The World Heritage on Öland:
An investigation into the Motivations of Chinese Travelers to Travel abroad

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to explore how Öland could attract Chinese tourists to sustain its development. This study is conducted on the basis of group interviews among 20 respondents selected from Chinese tourists. This research reveals that learning and experiencing, building a social relationship and enjoying natural landscape are the major reason for Chinese tourists traveling abroad, among which, the main motivations for Chinese tourists visiting Öland is the attractive spot. The research finds that not many Chinese tourists have been to Öland before. However, among those who have been, they said that Borgholm Castle was the most attractive tourist spot. The major approaches for Chinese tourists accessing information of Öland are travel agencies, travel apps, TV shows, movies and the internet, whereas little marketing strategies such as advertising (in Chinese) and cooperating with local travel agencies has been utilized by the government. An analysis of the key motivations of Chinese tourist reveals one challenge in attracting Chinese tourists facing the government: Öland is not well recognized as a World Heritage among Chinese tourists compared to other popular travel destinations. The strength and weakness of Öland tourism indicates that Öland need to take more active marketing strategies to brand their tourism targeting Chinese tourists.

Key words: Öland tourism, Chinese Tourists, Tourism motivation, Qualitative Data Analysis, Attractions.
Introduction

This section gives an introduction to Öland. It introduces the key attractions in Öland preferences and presents the overview of travel behavior of Chinese tourists. This chapter will also give an introduction to the research motivation and the purpose in the thesis.

Background of the study

Öland is an important tourist attraction in Sweden. It has a range of unique sites which attract both domestic and international tourists. The landscape of Öland is such that it includes both cultural and natural heritage sites. The main sites of attractions in Öland are Southern Öland Landscape, The Great Alvar and Island of the Sun and Wind. This research is conducted to explore how Öland could better attract Chinese tourists with its unique sites and resources.

Because of the quick economic growth, the tourism industry in China has experienced a fast development in recent few decades (figure 1). Under this condition, China becomes an important market for tourism destinations around the world. The outbound tourism from China has increased in last few years and Chinese travelers are identified as a major contributor to growth opportunities at Europe. In 2010, the total number of Chinese tourists reached 57.39 million which was increased by 20% in comparison to the previous year (Latham, 2011). In addition, particularly on the Chinese side, an increasing number of people prefer international travel.

According to a Chinese international travel monitor (2014) supplied by a website support. In the global hoteliers’ survey, results show that the growth in the number of Chinese guests is continued. At a regional level, increases are across the board, with Europe on 43 percent (up from 36 percent). Chinese travelers’ consumer behavior projects various things like they spend 49.30% for sightseeing and 33.48% for vacation (Latham, 2011). However, another survey data show Sweden is ranked 5th among the countries which are most visited in Europe and Chinese travelers were amongst the Top 10 biggest spenders on hotel accommodation (Chinese international travel monitor, 2014).
To attract Chinese travelers to the destination, there is a need to understand the motivations that drive Chinese consumers to visit tourism destinations abroad. This research attempts to add implications on the development by investigating the motivations for Chinese travelers to travel abroad and exploring how Öland can attract Chinese tourists with its attractiveness.

Despite Öland has its unique resources and classified as a cultural heritage site, it is also facing significant challenges due to the rise in competitive pressure in the tourism industry. To cope with competition from other Swedish and foreign destinations, Öland wants to be regarded as an attractive choice for the tourists and in order to do so; they need to work on the development of effective branding strategy (Tourism strategy Öland 2012-2020, 2012). This research investigates how Öland can develop the branding strategy to better attract Chinese tourists. At present, the world heritage in Öland mainly focuses on three target groups (family, the global company, and people aged above 50). They also have three main themes for a visit, i.e. natural playground, Swedish lifestyle and Vitalised meeting (Tourism strategy Öland 2012-2020, 2012).

Öland focuses on the tourists in two markets, i.e. Swedish market and international market. For Swedish market, Mälardalen, Malmö, and Gothenburg region constitute primary venues for exposure. In terms of international market, they primarily focus on Denmark, northern Germany, the Netherlands, Finland, Norway, and Öland. And also, they regard the family and
50+ (seniors) as the target group in these international markets (Tourism strategy Öland 2012-2020, 2012). The current tourism industry of Öland is dependent on the local tourism agency which could be a limiting factor when attracting tourists from other parts of the world and could also be considered as an important advantage which enables in the maintaining the serenity of the place. To better understand the motivations behind Chinese travelers as well as develop better marketing strategies, the Chinese tourists have been segmented with respect to the different tourist’s attractions in Öland in the discussion below.

**Research question**

Based on the above background, the problem statement is described below.

1. What are the motivations for Chinese tourists to travel abroad?
2. What factors can help the Öland to go to the Chinese market?
3. How could Öland develop its destination branding strategy to better attract Chinese tourists?

**Aims and objectives**

The purpose of the thesis is to provide implications on Öland to develop the effective branding strategy to attract Chinese tourist. The objectives are given below:

1. To identify the main motivations that drive Chinese tourists to visit Öland;
2. To identify the resources and attractiveness of Öland to meet the needs of Chinese tourists.

**Outline of the article**

This study has five chapters which include an introduction, literature review, research methodology, data analysis and conclusion. The introductory chapter provides an overview of the study and mentions problem questions, aims, and objectives. The literature review discusses the key concepts related to tourism branding, tourism motivation, and habits of Chinese tourists. The research methodology chapter proposes the research design strategy and the sampling plan of this research. Data analysis chapter presents the results of the qualitative interviews conducted among Chinese tourists. Finally, the conclusion chapter discusses the
concluding based on the objectives of the study and recommendations based on the findings of the research.
Literature Review

Branding for tourism destination

Gartner (1989) indicated that because of the particular characteristic “non-physical” of tourism products, the complexity of the process of decision making by tourists will bring a challenge to the operation of the brand in tourism areas. Hall (1999) thought that the key objective of brands in travel destinations is “creating a harmonious and concentrated communication strategy”. Lionel Becherel (1999) pointed out that an effective positioning strategy will greatly increase the competitiveness of some travel destinations where are eager to show their attraction to target markets. Crock-ett and Wood (2002) analyzed the brands establishment process in Western Australia from the perspective of application and put forward some important principles for the brands establishment in travel destinations. He indicated that image is only one part of destination brands management and establishing a unified brand should be established from the perspectives of theory and practice through integrating every market activity. Gnoth (2002) thought that the attractions of travel destination have their unique characteristics, so the selecting the property of destination attractions is the primary critical thing. Therefore, in a conclusion of the various interpretations of tourism branding, it is significant to develop a specific tourism branding with respect to the tourism destination. In the following context, a comprehensive concept of tourism will be introduced in terms of world heritage branding.

Tourism brand is established by the tourism resource or the unique characteristics of tourism areas, which is a comprehensive concept through integrating the tourism products’ quality, characteristics, image and their market influence (Mowfort & Munt, 2003). Tourism brand means name, sign, symbol or the inter-combination among them established by tourism operators according to their product and service which stand for the product and service. The tourism brand reflects the high identification of tourism products by personalized consumers. The narrow definition of tourism product means the brand of a tourism product, which is a kind of special product incorporating the purchasing and consumption at the same time. There are two types of way to obtain the relevant information before the start of a tour, first, the
spreader transmit the brand information to tourists or potential tourists by variable approach, and secondly is the tourists or potential tourists automatically obtain the tourism destination brand information during the network or human communication. The first kind of approach spreader generally transmit the positive brand information to attract the tourists or potential tourists head for the tourism destination, whereas, the second approach may allow the negative information obtained by tourists and reduce their interest of the tourism destination. The generalized definition of tourism brand has a structure, which includes various types of product branding, such as brands of a certain time period, brands of tourism companies, tourism group brand, chain brand, public product brand and travel destination brand. Tourism brand is not only the image to distinguish other competitors, which is also the direct expression to provide core value of tourism destination for consumers. When tourists choose the travel destination, except the considerations of distance, time, transportation and travel cost, more and more people focus on the brand image of the travel destination. Brand of travel destination does not simply mean the name of travel destination, it means the appellation to show the typical significance of the travel destination which is widely approved by publics (Jamal & D. Getz, 1995). The brand is established according to the historic culture, human landscape, folk custom, religious culture and art culture under various economy structures. Tourism brand means the brand from a certain geographic position or a certain space region, which is a profit commitment provided by travel destination to bring unique enjoyment for consumers. Brand in travel destination is a concrete form of tourism brand which is constituted by many comprehensive factors, such as the external factors of destination name, symbol, tourism resource and tourism facility and internal factors of tourism quality, tourism service and the culture of the destination. In general, during the process when travel destination generalizes its image, brand of travel destination means the core concept conveyed to publics according to the development strategy positioning of travel destination, which is also accepted by society.

Travel destinations such as Öland are known as the world heritage site, which has already evolved from a technical measured tourist attractions brand into an acclaimed and widely respected brand. Although recognized as a world heritage by the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) World Heritage Program, tourism brand of Öland is not well established around the world. A similar situation can be found in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) in late 20’s century when CEE was trying to perform a collective branding of various destinations under the challenges of global economy and preparation for accession to the European Union (EU). Lack of adequate finance support and expertise, as well as the unspecific image as an ‘Europeanness’ greatly affected the effective branding in CCE (Hall, 1999). Although Öland has sufficient finance support compared to the income dilemma in CEE, a global image as a ‘Swede’ and lack of international expertise do challenge the destination branding for Öland standing out. As what has been mentioned above, the brand of Öland is mainly transported via local agency within Sweden or around neighboring countries in North Europe which is greatly challenged by the globalization; it is of significant value to establish a specific and impressive brand to attract international tourists other than Sweden or Europeans. In this report, branding targeting Chinese tourists will be discussed in the following methodology and analysis sections due to a gigantic growth of Chinese tourists in international tourism. The foundation of Öland branding is to build a customer-based advertising strategy, where the brand evaluation should greatly take customers’ beliefs and behaviors; hence, the role of customers is going to be reviewed in the following part.

**The role of receivers in tourism branding**

The receiver is the concept from communication sciences and mainly referring to the people who spread information, namely spreading object. In a narrow sense, the receiver of the spreading of the tourist destination is mainly the tourists and potential tourists of the tourism target market, citizens of the tourist destination and the tourism-related enterprises and etc. and who can directly make the tour decision and action after receiving the brand information consist the main receiver of brand spreading. Aim to enlarge the effect of brand spreading, it is important to distinguish the features of the receiver. During the whole process, the tourist identity evolves from the potential tourist, tourist on the way, tourist arrived and finally tourist returns. The tourists in different periods have the different way to receive brand information, which requires spreader to process the brand spreading activities based on the features of tourists in different period. Also, the citizen at tourism destination is the first group of people
receiving the brand information and proceeding the further spreading of brand information during their reception services with tourists. Tourism relevant enterprise mainly includes the contracted dealer, the tourist bureau and relevant private business which will develop the cooperative management strategy with the manager of the tourism destination. By taken in this sense, the receiver could overlap with the tourist brand spreading groups or individuals.

In the case of Öland, most of the current receivers are limited to the seniors from European countries and local residents who are more likely overlapped with the brand spreading process due to relatively nearby geographic features, termed as local receivers, whereas Chinese tourists are less exposed to the brand information and therefore characterized as potential tourists for Öland. Although a study confirms that communities of Öland work actively in attracting tourism to the island, the short tourist season because of the seasonal workforce moving to the ski resorts in the north of Sweden in the middle of August (Hagen-Grant, 1998) which impairs the activity of these local receivers. Taking the challenges in branding and mobility of receivers into consideration, Öland should develop a valid branding strategy that targets the potential international tourists, i.e. Chinese tourists to compensate for the seasonal mobility of local receivers. In order to develop a strategy targeting potential tourists, it is necessary to analysis the underlying motivations of tourism especially for Chinese tourists in this content.

**Tourism motivation**

Tourist’s perception of the tour determines the main conception, emotion and the multiple perspectives of the destinations which will produce the critical influences in the travel behaviors especially the selection of the tour destination. Obviously, there is a correlation between tourist’s perception and motivating potential tourists actively participating in some journey, therefore to better understand and utilize this correlation; a study has divided perception into expectation and attitude to simply the analysis (Hsu, 2010). In that study, a model of expectation, motivation and attitude (EMA) has been built to illustrate the relationship among these three aspects in tourist behavioral process. The EMA model reveals that the expectation of an outbound destination directly motivates the visiting of that destination; the motivation together with the expectation will establish a pre-visiting attitude
toward such destination; and motivation has a mediating effect on the relationship between expectation and attitude. In accordance with that study, the motivation of visiting some tourist destination serves as not only the consequence of the attitude and the expectation, but more importantly, as the cause of establishing an interactive pre-visiting behavioral system. With respect to that, an analysis of tourism motivations is necessary in developing a valid tourism brand discussed herein above.

Tourism motive is new concept introduced psychology into tourism, most home scholars give it defined. Murray (1964) point out tourism motivation is internal power push people tourism, tourism motivation can be activation, directing, preserve and adjustment, starting traveling and forwarding to the destination. Tourism need induces it, which is influenced by social values and rules, specified tourism actions internally. Tourism motivation is caused by tourism’s personal factors and externally surroundings factor, especially influenced by personal knowledge, experience, salary, spare time and other information. Meanwhile, tourism motivation is dynamic processing, varied by tourist’s subject need and object conditions, like tourism area resources, various transportations, traveling price changes; all can cause tourism motivation change.

Motivation is the important factor influencing tourism behaviors. Yoon and Uysal (2005) divided the tourism motivation into thrust motivation and pulling motivation, take structural equation analysis to the tourist in Northern Cyprus restore, Mediterranean, they found personal subjective thrust motivation is positive relationship between tourist satisfaction and tourist loyalty, while the area feature is not obviously impacted by pulling motivation and satisfaction, also little influence on tourist loyalty. And in a similar study, Alegre and d Cladera (2006) have a positive study on mutual relationships between tourism motivation and tourism loyalty, they think there are great links between them, for example, for entertainment, leisure or holidays motivation, the tourists will prefer familiar and safe places. While for that youth pursuit fresh and stimulate motivation, the relationships between them will be nothing. Surely, all the motivation and need will make tourists get effective satisfaction, because this is root reason for tourism decision.
According to the most-used classification of tourism motivations in the past in the bibliography posed by Jang and Wu (2006), exploring new knowledge, relaxation and family reunion fall within the push motives, and the pull motives include natural and historic sites, the cost, facilities and safety of tourism and the accessibility of destinations. In light of their research on the people in 1960s, the push motive can be classified into five categories: Self-actualization, the building of self-esteem, the search of new knowledge, relaxation and socialization, while the pull motives are divided into cleanliness and security, leisure facilities and traveling cost, natural and historic landscapes. The search of new knowledge, cleanliness and security play a significant role in the push-and-pull motive and the health of physiology and mentality exert a vital impact on the tourism motivations. Sangpikul (2008) studies the motives of Japanese aged over 55 who travel to Thailand so as to provide marketing information for the country’s Tourism Authority. According this report, the tourism motives are classified into: the experiencing of novelty and exploration of new knowledge, leisure and relaxation, and self-improvement. Therefore the role of the motivation in shaping specific tourism branding can be classified into two aspects: one is to trigger personal subjective thrust motivation to achieve satisfaction and loyalty to the destination; another is to tailor the branding in accordance to different classes of the motivation. By understanding the role of the tourism motivation, a further step is to specify the tourism motivation with respect to the Chinese tourists.

**Over of Chinese tourists habits and expectations in Europe**

Chinese outbound tourists are intended to visit Europe, especially the Western Europe, France, Italy, Germany and the UK. Europe is attracted to Chinese tourists due to factors like the presence of natural landscapes, the overall hospitality and the various places to visit. It is found in a study that 85% of the travelers are inexperienced travelers which mean they don’t have previous travel experience and they prefer to select standard package tour to Europe. Further, the rest 15% of them are experienced travelers (RÖlandberger Strategy Consultants, 2015). Another study on high-end Chinese tourists’ behavior has revealed that these tourists are ready to spend money over 50000 yuan 68% spend more than 50000 yuan, 28% tourists spend more than 10000 yuan per capita and Europe is considered their first choice. It is also
seen that 53% of the Chinese tourists prefer to travel abroad more than three times a year. They prefer to visit at spring time, during which they select their vacation time as well. It is also found from this study that 66% of the tourist books their package through online reservation whereas 14% of them book through their secretaries. Thirdly, the influence of tour leader and trip schedule remain an important factor to enrich customer satisfaction as well as customer retention (China Outbound Tourism Research Institute, 2013).

Other studies reveal that generally Chinese tourists prefer to travel in organized groups for various reasons, for example because of the cultural distance and linguistic barriers. Moreover, it is laid-back to get a visa and for persons who have little experience of traveling to a foreign country, particularly to remote destinations in Europe, it feels easier and more secure to arrange for a visa through forming group travels. On the other hand, it is predicted that individual trips are all set to increase in the coming years specifically due to a growing number of experienced Chinese travelers. Furthermore, because of the augmented utilization of the Internet in China, typically by the more wealthy classes and younger segments of the populace, the online presence of the various European countries in the Chinese language require being focused (Lui et al, 2011; Xie and Li, 2009). In a recent study, Prayag, Cohen and Yan (2013) have conducted a study investigating the tendency for long-haul independent travel by young Chinese tourists and evaluate the resultant management implications. The study has been conducted by means of a survey of 403 prospective Chinese tourists to Western Europe. Dissimilar previous studies results, the results of this study reveal an emerging Chinese independent travel segment that does not toe the line to Western conceptualizations of the typical attitudes and behaviors of tourists. Despite the discrepancy in Chinese tourists’ behaviors, understanding their preference and particular expectations may help Tourism service providers or marketers better serve this active market.

As mentioned above, Europe, especially Western Europe, stands out as one of the most popular long-haul tourism destinations for Chinese tourists. However, projections for the coming years point out that even though Europe most likely is all set to uphold the highest share of global arrivals, this share is projected to drop to 46 percent until 2020. This drop in Europe is explained by an increase of Chinese travelers to the Asia-Pacific region. In the
recent past years, notwithstanding the effect of the worldwide financial crisis, particularly China’s tourism industry has demonstrated an increasing drift, and this has been an exceptional performance considering the tourism of Western countries, particularly European countries (Zhang, 2011). However, the major part of the Chinese tourists traveling out of country select destination countries those are geographically and culturally near to them, mostly in Asia. Nonetheless, over the years, there has been a rising drift on the way to traveling countries located at a far geographical distance such as long-haul destinations (Lui et al. 2011; Xie and Li, 2009). Hence, Öland is not only challenged by European countries but also the Asia-Pacific tourist attractions. As the emerging market of global traveling expands to almost all over the world, Öland needs to develop effective marketing strategies and boost the financial performance in order to compensate for the shortcomings arose from seasonal traveling.

For developing customer-centric marketing and tourism strategies, segmentation holds the key. Effectual segmentation enables tourism firms to gain competitive benefit through making out and exploiting new market opportunities. Selection of the fitting target market, enriched differentiation and positioning lead to increased business and profitability. Notwithstanding the strategic and planned gains of market segmentation, there is much dispute contiguous the most frequently utilized methods and systems to customer markets segmentation (Tuma, Decker and Scholz, 2011). It is found that heterogeneity of the supposed image of Europe and specifically Western Europe exist and that fitting marketing strategies for every segment of prospective tourists is vital and ought to be executed (Li et al., 2013). These results may well be utilized to evaluate the image and potential segments of Western Europe in China and vice-versa and the marketers in tourism firms may well plan and implement segmentation and marketing strategies. Supposedly it becomes evident that segmentation of Chinese tourists ought to be based on specific groups versus individual, geographic and demographic particularly in the context age group. More studies need to be done as Öland has long been a relatively inactive and isolated tourist site open only to geographically nearby regions. Therefore, in order to appropriately identify the prospective segments in the Chinese markets, marketers of Öland need to be more open to evaluate the results of studies and extend
effective segmentation strategies and look for new tourism segments and products to increase business and boost financial performance through implementing appropriate and effective segmentation and marketing strategies (Xie and Li, 2009).

Summary

This chapter reviews the literature about branding strategy for tourism destination, tourism motivation, and the habits of Chinese tourists to set the theoretical basis for the research. It is found that an effective branding strategy is needed for the sustainable development of a tourism destination. Tourism motivations have a great impact on the traveling behaviors of tourists. A detailed review of Chinese tourists’ motivations and outbound traveling behaviors has been conducted to instruct further researches. Öland, owning the brand of world heritage, has a range of unique sites of attraction to attract both domestic and international tourists. The main sites of attractions in Öland are Southern Öland Landscape and The Great Alvar. Due to the less development of Öland towards global tourist market and the growing number of Chinese outbound tourists, it has the potential to actively join the market and attract Chinese tourists. This paper aims at understanding the motivations of Chinese tourists to guide the development of a valid strategy for destination branding.
Research Methodology

The purpose of research is to discover answers to research questions and scientific procedure are applied to receive these answers (Kothari, 2012). This chapter discusses various steps of research ranging from research methods, research strategy, data collection means to data analysis procedures. The major questions of the research are focused on the main motivations driving Chinese tourists to visit Öland, by analyzing the answers to the questions this paper will be able to identify the resources and attractiveness of Öland with respect to those motivations. Data collection and analysis would to answer the research questions.

Research design

A research design is the framework of the research methodology following the steps like research methods and research approach.

There are three types of research methods; descriptive, exploratory and explanatory method (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). The present study employs exploratory research in order to explore the tourism industry in Öland and areas which can be focused on in order to attract Chinese tourists to Öland. Exploratory research refers to the research that conducted to explore a problem that has not yet been defined clearly. At present, Öland has not yet particularly developed its branding or marketing strategy to target at Chinese consumers. The motivations and demands of Chinese consumers are still not clear to Öland. Therefore, exploratory research is an appropriate research method for the present research. In order to achieve the aim and objectives of the study, the researcher has explored the literature to determine the tourism trends in Öland, motivations of Chinese tourists, and the features of an effective branding strategy for the tourism destination.

In terms of approach, there are two types, inductive and deductive approach. The present study adopts a deductive approach in order to generalize the findings of research to a larger population of Chinese tourist so that marketing strategies could be developed accordingly.
**Data collection**

This research is conducted on the basis of qualitative research. Qualitative research is the research method that relies on non-numerical data to answer questions such as ‘how’ and ‘why’. In this research, qualitative research helps to understand how Öland could develop its effective branding strategy to better attract Chinese tourists. Qualitative research actually can be conducted with observation, interview, case study, and so on. This research selects focus group interview as the research instrument to collect primary data to answer the research questions. Focus group interview is the interview in which small groups of respondents are gathered together and guided by a moderator throughout the unstructured discussion (Harding, 2013). 20 respondents are across the country from China to take part in the focus group interview. The main purpose of the focus groups was to discuss the motivations of Chinese tourists and branding for the tourism destination.

In the case of focus group interview, a similar presentation was shown to the each group member who included photos and video clips related to the Öland. Next, the respondents were asked about their views and their preferences to visit world heritage sites. The participants came up with different ideas of how the Öland could work with the four different areas of their tourism strategy. Open-ended questions were developed for the focus group interview to determine motivations and expectations of Chinese tourists’ visiting Öland. The interview lasted about 40 minutes. At the beginning of the interview, a presentation was shown which included relevant pictures and video clips on Öland. This gave a short overview of the place, its tourist and heritage locations, hotels and accommodations and dining experience in Sweden. Once the respondents were prepared to answer the interview, questions were asked accordingly. During the process of interviews, presenter tried to create a relaxed atmosphere so that maximum information and their ideas can be collected as much as possible.

**Target population and sampling**

The target population of the present research is Chinese tourists who may be attracted to Öland. The respondents for the focus group interview are selected from the target population using non-random sampling technique. A sampling plan is referred to a specific technique or procedure that the researcher exercises to select the items for the sample. There are two types
of sampling; probability sampling and non-probability sampling. In this study, purposive sampling has been chosen as this study has opted to choose subjective methods to determine sample size. The sample size of this study was 20 Chinese tourists were included for focus group interview. The respondents are divided into two groups: male respondents and female respondents.

The participants of this focus group interview were Chinese nationals. Respondents between the age group of 18 to 55 years were approached for the study. They participants were residents of different metropolitan cities in China like; Shanghai, Beijing, and Hong Kong. This target population represents varied, age groups, gender, education level and current income level. The respondents are approached email and based on the respondents to collect consents prior to the interview.

**Data analysis process**

The collected qualitative data in this research are analyzed with coding technique. The transcripts of the interviews are firstly analyzed to determine the themes of the interview. The contents are divided into several themes, such as tourism motivation, features, and resources of Öland, expectations of tourists, and so on. Under each theme, the contents are further divided into sub-themes. For example, under the motivations of Chinese tourists, contents are divided into learning & experience, escape & relax, building a social relationship, and so on. The motivations of Chinese tourists are accompanied with the features and resources of Öland to explore how the destination can use its resources to develop the branding strategy to attract Chinese tourists.
Analysis

This chapter presents the results of the focus group interview to answer the research questions. The expectations and motivations of Chinese tourists are identified in this research. Based on this, it discusses how Öland can develop its branding strategy to attract Chinese tourists. Recommendations for the branding strategy of Öland are also proposed in this chapter based on the research results.

Overview of the results

As it presents in the above chapter, the data that collected with the focus group interview are analyzed with Table form. Table 4.1 below presents the results from interviewers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Visiting Öland</th>
<th>Have not been</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traveler segments</td>
<td>Inexperienced travelers, Experienced travelers, Students, Retired people, Newlywed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of visit</td>
<td>Visiting natural Scenery, Learning and experience, Relaxing, Getting together with friends/family members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of Visit</td>
<td>Personal: free time, adventure, designs the travel line by them own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solliden Place, Borgholm Castle, Vida Museum &amp; Art Gallery</td>
<td>Tour group: convince, get new friend in the travel, save time, and resolves language barrier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most attractive part of cultural heritage tourism in Öland</td>
<td>Traditional Food, Special festival, Transportation, Natural landscape, World heritage, Windmill, Accommodation, Nature Island scenery, Taking exotic wedding pictures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Intend to refer friends/family to visit Öland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facilities of hotel accommodation</th>
<th>Parking, power backup, Wi-Fi connection, tourist guide, ticket booking facility, Shuttle services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions to improve tourism</td>
<td>Comfortable hotel, Tour guide services, Chinese service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant tourist resource</td>
<td>Travel agency, TV programme, Network, Develop travel Apps, Newspaper, Blog, Reference to friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing strategy of local tourist agency</td>
<td>Publicity through advertisement, Collaboration with travel agencies, Set up China’s travel agency, Negotiate with the local government to make visa-free policy for Chinese tourists</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1: Overview of the results

The above table summarizes the key themes which were identified. Based on the key themes, sub-categories were identified. As per the sub-categories it can be concluded that Öland is still an unexplored location for most Chinese tourists, however the natural habitat of the Island and unique attractions in Öland if promoted well can boost the tourism.

The above table also suggests that most of the respondents have not visited Öland before this interview. Based on the presentation on Öland which included pictures and video clips, respondents indicated that they would visit Öland for their or theirs indicated that they would visit natural landscape” “world heritage” “windmill” “accommodation”. These were some of the key areas which can be regarded as the most attractive part of cultural heritage tourism in Öland. Meanwhile, comfortable hotels are also important to them when they go to visit Öland.

Further, due to their language problem, Chinese tourists also indicated their preference of tour...
group guides who can explain them about the place in their native language.

Further, in terms of advertising, the tourists have to depend only on blogs and “promotional advertisements” by local agencies and hotels on “social media”. The key suggestions identified through coding include; Chinese services, develop travel Apps, Shuttle services, better pick and drop facility at the hotel, better promotion, and availability of tour guide services.

**Awareness of Öland**

High brand awareness is the basis for Öland to attract Chinese tourists. Therefore, the focus group interview firstly investigates whether Öland has a high reputation among Chinese tourists. It is found that currently Öland still does not have high brand awareness among Chinese tourists. Only 4 out of the 20 respondents in the focus group interview have heard of this destination before, which indicates that the destination has not yet been known by Chinese tourists at present. Moreover, most of the respondents have not yet been to Öland before. Only two respondents have been to this destination before. This suggests that there is a need for the destination to brand the tourism information about the destination in advance to advertise this destination to Chinese tourists.

On the interview, the main approaches in which the respondents gain information about the destination when they plan to travel have been also explored on the focus interview. In the responses to this question, four respondents (labeled as ‘C’, ‘F’, ‘J’, and ‘S’) suggest that they mainly gain information about the destination from travel agencies. This suggests that cooperating with Chinese travel agencies or setting up China’s travel agency is an important and effective approach for Öland branding the tourist destinations and targeting Chinese tourists. Another suggestion is that the local agency could try to negotiate with the local government to make visa-free policy for Chinese tourists as visa certification has always been a hurdle in Chinese outbound traveling.

In addition to travel agencies, social media such as TV shows, movies, and the internet are also the major approaches in which Chinese tourists obtain information about tourism destinations when they plan to travel. Two respondents (labeled as ‘B’ and ‘H’) stated that
they mainly gain information about tourism destination from tourism programs on TV. For this, the sponsorship in tourism programs on TV is also a possible strategy for Öland to make the destination popular among Chinese tourists.

**Attractiveness of Öland**

After the presentation of Öland, most of the respondents answered, “I want to visit Öland which especially places like; Solliden Place, Borgholm Castle, and Vida Museum and Art Gallery”. This confirms the great potential of Öland to attract Chinese tourists. These are that major places that can be used by the destination to attract Chinese tourists.

As can be seen in the literature survey as well, Chinese tourists are among the highest spenders on hotel accommodation, which was reflected in their answers as well wherein, Hotel accommodation was found to be an important factor for tourists. Facilities which they were interested in included; parking space, Wi-Fi connection, tourist guide, and ticket booking facility at the hotel reception. Out of the respondents who have been to Öland, most of them were satisfied with the facilities available. Both the two respondents who have been to the destination before suggest that they have good experiences at the destination and the comfortable hotel is a key part of their experience. However, they gave suggestions to improve pick and drop service at the hotel for which they had to spend a lot of time waiting.

In addition to the hotel accommodation, the culture and food of the destination are also found as the key attractiveness of Öland. After we introduced Öland, most of the respondents said, “I would like to try local food, festival, heritage site and accommodation” and this was the reaction of 18 out of the 20 respondents. As a respondent (labeled as ‘K’) suggested in the interview, ‘*the featured food at this destination is most attractive for me. I think it will be the most important issue that attracts me to this destination*’. Very few respondents said that they like the windmill and natural scenery.

The good public transportation facilities also add attractiveness to the destination. A respondent who has been to the destination says that the convenient public transportation helps to leave good memories on him. Another respondent who has not been to the destination also suggests that ‘I believe that it would be an excellent memory to travel in this destination
with its featured transportation’. The positional conditions of destination (which include geographical location, economic location, traffic location and tourism location) also have a great impact on the tourism competitiveness. Different geographical locations have different resources, so the tourism attractions are also different. Good economic location cannot bring capital flow for the tourism destination to improve its competitiveness, but also take advantage of the economic development characteristic of travel destination to develop the tourism types, such as business travel, convention travel and shopping travel, and enrich tourism products and meet people different tourism demands. Good traffic location is also important for the development of tourism destination. The tourism market of destination is affected by travel distance. The improvement of transportation will increase the tourist quantity. Tourism location of tourism destination mainly means the products’ difference and relevance compared with the products in adjacent tourism areas, which has a great impact on the tourists who are in the tourism destination. Through driven by surrounding city which has advanced tourism, good tourism location can generate the regional joint effect so as to boost the local tourism development.

**Motivation of Chinese tourist**

As it presents in literature review above, tourism motivation can be divided into several types, such as experiencing, learning, leisure and relaxation, and self-improvement, etc. The main motivations that drive Chinese tourists to visit destinations abroad have also been investigated with the focus group interview. The interview finds that learning and experience is the leading motivation that drives Chinese tourists to visit world heritage, such as Öland. For some of the respondents, the main purpose of visit was to enjoy adventure sports at the beach. As a respondent (labeled as ‘M’) says in the interview, ‘*I often take traveling as the chance to experience and learn new things. I am particularly interested in cultural heritages as I can learn a lot of knowledge about the history and local cultures of the destination by visiting such sites.*’ Several other respondents also mentioned on the interview that learning and experiencing is a main purpose that they travel. They tend to believe that traveling can enrich their life experience.

Building social relationship is also found as an essential motivation of Chinese tourists
traveling abroad. 7 out of the 20 respondents have mentioned that building social relationship is the main purpose of their outbound travels. In general, building social relationship is divided into two aspects. The first one is to meet new friends at tourism destinations. Three respondents have reported that they travel with the purpose to know more friends through the traveling. The second aspect of building social relationship is taking traveling as the chance to get together with friends/family members. Four respondents have mentioned that they often travel together with friends or family members, and takes traveling as an important opportunity to spend time with friends or family member. As a respondent (labeled as ‘T’) suggested in the interview, ‘for me, traveling is an opportunity to get relaxed and spend time with someone who I care about. During traveling, we can talk and do many things together. I believe that this is an important chance for me to maintain good relationships with others’.

Enjoying natural landscape is also found as key motivation for Chinese tourist to travel. Four respondents have mentioned that traveling is the chance for them to get close to the nature and enjoy natural landscape. As a respondent (labeled as ‘F’) says on the interview, ‘In today’s society, urbanites has mere chance to get close to the nature. We are always busy with works. Under this condition, traveling abroad is a chance for us to get escape from the daily life and get close to the nature. By visiting different places, we can enjoy the natural landscapes at different places’. This not only suggests that enjoying natural landscape is a key motivation that Chinese tourist travel, but also reveals that escaping from daily pressure is also a main tourism motivation for Chinese tourists.

A minor motivation behind is taking exotic wedding pictures in other countries. According to a survey, those Chinese newlyweds regard their photos on the wall as the most important decoration at home. And of course, they prefer an exotic destination to take wedding pictures rather than an unromantic one, which implies that young Chinese newlyweds recognize taking wedding pictures abroad as a good option. Also, an exotic wedding pictures hanging in their home reminds them of their precious time abroad is a good way to build loyalty to the tourism destinations.

From the analysis, the major reason triggers Chinese outbound travelers is the process of
experiencing and learning during the trip, which is greatly consistent with the Word Heritage brand of Öland. Building social relationships is another key reason behind the traveling, but it cannot distinguish Öland from other tourist sites as it is a common appears in almost every trip. Although taking exotic wedding pictures and appreciating natural landscapes are regarded as less important motivation according to the research, the unique natural landscapes can a good way of advertising to make Öland stand out. By understanding the motivations of Chinese tourists, some recommendations have been provided in the following paragraphs.

**Recommendations**

As it is found early, currently Öland does not have high brand awareness among Chinese tourists. This sets barriers for the destination to attract Chinese tourists. Under this condition, there is a need for the destination to develop an effective branding strategy to promote the destination to Chinese tourists and form the unique brand positioning. This not only helps the destination to become more popular among Chinese tourists, but also enables the destination to differentiate itself from competitors. This section proposes recommendations on the branding strategy for Öland to promote the development in China market based on the findings of the focus group interview.

First of all, it is recommended that Öland should develop its brand positioning according to its resources, particularly the attractiveness that perceived by Chinese tourists. As it is found in the focus group interview, hotel accommodation, the culture and food, and the good transportation facilities are the key attractiveness of Öland in the perceptions of Chinese tourists. These resources should be used by the destination to differentiate it from other tourism destinations. In particular, the local culture and the featured food should be used by the destination in promotion. It is recommended that Öland should position itself as a cultural city for international tourists. Tourism environment of destination includes natural environment, cultural environment and ecological environment. These three types of environment should be used by the Öland to differentiate the destination from others. Natural environment has obvious zonal characteristic, namely, different regions have different natural landscape. Compared with natural environment, the influence factors of cultural environment are more complicated, which mainly include economic factor, political factor and social factor.
The cultural environment can provide infrastructure and tourism service facility for tourism destination and ensure the safety of tourism environment. Ecological environment is the foundation to develop tourism industry, which is also the important condition to take its sustainable development and a kind of tourism resource to attract tourists.

Second, effective promotion should be used by Öland to promote it to Chinese tourists. Most of the respondents indicated that not much promotion is done to attract tourists to Öland. Therefore, it is crucial for the destination to develop effective promotion strategy. As it is founded on the interview, TV program, internet, and travel agencies are the main approaches from which Chinese tourists gain information when they plan to travel. Therefore, it is suggested that Öland should sponsor TV program to conduct the advertising. In addition, Internet should be also used by the destination for advertising. Other than that the respondents indicated that they have read blogs from tourists who have been there before to understand the cultural heritage of the city. Therefore, blogs could be also used for advertising by the destination.
Conclusion

Rapid growth in China’s tourism makes it important to study the factors which influence their traveling behavior. This research explores how Öland, a famous cultural heritage city in Sweden, can better attract Chinese tourists by understanding the motivations of Chinese tourists and the resources of the destination. This research adopts focus group interview as the instrument to collect data to answer the research questions.

To assess the factors which can help tourism in Öland in attracting Chinese tourists’ interview schedules were conducted among Chinese tourists in the present study. It has been found that the Chinese outbound market is indisputably a growth market for European tourism, particularly Western Europe. Moreover, it is found that marketing strategies of Western Europe tourism must exist to attract the prospective tourists and its initiation must be executed (Li et al, 2013). Regarding the sources from which Chinese tourists gain information when planning to travel, the research finds that Travel agencies, TV shows, movies, and the internet are the major approaches. Therefore, the collaboration with travel agencies, make visa-free policy for Chinese tourists, sponsors in TV shows and movies can also help the destination to attract Chinese tourists. Hotel accommodation, the culture and food, and the good transportation facilities are found as the key attractiveness of Öland in the perceptions of Chinese tourists. These resources should be used by the destination to develop the differentiation strategy.

As for the main motivations for Chinese tourists to travel abroad, learning and experience, building social relationships, and enjoying natural landscape are founded as the key motivations that Chinese tourists travel abroad. There is a need for the destination to attract Chinese tourists by meeting the motivations of Chinese tourists. At present, Öland has not high brand awareness among Chinese tourists. Most of the respondents indicated that they had never been to Öland, still only after viewing photographs and videos on YouTube the participants were willing to explore Öland. Some of the respondents also indicated that they were interested in adventure and would like to try out water sports at Öland beaches.
Therefore, there is a niche for Öland tourism industry where a great market of potential Chinese customers has not been well developed and activated yet. Word of mouth recommendation may be an effective approach to achieve this. Öland should position itself as the destination for tourists to experience and learn new things. The cultural resources and the unique natural landscape must be used by the destination for the marketing strategy.

**Recommendations for further research**

The present research is conducted with some limitations. The first limitation is the small size of the sample in the focus group interview whereas China is the country with a large population size, which is not sufficiently representative to guide branding or marketing strategies. Therefore, it is not enough to select only twenty respondents as the representatives of Chinese tourists. Further research should be conducted to make up for this limitation. More respondents should be included in the further research. The second limitation of the research is that it has not compared the differences on consumer behavior between western tourists and Chinese tourist, as the geographic location of Öland determines the closest tourism market is located in western countries. Although this study regards Chinese tourists as a group of potential and promising customers to Öland, the significance of western tourists cannot be underestimated. Future research could be taken forward to study the role of different factors among Europeans and Chinese tourists in order to compare their traveling habits to develop a more advanced branding strategy.
References


**Other source:**
Turismstrategi Öland 2012-2020 (Tourism strategy Öland 2012-2020)
Appendix : Questions for interview

Q1: In the presentation, what are the main features of Öland impressed your most?

Q2: Which factor can attract to you to come to Öland?

Q3: Do you know Öland before? If yes, how do you describe the features of this destination?

Q4: Have you ever been to Öland? If yes, can you share the experience there?

Q5: In your opinion, what are the 3 most attractive heritage sites in Öland?

Q6: What are the main reasons that you travel?

Q7: Which kind of way to get the relevant tourist info when you plan to travel?

Q8: Would you like personal trip or tour group? Which one do you like/prefer to choice?

Q9: What are places you want to visit when you looking Öland’s pictures?

Q10: How should the local tourist agency to attract the tourists to Öland?

Q11: Can you provide recommendations on Öland to develop the branding strategy to attract Chinese tourists?