

Study of Chinese foreign tourist consumer patterns

By the Chinese foreign tourist consumer working group
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Abstract

I. Transition of international travel into a fully-fledged market and the climate of this market

Landmarks in the transformation of the international travel market in China: the early stages of the market (March 1983 – 1997), phase of constant growth (March 1997 – present). Obstacles to the development of the international travel market in China: level of income and consumption of inhabitants, government policy restrictions.

II. Analysis of Chinese consumer patterns for international travel

1. Consumer patterns of Chinese traveling overseas: gradual growth of the overseas travel market, middle income households are rapidly becoming the main consumers of this demand. Young and middle-aged people with a medium to high level of education and a relatively high income level also form a major part of demand.
2. In most cases foreign travel is not a one-off consumer activity. The majority of customers who go once will do so again. Overseas travel is considered by the majority of consumers to be expensive but not excessive.
3. Information about trips abroad is gleaned mainly from newspaper or magazine advertisements and to a certain extent by word of mouth.
4. Price is the main determining factor in consumer choice. The choice of a travel agency is governed principally by brand image.
5. The typical aim of foreign trips is leisure and discovery while the most common activity is shopping.
6. In the future there is likely to be a tendency to use travel agents more frequently, whereas seeing famous attractions and visiting developed countries and regions will remain the favoured pastime for tourists.

III. Development trends of consumer patterns in the Chinese foreign travel market

1. The foreign travel market is likely to see a strong progression whilst the product itself remains complex.
2. There is a preference for far-flung destinations.
3. Price is a major deciding factor for potential consumers.
4. The aim of trips abroad will change from being purely for tourism to being something closer to the idea of a holiday.
5. The means of travel will depend on the distance of the destination and the personal circumstances of the traveler.

6. There will be changes in the ways it is possible to leave the country.
7. Consumer capacity for foreign journeys will go from being artificially high to permanently high.
8. The reality of a weak culture will engender awareness of a strong culture

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusion

1. International travel is undergoing democratization. It is no longer targeted solely at high earners. Middle income consumers are increasingly able to afford it.
2. The aim of international travel is changing.
3. A growing proportion of Chinese tourists' budget is for shopping.
4. In the current context, short-haul travel is predominant.
5. Price is the main determining factor in choice of destination.
6. The choice of travel agent is primarily based on brand image.
7. Group travel group packages remain the favoured form of overseas traveling for Chinese tourists.

Recommendations:

1. Recommendations for companies in the tourism industry:

For Chinese companies: implement brand-based management strategies, have a multinational management structure based on tourist preference.

For tourism companies in the destination country: take into account the specific needs of Chinese tourists, develop new travel products. Work with the government and take an active role in promotion campaigns in the destination country. Increase cooperation with Chinese tourism companies.

2. Recommendations for government:

For the Chinese government: fine tune measures regulating the international tourist industry; actively promote the attractiveness of tourist regions. Gradually lift politically-motivated restrictions on the tourist market; increase measures facilitating overseas travel. Endeavour to build a climate favourable to the market. Promote use and spread of computerizations. Increase international cooperation.

For foreign governments at national or regional level: make strategic choices conducive to exploiting Chinese market opportunities. Improve the host environment.

[End]

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