-year good relationship with Chinese Government.

Prior literature also highlights that one of the main motivations of this market is shopping and when it comes to the amount of money they would like to spend, most of the time it is a very large amount. Shopping happens to be their focus on their Europe trips. In fact, over half of all Chinese tourists state that shopping expenses make up the majority of their expenses while traveling due to the gift giving culture they grew up with in China, seen as a status symbol of wealth (Kimes Mina, 2013).

2.5   Chinese Market Characteristics

The profile of Chinese tourists traveling to European destinations is very specific. High-class tourists, who can afford this opportunity and pay to acquire branded products in Europe and the U.S. rather than in Hong Kong and Macau, traditional destinations for these purchases. Other destinations that have become popular during this holiday season are warmer places, such as the islands of Southeast Asia (Kimes Mina, 2013).

According to China Tourism Academy (2011), Chinese travellers determined to travel long-distance have a high purchasing power and belong to the high social class. Their age ranges between 25 and 44 years old and most of them are men who have already finished higher studies at university. They occupy the educational sector professional positions, the manufacturing industry as well as positions related to finance. They like to travel accompanied by their relatives, spouses, friends and even work or study partners. Only a minority of them would travel on their own. Special holiday periods in China would be the chosen dates for them to travel abroad such as the Chinese New Year (between January and February) or for Dragon Boat Festival (April).

One of the requests of Chinese travellers is to go on a group tour surrounded by people from their country. Making sure that what they paid for has been worth it and a valuable experience hopping from country to country during the same trip seems to be what they gravitate towards (Kimes Mina, 2013). They are still willing to travel this way due to the language barrier and cultural distance from European countries. Gaimundiz (2012) point out that obtaining the visa when travelling in-group can be done by following a much easier process and it is the option preferred by those who do not have any previous international experience.

Most Chinese Tourists travel abroad in package tours with the aim to sightsee the city sights from an air-conditioned bus and shop at the most luxurious and opulent shops of the city. Although some might complain about the lack of exciting activities on the program, only seldom would they ask to take a closer look at the quotidian life of locals. On the contrary, the quest for the touristic instead of the authentic is the most requested activity from the Chinese tourist groups, (Chan, 2011; Kimes Mina, 2013).

Anyhow, those experienced tourists might take on the individual long-haul trips in the near future since they are already travelling on their own to neighbour countries from China. The educational level due to the higher purchasing power of some Chinese from this generation are the ones who will change the perception of Chinese and will open up a new spectrum of tendencies for this community (Thomas, 2006).

One reason that might explain the increase of tourists coming to Europe and the U.S. is that the price of airline tickets from China to Western countries has slightly dropped in the last few years due to competition between airlines hence why ever a higher number of airlines operating between the two places nowadays (Pizam, 1999).

Other reasons could be the favourable impact of currency exchange rates and more favourable visa policies. An example of facilities for the arrival of Chinese tourists, particularly to Spain, was the recent opening of the Spanish visa centre in Beijing, which aims to reduce visa procedures processing to between two and three days (Greenlees, 1999).

One of the explanations on why Chinese choose Europe out of any other existing continents (being Europe the most desired tourist destination for Chinese) might be the excitement of visiting more developed places since back in the 1990s; Chinese mobility was controlled and forbidden. It is important to mention though, that still nowadays they are bound to travel in group tours and subject to collective schedules (Greenlees, 2005).

Chinese tourists loathe experiences of ancient times and refuse the feeling of nostalgia that reminds them of their own poverty before the 1990s. According to Urry (2002), "There is no single tourist gaze as such. It varies by society, by social group, and by historical period". Their gaze is very structured and particular, following the lines of a desired track of modernity at the present development process. Chinese people do not appreciate being thrown back to past times when poverty was part of their lives and the inadequate underdevelopment was real.

It is for that reason that Spanish hospitality professionals and tourism marketers should give importance to the Chinese outbound tourism, thereby targeting this market as it has become one of the most relevant in source-generating markets. It is essential to keep a good image of the destination on any online platform since they are used to searching online for any tip or information needed about the city they are travelling to. Online platforms such as Tripadvisor or eWOM is are also playing an important role since Chinese tourists like to look for other tourist's point of view before being taken to a foreign country (Fong & Burton, 2008).

2.6   What Spain can offer to Chinese Market

Chinese tourism in Spain has been gradually increasing in the past two decades, being very present in our daily urban life and creating evidence of how much this Asian community is still gaining importance. The Spanish government, which is greatly aware of this Chinese migrant community's power, reconducted the tourism policies including an Asian-Pacific Framework Plan 2000-2002 giving the international policies some consideration in order to diversify their focus from Latin America (Nieto, 2003).

Regarding Chan's (2006) approach, evaluating the development stages of other places such as its infrastructure and economic development, happens to be their great interest for Chinese tourists travelling abroad. Due to the fact that for the last three decades, China has been a country developing from extreme poverty to a fast growing economy community and is now undertaking a huge and quick modernization process, Chinese are eager to learn about developed regions and its people's mentality. Being nowadays shaped as a developmentalist mentality, the gaze of Chinese tourists can sometimes resemble the search of signs of development, modernization such as cleanliness, well-built road… that can ease their way into discovering a foreign country.

Even when they find themselves in foreign places they like to compare the modernity and development to their home country, the majority still finding China to be not modernized enough. Therefore, they feel the need to travel elsewhere to check out the different versions of modernity to create a clearer picture of what they want to achieve back home. They comply a massive tribe moving around the globe in a, not always successful, quest for modernity (Chan, 2006).

In addition to that, Chan (2006) states that Chinese tourist's constant quest for modernity and development could be two of many propositions that attracted the Chinese to visit Spain, taking into account that Europe is the most desired tourist destination for them. There happen to be two main cities in the Spanish country, which are Barcelona, and Madrid, both easily communicated by public transportation. Barcelona is a tourist destination that has had special interest since the 1992 Olympics, and Madrid seen as a real complex city with culture and development.

Nevertheless, if Spain is willing to attract more Chinese tourists, the marketing companies will have to start offering a few more group tours and other activities that differ from lying on the sun, which is not what this culture likes to experience. Also, fishing and snorkelling is not their picture perfect idea of the best vacation plan (Hudson, 2010).

Moreover, China outbound tourism is blooming due to the national reform and open-door policy at the point where Chinese could afford the luxury travelling experience. Due to that proximity and knowledge that Chinese have gotten from Western countries, the number of Chinese online users is bound to keep on growing. Many like to use Internet not only for the research of information but also to compare prices from two destinations as well as flight schedules (Lp et al, 2010).

In order for Europe to remain Chinese tourist's favourite long-haul destination, there are many factors likely to influence this community that Spanish still perceive as exotic and rare (Edmunds, 2000). This potential market of Chinese can sometimes bring along confusion in trying to understand the foundation of this type of outbound tourism form (Edmunds, 2000). Regarding the promotion of tourism and this being attractive for Chinese, there has to be an emphasis on culture as well as on Spanish traditions, festivities, customs and rituals, since this community is particularly attracted to this aspect of any destination, hence why they choose Spain to visit since the range of attractions following this objectives are quite vast.

Nevertheless, public administrations should continue to improve their approach to Chinese tourists, enhancing and promoting the establishment of new flight connections from China to Europe, creating an easier platform for the European countries to attract them. Within the framework of the different countries of Europe cooperating together towards captivating more tourists, the existence of a policy, which would regulate this cooperation, would add value and become a good investment for all European countries, let alone the exponential increase of Chinese tourists that Europe would receive (Edmunds, 2000).

Social behaviour from host European Countries, according to Thomas (2006), still have a long way to go in trying to adapt themselves to Chinese tourists since there are many changes to be made that would really help create a stronger relationship with them. There is one main aspect that should be improved which is adapting menus and tourist brochures to the Chinese language, taking into account that most of them do not feel at ease when speaking English, not to mention Spanish or Catalan. For that reason and many others, in order to meet their needs, it will be crucial for marketers and destination managers to adapt themselves into that target market.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

Regarding the conceptual framework of this research, as per graph below, there are four main dimensions, which can be determinants for the destination choice. It is for that reason that there has been an exhaustive research done about the four of them. These four dimensions, which are motivations, city's authenticity, destination's image and destination's attractions, all affect and shape the consumer behaviour, focusing on a specific market which is the Chinese.
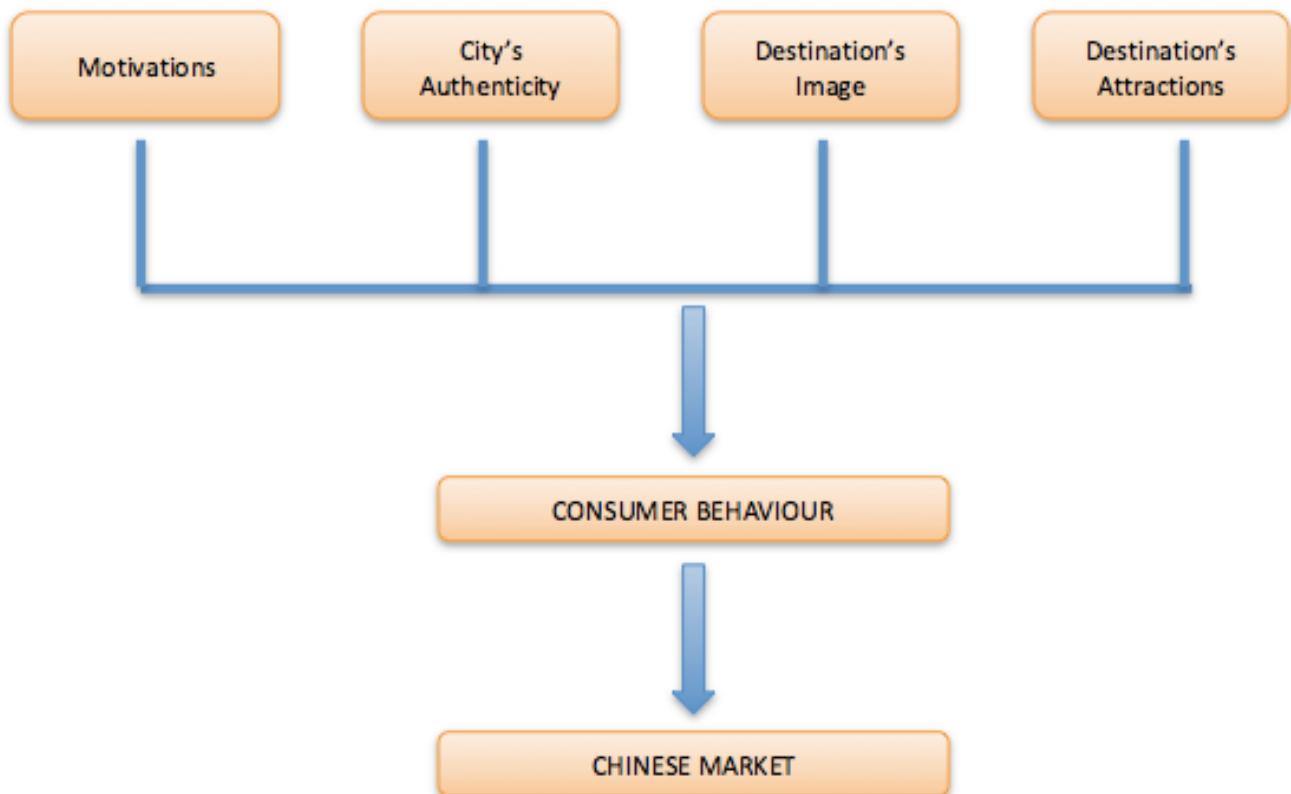
Chapter 4: Methodology

Having already established the basis of the theoretical outlook of this dissertation, it is now necessary to reflect upon how evidence will be collected to support the arguments. To answer the research question, there are numerous research approaches, but in order to explore the choices of Chinese tourists, a qualitative research using a Focus Group with Chinese tourists here in Barcelona is the most relevant research tool.

There are a number of ways in which to create a clear picture of tourists' motivations. However, it is important to study the Chinese market and when they felt the need to start discovering other countries such as Europe, which can be done by other sources such as exploratory and qualitative studies as well as the focus group. Also the collection of qualitative information is necessary in order to explore theories and apply these to the city analysed, which is Barcelona.

As stated by Thomas (2006), an inductive approach is usually used when analysing the evaluation of the qualitative data one has collected. Formatting and condensing all the information the researcher has gathered into a brief summary and defining the links between the substantial information the researcher has collected and the research objectives, are two of the main purposes of this inductive qualitative research methodology that has been used for this dissertation.

Although focus groups have been proved to be a relevant and useful tool for this type of research, it is necessary to establish the definition of it as well as the positive and negative aspects. According to Morgan (2008), focus groups are small group interviews in which a moderator guides the participants throughout the conversation they will be having, always structured and following the interviewer's interest and focus. The data collected from this focus group was later on analysed and compared to the previous research carried out with the help of academic articles and studies.

In the following lines is stated by Kitzinger (1995) what are some of the benefits of focus groups as well as some of the limitations of these: the non discrimination to those who cannot read or write, the encouragement to talk to participants who were reluctant of the formality of an interview and the contribution of those who would never be reactive but actually express their thought since they want to follow the conversation, make up for the benefits of a focus group. Some of the limitations of this could be the cohesion the participants might feel to talk, the rejection to talk of those who tend to be shyer and do not want to express their feeling in front of others and the inability to carry out a conversation with substantial inputs.

After setting down the basis of a general focus group, the focus group that this dissertation used involved a guide with open-ended questions to be followed by the interviewer. There was no moderator meaning that the moderator and interviewer was the researcher. In order to gather five Chinese students, the snowball technique was used meaning one participant informed another one and so on. The number of participants was five, all Chinese students who have chosen Barcelona for their 6-month academic program. Their age range is from 20 until 27.

The interviewer's questions could be described as in depth and open-ended questions so the interviewees do not have to face restrictions with their answers and their opinion. The assistant to this researcher, who has a Chinese background, provided help regarding this aspect such as coming along with the researcher in order to translate any conversation, in case the tourists didn't feel at ease when speaking English. Also, having the Chinese assistant Zou li Jia there was a great link between the researcher and the participants of the focus group, leading to a more relaxed and laid back atmosphere perfect for a focus group environment.

The data collected from the focus group was analysed following these lines, regarding Kitzinger's (1995) theory: the collection and analysis of data from a focus group does not really differ from any other qualitative self report data collection. The researcher is the one who draws together and compares the discussion of similar topics and analyses how these can relate to the variables the researcher already investigated about from the population. In coding the script though, categorizing the data and codifying it in order to later on analyse the information from the questions to discuss it, was much worth it. An illustration of the focus group also adds relevance to the study.

Chapter 5: Findings and Discussion

Throughout the focus group that was carried out with five Chinese Erasmus students in order to find the answer to the research question, there were many questions asked and several topics were covered so the results would be richer in quality and the closest possible to reality.

Regarding the topic of their favourite thing to do in Barcelona while on vacation, all the participants had very different opinions although all of them are related to leisure activities. For instance, participant 2 mentioned that "watching soccer games at Barça's stadium" is one of here favourite activities meanwhile participants 5 and 1 suggested, "going to the beach to sunbathe while sipping on a drink. Also going to nudist beaches. There are so many Chinese that are curious about it. Although it really depends on people's personality, I have so many Chinese friends that ask me to take them to these beaches. However, they are quite ashamed". Another suggestion was "finding a boyfriend in Barcelona and wandering around the city with him" from participant 2.

Prior literature says is contradictory to what participants mentioned regarding to the beach setting. Hudson (2010) suggested that if Spain aimed to attract more Chinese visitors in the future, a promotion of only the Sun and Beach environment would not be enough to attract this target market. Following the participant's point of view, the Beach is a reason for the Chinese community to travel to Spain although it is not for all of them. Specially, the nudist beaches. However, they do enjoy this activity and the sunny weather. In addition to that, according to Upadhyaya (2014) stated that preconceived expectations could be a main motivation in order to travel to once city. In that case, prior literature matches the participant's opinion since one participant mentioned that being a Barça fan and following their moves was a reason for her to come to Barcelona. That belongs to the expectation she had of the city while watching not only the matches but also their "lifestyle" in some sort of way. The fact that some of them have the need to find a partner and are willing to come all the way to Barcelona to find that person is related to the push and pull theory described by Pizam (1999). This aim to find a partner in Barcelona becomes the push factor that makes them come to the city.

In terms of the main differentiation elements that actually pull them to visit Barcelona, the great majority agreed that architecture (modernism) and lifestyle (weather and calmness) were the two main ones. For example, participant 4 mentioned, "The architecture is much different. In Shanghai (China) there are many skyscrapers and although it is this modern, it gives you so much stress. The buildings are too narrow and there is a lot of people. Also I feel like Barcelona is much more of a romantic city". Following the same lines, participant 3 stated, "You can really feel the city lifestyle yet it is very calm. Walking around the city and doing some shopping… in China everything revolves around work and life is harder". Participant 1 highlighted "Even the traditional things in Barcelona are modern".

Prior literature says exactly the same to the focus group participants. According to Andreu, Claver, Quer (2014) the Chinese market is willing to travel to cities where democracy plays an important role. That is actually due to their constant quest for a different background to China. As participants mentioned, their main reasons for travelling to Barcelona are modernism and the Spanish lifestyle in general. The historical background, safety, security, beautiful scenery and folklore are a few of many elements that Chinese tourists seek for, stated by Andreu, Claver, Quer (2014) and that matches entirely with the participant's perception.

Concerning the time they found out about the city of Barcelona and regarded it as an interesting city to visit, there is no consensus. Whereas participant 2 sticks to "Barça" as her source of knowledge, participant 1 relates, "I was very young and I watched the Olympic games… Since then I have been wanting to come to Barcelona".

Prior literature matches exactly with some of the participant's opinion. According to Hudson (2010), Olympic Games in 1992 where the game changer for the city of Barcelona. That event raised a lot of awareness internationally and since then, tourism has suffered a huge increase in number of tourists. On the other hand, Edmunds (2000), replies that there needs to be a better promotion of Spain which would show the amount of offers the country can offer such as traditions, festivals, rituals and so on. However, he also suggests strengthening the relationship between China in Spain in order to create more convenient flight connections. Participants though, do not happen to worry so much about that aspect.

The researcher also addressed the question of whether they though more students preferred Barcelona rather than Madrid and one of the participants had a solid opinion. Participant 1 says "I have so many friends that chose Madrid over Barcelona because of the language". Also participant 1 continued to express that "Spanish people is very open, very friendly… They say for example that in the northern part of Europe they are much more cold".

When participants get asked about the Spanish culture, both participants 5 and 2 agree that "Food, Architecture, Flamenco" are some of the words they would use to describe the Spanish culture. They go on and state that "Siesta" is a tradition they would like to follow if it wasn't for their classes starting at 15.30h. Participant 3 replies, "You can feel that actually here in Spain the schedule is a bit pushed back until later on in the evening. Nightlife is quite a thing over here. A lot of partying goes on". Participant 3 continues to describe the Spanish culture as "Very hospitable. I have been in Madrid and there they are quite cold. I prefer Barcelona than Madrid. I used to live in Sants and there are quite small groups of neighbours and every two weeks people organize songs playing the drums and it is very lively. I wonder what day it is but no, it's a normal day, just their personality". Following the same lines, participant 5 adds that " In china people are quite traditional and they don't organize a lot of parties, they like to stay at home more than going out and doing activities with others".

Prior literature matches the researcher's insight. Regarding Andreu, Claver, Quer (2014), Spain is perceived as the third most desired destination to travel to overseas. That actually correlates with the participant's input since all of them agreed that Barcelona's (Spain) culture is very warming and open to new people and with a personality that attracts them.

Concerning the subject whereas Barcelona is ready or not to welcome Chinese tourists to the city, regarding the adaptability of the main city attractions, the majority of the participants agreed in opinion. Participant 3 said, "I think so. Last week I attended a TED conference about tourism and big data and they explained how prepared all the services are in order to attract Chinese here in Barcelona". Participant 1 went on and added, "I think so. I went to Casa Batlló for example and they have guided tours in Chinese. However, Casa Milá doesn't have the translated tours. In terms of restaurants, I think there should be more menus translated but actually the main tourist attractions have their brochures translated to Chinese". Added to this, participant 2 suggested "**:** A very well know restaurants like La Fonda, they have the

translated menu so you will always see a lot of Chinese there. According to hotels, it is very well adapted".

However, prior literature reviewed does not match with any of the participant's answers. According to Thomas (2006), there are yet many changes to be made from Barcelona in order to adapt the city to this new market. These changes the researcher was referring to encompass the translation of menus and information brochures. However, participants related that Barcelona is very well adapted to the Chinese Culture with a wide array of options for them and even some of the most traditional restaurants of the city where not a lot of tourists tend to go, have the menu translated in Chinese.

Regarding the aspect of Chinese tourists always travelling in groups and whether that was going to change in the future or not, all participants had the same opinion. For instance, participant 2 said "In fact, the reason why elder Chinese people travel in groups is because of the language barrier since they feel they can rely on the tour guide. However, the youngsters can already speak English hence why they don't really need to travel in groups anymore". Participant 3 said the following about the future of group travelling "The elder will still be going with the groups but youngsters won't. The majority of my friends are already travelling with the group of friends but it is complicated to change the habits of elder people, they want to eat "hot food" and not drink cold water".

Prior literature regarding this aspect does not match with the participants that were involved in the Focus Group. According to Kimes Mina (2013) Chinese tourists aim to travel with other Chinese. In addition to that, Gaimundiz (2010) suggest that this willingness to travel in groups is due to their fear to travel internationally without previous experience and with the language barrier handicap. However, regarding the participant's opinion, they will be travelling individually, specially the younger generations who do not have to face the language barrier issue.

Moving to the topic of authenticity and the perception of Barcelona as an authentic city or not, participants got asked if they though Barcelona ought to carry out a better marketing plan or not in order to really promote the city and it's authentic experiences. The participants though had very diverse opinions. Participant 5 mentioned, "I believe you are already doing that. Eight years ago before coming here, Shanghai's tourism fair already invited exhibitors from Spain promoting Gaudi". However, Participant 1 added "Normally Chinese, we get the first insight of Spain from the movies, although these movies are from the 50s". So the impression is that there is an existence of Gypsy girls, singing and having fun. Before coming here I didn't know about the local gastronomy or music. There are no movies about the actual Spanish scenario yet there are so many from South America". Participant 3 suggested, "There is one famous movie though… It is called Vicky Cristina Barcelona. It won a novel prize so it became famous. I believe it is actually a good way to promote the city since now, a lot of Chinese know about Gaudi thanks to having watched this movie"

Prior literature says that tourists tend to give great importance to authenticity being on a constant quest for experiences they do not find at home. However, Chinese tourists do not have this need, not giving it much importance nor relevance, as Mac Cannel (1973) stated. Chan (2006) also reaffirms Mac Cannell's (1973) opinion, adding that authenticity is never visible on the priority list for Chinese travellers, never being perceived as a concern. However, Mac Cannell's (1973) and Chan's (2006) statements do not correlate with the Chinese participant's opinion since they assess that from their point of view, there should be more general knowledge about Barcelona's authentic experiences and a differentiation between what is part of the city's heritage and what isn't plays a big role during their stay.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Implications

To conclude, from our results we can say that the objectives were achieved and the research question was answered through taking into consideration the literature review and findings obtained after the data collection.

Regarding the first objective, through the analysis of prior literature to my study, it has been possible to understand theoretical concepts related to destination's authenticity, destination image and tourist's motivations and how these factors influence the consumer behaviour. Chinese tourists' behaviour is influenced by the destination's image (paying attention to the modern and prosper image of Barcelona), destination's offer (such as the beach options and architectural attractions) and their own motivations (their wish to discover cultures and places that highly differ from theirs). However, they don't pay that much attention to authenticity, according to our data. In addition to that, the knowledge of Chinese tourists' motivations and the drivers that take them to visiting other countries are the perfect combination in order to create great marketing plans for European host countries trying to attract them.

The second objective of this study was to explore the reasons why Chinese tourists choose Barcelona as a holiday destination through a focus group. Comparing the prior literature about the subject and this research's findings, we come to the conclusion that many aspects to be considered as reasons for Chinese tourists travelling to Barcelona are yet to be considered as relevant for some researchers. In addition to Chinese tourists travelling to Barcelona because they see it as very modern and industrialized since what they see in their host country was once the opposite, they also travel for many other reasons such as the aim of finding a partner that belongs to the European culture as well as carrying out some activities that are seen as forbidden in their home cities such as paying a visit to nudist beaches.

Furthermore, I believe it is very relevant to highlight that after this study and the focus group carried out, we can find a tendency of Chinese travellers to Barcelona to travel more and more individually without the need of belonging to a group. In that sense, this tendency is much more related to younger Chinese travellers who have an intercultural background and feel confident when it comes to expressing themselves in English. Although this is for now just a tendency, future researchers will discover if it consolidates as a new attribute for young Chinese tourists.

Chapter 7: Recommendations and Limitations

7.1 Recommendations to Professionals

The third objective of this study has been to make recommendations to professionals involved in Barcelona's DMO about the Chinese Market so they can attract a larger amount of tourists coming from this country and also better the adaptability of the city in regards to their needs and wants.

All of the data collected becomes quite relevant for tourism professionals wanting to attract even more Chinese tourists since using this information eases the process of creating tailor made and customized tour packages that can easily get the attention of this target market.

Although Barcelona has already been receiving Chinese tourists for a rather large amount of years, there is still a lack of commitment coming from Barcelona's city counsel when it comes to making Chinese feel like they are at home during their visit to Barcelona. Some of the focus group participants mentioned obstacles like the no Chinese version menus as well as the lack of Chinese guided tours around some of the most historical buildings of the city.

Some other offers that would draw the attention of Chinese tourists would be the incorporation of off-the-beaten-track tours. Barcelona is now welcoming more and more Chinese students that highly differ from the elder generations. Providing them with tours in order to explore typical Catalan traditions would be of their interest. Moreover, that could the start of educating them about the importance of being authenticity-sensible when travelling so they value each culture's heritage for what it really is.

7.2 Recommendations to Academics

Understanding the motivations plays a very important role in the area of tourism academic investigations since the early days when people looked at the reasons people had for involving themselves in the tourism activity. Also the question of "Who is a tourist" is of relative importance for researchers trying to provide the destination managers with an answer.

For academics I would suggest taking a deeper look into the future of the Chinese Market and its trends such as the transition from group traveling into more individual traveling. Specially, focusing on the younger Chinese generations how are now travelling to Europe for academic reasons and with a larger intercultural knowledge.

Also, I would recommend investigating about their strong opinion about relationships and how that could be translated into a future niche in the tourism industry, especially for the young Chinese tourists. For them, the sense of belonging with someone else is highly valued and that could become the driving fore for them to visit one country ore another.

Another recommendation would be researching about what other cities would be the competitors of Barcelona when it comes to attracting Chinese tourists. After analysing how Barcelona can differentiate itself from these other competitors in order to attract Chinese tourists to their destination, it is important to explore more in depth the field of Barcelona's competition.

7.3 Limitations

Although looking at the overall picture it might seem like there were not too many limitations, there have been a few obstacles thought out this project that were to be faced:

First and foremost, the limited amount of academic papers that could be found regarding the Chinese community and Spain was one of the biggest obstacles. In order to overcome this problem, more generic academic papers about the practice of travelling to Spain had to be used.

Another limitation was the Chinese culture itself. Since for this undergraduate dissertation a focus group was done in order to find out more information from the main characters of this study, their personality came across sometimes as immature and disorganized which slowed the process of the project's development.

Following the same lines, doing a focus group was a method that at first glance does not really go along with the Chinese community due to their lack of open mindedness. However, the results were better than expected and the outcome was very successful and helpful, adding a lot of value to the project.

It was also a challenge to meet five Chinese tourists in Barcelona. Due to their personality they tend to gather around people that also come from Asian countries and they do not really mingle with others. It was thanks to a Chinese teacher that I was able to gather five Chinese tourists since she was the one asking them to get involved in the focus group in their language.

Last but not least, the reason why only one focus group was carried out was because of the time shortage. Orchestrating five agendas and trying to find a timing that suits everyone was not easy, especially since the Chinese Erasmus students usually attend university and have different timetables. However, I reckon that with the focus group I carried out I was able to abstract the amount of information needed to jump to a solid and relevant conclusion.

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