

## THE CHINESE TOURISTS - A CHANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL TOURISM

Milena CVETKOVIĆ  
Sara Stanić JOVANOVIĆ

***Abstract:** Culture is a very fundamental reason when we are trying to understand the Chinese tourist, because of its long history and rich culture. Confucian philosophy, roots of religion and tradition make a simple trip very complicated. But culture is a key for the strategic victory in the marketing of this special group of tourists. Of course, globalization and modernization of technology are also important reasons that contribute to the success of China's outbound tourism, which is provided by external conditions. Chinese outbound tourists are quickly becoming a bigger and more sophisticated group of consumers. When they travel abroad, they expect quality services, quality traveling, and better understanding of their wishes and needs. Thus, a successful marketing should be well prepared to meet the basic needs of Chinese tourists during their first visit, as well as add social and psychological closeness and comfort to the products and services they offer. Good cultural event programs make a good touristic product. That is why, in the future, all creative potential should be focused on creating a valuable cultural-touristic image and on the promotion of cultural tourism offers because nowadays the Chinese tourists represent a chance for development of cultural tourism.*

***Keywords:** Chinese, chance, culture, tourism, development*

### Introduction

Culture and tourism have sufficient common bases for an integral development under the auspices of cultural tourism, which arouses interest both in tourists and researchers. Culture is a wide and specific social phenomenon, which comprises all forms of human material and spiritual expression in society and nature. Tourism is an experience initiated by a man's need to travel and meet unknown areas and cultural values – rural, urban, combined, inseparable with the nature or physiologically so developed that they can be considered manifestations and other cultural events (Cvetković, Todorović, 2012).

Cultural tourism can be analyzed from the economical, touristic, cultural, educational, organizational and other perspectives (Djukic, 2005).

It is being increasingly perceived as an effective way of interpretation, restoration and rehabilitation of a cultural site, as well as a catalyzer of economic growth. Apart from the positive economic effects (foreign currency inflow, new job openings, the multiplier effect etc.) it has been noticed that the tourism also encourages the development of an awareness of the value of the cultural-historical heritage, new monuments, sites and its preservation. The meaning of the concept of development lies precisely in the positive and

sustainable results of the cultural tourism on a socio-cultural, economic and ecological plan as well as in the protection of cultural resources. (ICOMOS, 1976; Tomka, 1998; Djukic, 2005; Scepanović-Grbavac, 2011).

According to that, cultural tourism represents a part of the whole touristic phenomenon, more specifically the one that is based on cultural heritage as its main resource (Cvetković, Stanić Jovanović, 2017).

Cultural tourism is based on a mosaic of sites, traditions, artistic forms, events and experiences which represent the people, the nation and its members, vividly reflecting the diversity of their features and characters. Keillor (1995) explained picturesquely the meaning of this notion: “We have to think about the cultural tourism because in fact, there is no other type of tourism. Tourism is precisely that – people don’t come to the United States because of our airports, they don’t come because of our hotels or sports facilities... They come because of our culture: high culture, low culture, middle culture, right, left, real or imaginary culture – they come to see the United States of America.” (Keillor, 1995).

Cultural tourism is motivated by the need for culture, which, in the widest sense of a word, comprises history, art, heritage or the lifestyle of the people on a certain area. This implies visits to archeological sites, religious and secular monuments and edifices, museums, art galleries, manifestations, festivals, cultural institutions, theatre and cinema performances, concerts, exhibitions etc. (Richards, 2005; WTO, 1995).

Regarding this, cultural tourism is also expressed through other forms of tourism: city tourism, rural tourism, ethno-tourism, congress tourism, religious tourism and other (Tomka, 2000).

### **The Profile of Chinese Tourists**

With a population of over one billion, China is one of the largest countries in the world that generates tourists. Although the development of Chinese outbound tourism is a relatively recent phenomenon, China has quickly become a major tourist generative market. According to some estimates, the Chinese will travel more in the future and they are a new hope for the international tourism industry. Today, the perspective that they bring is valuable and special attention is given to the needs and habits of Chinese tourists in the global tourist market. Both the economy and culture of a particular country benefits from that, because there is growing mutual understanding.

The Chinese government, through the establishment of a system ADS (Approved Destination Status), allowed Chinese citizens to travel abroad for fun in the 90s. Yet some may argue that the starting point of China's outbound tourism can be traced back to 1983 when the citizens of mainland China were allowed to visit Hong Kong and Macao under special conditions (Qu & Lam, 1997; Zhang & Heug, 2001). The Chinese government formally revised its

tourism policy in 1997 through the adoption of the document “Provisional Regulation on the outbound travel” so that citizens were able to travel abroad at their own expense (Arlt, 2006; Guo et al., 2007).

Tourism is one of the open sector in China, and it has more favorable atmosphere for the development of environment, both inside and outside the country. At the present stage of China's outbound tourism, especially in Europe, the Chinese government and tourism authorities adapted its policies and liberated its citizens from such political and administrative narrowing.

Current research of tourists is still limited. Recent years have been flooded with literature on tourism and tourists, which was published. Disciplines such as sociology, anthropology and social psychology joined the economics and geography. Most authors agree that tourism should be the subject of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, or even extra-disciplinary studies. There is still lack of comprehensive studies that take the heterogeneity, complexity and dynamics of the phenomena into account.

While trying to understand the Chinese consumer in general or in a particular area such as tourism, culture as an important explanation will never be neglected, especially an incomparably rich culture such as Chinese culture, history as long as China's and the most diversified society such as Chinese society. Chinese tourists as a very important social group are a strong correlation between the pattern of consumption and culture. The best method when trying to understand Chinese people is to understand Chinese culture. With its origins from more than 5,000 years, Chinese culture is a rare ancient civilization that has survived and is still vital. Since China has always been, in one way or another, isolated from other parts of the world, some features of its culture were developed independently.

Comparing with the Western culture, Chinese culture is more collective. Individuals are seen in relationships, and some of these connections are particularly important. Chinese cultural values are largely based on interpersonal relationships and social orientation. However, it should be noted that collectivism does not mean homogenous society. Collectivism operates in small social contexts such as the family, the tribe, or labor unions, and the nation consists of these small units (Tian, 2001). All social activities should and can only be achieved in certain groups, whether it is between colleagues, friends or family members. Thus, several concepts should be brought into the discussion, which can help us to understand the reason for group travel.

Family is the main collective group in Chinese society. In traditional China, the ideal family consists of several generations living under one roof, sharing a common wallet and a common cooker, and with the head of the family (Game, 1999). Families organized on the basis of “coordinated” relations were discussed by the Confucian students to be fundamental to maintaining social harmony and political stability in China. Maintaining family ties with each

member in harmony is very important in the Chinese family both the traditional and the modern.

Another important Confucian philosophy is the relationships among society members. Confucius emphasizes the hierarchy between different social groups within the government, organizations, even families. Most Confucian scientists believe that his philosophy is deeply rooted in Chinese society, especially in the remote areas. Another importance of his philosophy is "powerful distance," which was noticed by Hofstede (Sun, 2006). He did not know about the concept of GuanXi, which exists in Chinese society. GuanXi is an important factor of Chinese culture based on personal relations, which differ from the relationships in the Western culture (Sun, 2006). Network "GuanXi" can be formed with friends, relatives, colleagues, employers and high-ranking officials.

Most Chinese tourists are between 30-35 years old, and a certain percent of them are nouveaux riches, who began their career during the poverty and lived in a period of shortage of material products (after the Cultural Revolution in 1978). When they get enough income, long-term pressure of the poor economic situation begins to explode. In most cases, this type of high expenses is intended as the boasting with their wealth, and it is called "the revenge for their poor life."

The other reason is the "symbol value" of branded items (such as branded suits for men, branded cosmetics for women) which remind us of the social status and class, that help to tell the customer apart from others. Due to the lack of proper management of consumption, this kind of irrationality has a very negative impact on Chinese society. Chinese culture tends to avoid or interfere in the harmony of others, including the nature and other society members. Connecting with their travel pattern, most Chinese tourists are not willing to have interactive programs, such as festivals, beach resorts, where they can have more contact that is personal with the local or other tourists. Most programs are packed so that Chinese tourists have almost no contact with residents at the destination.

### **The expectations of Chinese outbound tourists**

Yu & Weiler (2001) analyzed the behavior of citizens from mainland China who traveled to Australia for pleasure and came to the conclusion that they preferred organized trips for their convenience and favorable price. They also concluded that the level of satisfaction of Chinese tourists varies between the sexes and educational profiles. Tourists from mainland China prefer an organized trip that includes more countries than a trip that includes only one destination (Guo et al., 2007).

Customer expectations of Chinese travelers differ based on their trips abroad (Wang et al., 2008). The survey results obtained by adapted

SERVQUAL questionnaire show that Chinese tourists expect reliable service and adequate facilities, similar to what typical hotels in China offer. It was also found that customer expectations of Chinese tourists in restaurants are largely influenced by their previous experience in local restaurants.

Huang conducted a survey with tourists from mainland China in Canada. He summed up 55 expectations in 12 factors. According to his study, there are three forms of expectations of tourists from mainland China in Canada, relating to entertainment, variety and low prices (Li et al., 2011).

Moc & DeFranco (1999) proposed a conceptual model of Chinese cultural values and understanding of the behavior of Chinese tourists from several key Confucian values such as respect for authority, interdependence, group orientation and harmony. In general, such overviews suggest that due to cultural, social, and economic reasons, Chinese travelers can have specific expectations and requirements on the journey that the Western marketing still does not understand. Several studies have systematically investigated the expectations of outgoing tourists from mainland China.

Weather is the most important criterion when residents choose a package deal (Wong & Kwong, 2004). Many Chinese tourists prefer a “less busy” schedule. This also supports the study of Zhu, who found that relaxation was one of the primary motives of Chinese outbound tourists (Li et al., 2011). In addition, they consider that schedules are not always properly done; too little time is spent on tourist attractions and too much on shopping. One of the reasons why people choose group travels when traveling abroad is that they expect to have fewer cultural and language barriers. Chinese tourists expect from their tour guides to have knowledge of the culture and the language ability. Furthermore, many have stressed the importance of professionalism.

Most Chinese tourists suggest that service providers in the Western countries have to know more about the Chinese way of life and their food. This is probably because they are not quite impressed with accommodation and food. Consumer habits of Chinese tourists and their motivation for the trip are two other things that the Western marketing must understand.

Tourism development and social and cultural transformation have a very strong relationship, the economic situation, in particular, changes fond of basic accessibilities for outbound travel of Chinese citizens. Chinese outbound tourists are quickly becoming a bigger and more sophisticated group of consumers (Cvetković, Stanić Jovanović, 2016).

## **Conclusion**

Understanding the wishes and needs of Chinese tourists nowadays represents an opportunity for the development of different types of cultural tourism. With a rich culture such is a Chinese culture, history as long as China's

and the most diversified society such as Chinese society, Chinese tourists are a very important social group, representing a strong correlation between the pattern of consumption and the culture.

With a population of over one billion, China is one of the largest countries in the world that generates tourists. Chinese tourists are different from the European ones, and in the absence of clearly outlined what they want to see as much as they can.

According to them, all European cities resemble each other but they still like to visit them, always in groups, and particularly when guides take them to places, where they have something to take pictures

Culture is a very important reason when we are trying to understand the Chinese tourist. They are mostly traveling to meet with a new culture, different from theirs. That is why Chinese tourists represent a chance for development of culture tourism.

## References

1. Arlt, G. W. China's outbound tourism. New York, NY: Routledge, 2006.
2. Cvetkovic, M., Todoric, J. "Perspectives for cultural tourism in Valjevo". Collection of papers of the seventh scientific seminar "Mediterranean days" – Tourism: Challenges and possibilities, The Institute of Economy, Belgrade. 60-66. ISBN 978-86-7329-096-6, 2012.
3. Cvetković, M., Stanić Jovanović, S. „Spatial Cultural-Historical Units in the Function of Tourism Development in Serbia“, Proceedings, 4th International Scientific Conference Agribusiness MAK-2017 "European Road" Ipard 2015-2020, Kopaonik, Etno centar Gegula, ISBN 978-86-80510-01-9, pp. 222-231, 2017.
4. Cvetković, M., Stanić Jovanović, S., (2016): The Profile of Chinese Tourists – Recommendations for the Development of Receptive Tourism in Serbia, Thematic Proceedings II, The First International Scientific Conference – Tourism in the Function of Development of the Republic of Serbia-Spa Tourism in Serbia and Experiences of Other Countries, University of Kragujevac, Faculty of Hotel Management and Tourism in Vrnjačka Banja, Vrnjačka Banja, ISBN 978-86-89949-09-4, pp. 569-585.
5. Djukic, V. Cultural tourism. Belgrade: Clio, 2005.
6. ICOMOS. Cultural tourism charter, 1976.
7. Keillor, G. White House Conference on Travel and Tourism, Washington. D.C, 1995.
8. Game R. E, Understanding Contemporary China. Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999.

9. Guo, Y., Kim, S. S. and Timothy, D.J. "Development characteristics and implications of Mainland Chinese outbound tourism." *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 12 (2007): 313-332.
10. Li, X. R., Lai, C., Harrill R., Kline S. and Wang L. "When east meets west: An exploratory study on Chinese outbound tourists' travel expectations." *Tourism Management* 32 (2011): 741-749.
11. Moc, C. and DeFranco, A.L. "Chinese cultural values: their implications for travel and tourism marketing." *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* 8 (1999): 99-114.
12. Qu, H. and Lam, S. "A travel demand model for Mainland Chinese tourists to Hong Kong." *Tourism Management* 18 (1997): 593-597.
13. Richards, G. *Cultural tourism in Europe*, Atlas, 2005.
14. Scepanovic-Grbavac, S. *Cultural tourism as a factor for tourism development in Belgrade* (Master's thesis). Belgrade: Singidunum University, Postgraduate studies department, 2011.
15. Sun, Y. *Understanding the Chinese Tourist – Intrinsic and Extrinsic Reasons of Travelling to Europe* (doctoral dissertation). MA European Tourism Management, 2006.
16. Tian, R. G. *Marketing Tian, R. in the 21st Century Cross-cultural Issue*. Eriskine College, 2000.
17. Tomka, D. *Culture through space, time and tourism*. Novi Sad: Institute for geography, 1998.
18. Tomka, D. *Spatial cultural-historical units – A chance for cultural tourism in Yugoslavia*, *Tourism*, 4/2000. Novi Sad: Institute for Geography, Faculty of Sciences, 2000.
19. Wang, Y., Vela, M.R. and Tyler, K. "Cultural perspectives: Chinese perceptions of UK hotel service quality." *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research* 2 (2008): 312-324.
20. Wong, C. S. and Kwong, W. Y.Y. "Outbound tourists' selection criteria for choosing all-inclusive package tours." *Tourism Management* 25 (2004): 581-592.
21. Yu, X., & Weiler, B. "Mainland Chinese pleasure travelers to Australia: a leisure behavior analysis." *Tourism, Culture & Communication* 3 (2001): 81-91.
22. Zhang, H. Q. and Heung, V. C. S. "The emergence of the Mainland Chinese outbound travel market and its implications for tourism marketing." *Journal of Vacation Marketing* 8 (2001): 7-12.

## NOTES ON THE AUTHORS

**Milena CVETKOVIĆ**, MSc (PhD Student), milena.cvetkovic4@gmail.com

was born on 4 December 1985 in Vranje. In the same town, she finished her high school (department of natural sciences). In 2004 she enrolled in the Faculty of Geography in Belgrade, Department of Geography. She graduated in 2009 with an average mark of 8.94. That same year she enrolled in master studies (Tourism Department) at said university, which she completed with an average score of 10.00. Since 2011, she is a PhD student (tourism department). She passed all the exams on her PhD studies (average score 10.00) and her PhD thesis is in progress.

**Sara STANIĆ JOVANOVIĆ**, PhD, sara.stanic.zemun@gmail.com

was born in 1983 in Belgrade. She finished her basic studies at the Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management at the Natural Sciences of the University of Novi Sad, and her master studies at the Faculty of Geography, University of Belgrade (Tourism Department), where she completed her PhD thesis in 2017. She worked as a teaching assistant at the Faculty of Geography in Belgrade, as a Director of the Public Company for Tourism of the City Municipality of Surčin and in the Surčin Cultural Center from 2016. She is the author and co-author of a number of scientific papers in the field of tourism.