

**Destination perceptions for Chinese Tourists:
A Comparison between Japan and South Korea**
by

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Abstract

It has been widely accepted that competitive advantage is the key to the success of organizations, regions and countries (Porter, 1980). In the tourism industry, a country's potential depends on its ability to maintain competitive advantages in its delivery of goods and services to tourists. There has been a great deal of effort focused on establishing suitable strategies and operating procedures to maintain a level of high competitiveness (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999). This paper presents findings and conclusions from an examination of the competitiveness of two tourism destinations, Japan and South Korea, while using China as a baseline. The study will compare the destination competitiveness of South Korea and Japan by using both qualitative and quantitative approaches to determine the correlation between destination competitiveness and tourism demand for each destination by using attribute importance and performance. More specifically, the research objectives are: 1) to identify Chinese tourists' perceived importance of both destinations, 2) to compare the differences between perceived importance and performance, 3) to compare the competitiveness between Japan and South Korea, and 4) to find out the correlation between tourism demand and destination competitiveness.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Background

Tourism destinations are considered the central part of the tourism system (Kozak & Rimmington, 1999). Laws (1995) classified two features of destinations: primary features including climate, ecology, culture and traditional architecture, and secondary destination features including some related equipment and facilities for tourism such as hotels, transportation and entertainment. These two main parts contribute to the overall attractiveness of a tourism destination. Competitiveness is a general concept and it directly relates to tourism demand (Dwyer & Kim, 2003). Dwyer, Forsyth & Rao (1999) pointed out three determinants of tourism demand in their study: socio-economic and demographic factors such as population, income in origin country, leisure time and education; qualitative factors such as tourist appeal, image, quality of tourist services and destination management; and price factors such as the cost of transport services and the cost of ground content.

Goodall (1992) suggested that when prices are comparable, an attractive image is a critical factor for tourists choosing a destination. During a trip, tourists' perceptions of quality and overall performance play an important role in tourism demand, which is integral for repeated business and positive word- of- mouth (Kozak & Rimmington,

1999). After a trip, tourists make comparisons regarding different aspects of their experience, such as those related to the facilities, attractions and service standards of the different destinations (Laws, 1995). A positive destination image is important for destinations to attract new tourists and to retain old ones.

In China, outbound tourism started in the early 1980s when mainland Chinese citizens were first allowed to take leisure trips to Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand at their own expense and has been growing very rapidly since the late 1990s (WTTC,2003). However, according to Arlt (2006), the Chinese government did not officially recognize the existence of the outbound tourism market until 1997. Due to its economic growth, China has been considered the leading source of outbound tourists in Asia since 2003 (Chinese tourism trends, 2008) and has also become a major tourist-generating market worldwide. According to Tourism New Zealand (2008) and Tourism Research Australia (2008), China has become New Zealand's fourth and Australia's fifth largest inbound market. China Outbound Tourism (2010) suggested that the Chinese outbound tourists expanded to 57.39 million in 2010 and will continue to grow in the future.

A few factors are considered influential to China's outbound tourism. According to Chinese Tourism Trend (2008), China's annual GDP growth has been around 8-10% or more since 2008 and the strong Chinese currency encourages the Chinese people to consume abroad. Further easing of government control is also an important reason; in most areas of China, the process of applying for a personal passport has been made much easier by eliminating complicated examinations and approvals while allowing more travel agents to practice in the outbound tourism industry. China started the

practice of “two days off in a week” in 1995 and began to create 3 week-long holidays annually in 1999 by bridging weekends and public holidays (Chinese Tourism Trend, 2008). As a result, the Chinese people have more free time to enjoy travel and are encouraged to go abroad, where they increase their consumption by spending more money on leisurely and recreational activity to enrich their life experiences. In summary, there are two distinctive factors worth emphasizing, money and time. While business-related travel still constitutes the majority of travel in China, the increasing income of Chinese residents has supported the constant growth of outbound leisure travel. The main outbound destination countries and regions for Chinese tourists are Hong Kong, Macao, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and Australia in recent years (Chinese Tourism Trend, 2008). Further, even smaller Asian countries such as Vietnam and Malaysia are now competing for Chinese tourists (Los Angeles Times, August 2, 2010). South Korea and Japan are two of the closest countries to China’s coastal regions and it only takes a two-hour flight to reach both. In addition, both countries offer high quality urban tourism experiences and they both have relaxed many policies to attract Chinese tourists. For example, the Japanese government used to only issue tourists visas to Chinese citizens who earned more than \$ 37,000 a year but now the requirement has been dropped to an annual income of \$ 8,800 to ensure that more Chinese tourists could access Japan. South Korean government also instituted some new rules encouraging teachers, retirees and graduates of prestigious universities to apply for multiple-entry visas good for one year to encourage more tourism. These policy changes increased the number of Chinese tourists to South Korea to 1.2 million in 2009 and the number of Chinese tourists to Japan to 1.1 million in 2010, which made China the biggest market of both destinations (Los Angeles Times, August 02, 2010). According to

the Los Angeles Times, (August 02, 2010), the Chinese are also considered the biggest spenders; the average expenditure of Chinese tourists is \$ 2,203. It is apparent that the competition existing between these two destinations makes this topic worth investigating.

Purpose of study

The primary objective of this study is to compare the destination competitiveness of two of the largest Chinese outbound tourism destinations: South Korea and Japan. Further purposes of this study are: 1) to identify Chinese tourists' perceived importance of both destinations; 2) to compare the differences between perceived importance and actual performance; 3) to compare the competitiveness between Japan and South Korea; 4) to find out the correlation between tourism demand and destination competitiveness.

Significance

With the steady growth of Chinese outbound tourism and its expansion over the past 10 years, research interest in the development of Chinese outbound tourism is increasingly high (Li, Harrill, Uysal, Burnett and Zhan, 2010). The effect of destination competitiveness on tourism demand has been very familiar to researchers; however, few studies have focused on the comparison of destination competitiveness between different destinations. Since none of the research specifically focused on the largest potential market in the world, China, a naturally interesting study would be one analyzing the competitiveness of China's major outbound tourism destinations. This study chooses two major outbound tourism destinations, Japan and South Korea, as research targets and compares the destination competitiveness of these two destinations to Chinese tourists. This study will determine the main competitive attributes of each destination.

Moreover, this study will help destination marketers develop suitable marketing strategies to attract more tourists from mainland China.

Research Questions

This research primarily compares the destination competitiveness of Japan and South Korea to Chinese tourists. To address the purposes of this study, the following three research questions are examined: 1) Are there any significant differences between Chinese tourists' perceptive and actual competitiveness on image attributes in Japan and South Korea? 2) Are there any significant actual competitiveness differences between Japan and South Korea? 3) Is there any correlation between destination competitiveness and tourism demand?

Summary

This chapter discussed the background of Chinese outbound tourism and the significance of destination competitiveness in the tourism industry. The purpose of this study and its significance were explained and the research questions identified.

Chapter 2: Literature

Overview

This chapter is a literature review of tourism demand and destination competitiveness. The key factors involved in this literature include tourism demand, destination competitiveness, and competitiveness related components. It is important to understand the competitiveness of tourism destinations and its definition, significance and determinants to the tourism industry. This study provides a different perspective in understanding the competitiveness of tourism destinations and highlights the relationship between destination competitiveness and tourism demand of the potential market.

Tourism demand

Tourism demand has attracted researchers for decades. According to Song and Li (2008), 121 journal papers related to tourism demand had been published from 2000 to 2008, with many of them focusing on international tourism demand. Tourism demand is defined in different ways; Chowdhary mentioned in his 2011 research that general economists defined demand as “a schedule of the amount of any product or service that people are willing and able to buy at each specific price in a set of possible prices during a specified period of time (Chowdhary, 2012, p.10),” while psychologists described tourism demand as “a perspective of motivation and behavior; why people need tourism (Chowdhary, p.2).” The most commonly used definition for tourism demand is the total number of people who travel, wish to travel, or to use tourist facilities and services at

places away from their places of work and residence (Mathieson and Wall, 1982). It is obvious that the amount of demand for travel to a specific destination is a huge concern for people who involved in the tourism industry. Goeldner and Ritchie (2008) suggested various measures of demand in their study including: 1) how many visitors arrived, 2) by what kinds of transportation, 3) how long they stayed and in what types of accommodations, and 4) how much money was spent during the trip. Some measurements have been used in the industry to make forecasts for future demand. For different research purposes, researchers used different dependent variables in tourism demand studies such as total arrivals into the country (Dritsakis, 2004; Kulendran & King, 1997), and the number of overnight stays in hotels (Garin- Munoz & Amaral, 2000). In recent years, researchers also used expenditures of foreign tourists in a receiving country as dependent variables (Witt, Song & Wanhill, 2004). From the industry perspective, tourism marketers plan future development depending on the forecasts of future demand. As such, increasing demand is clearly the most important purpose for anyone involved in the tourism industry.

According to McIntosh et al (1995), the demand for travel to a particular destination is “a function of the person’s propensity to travel and the reciprocal of the resistance of the link between origin and destination areas.” Thus,

$$\text{Demand} = f(\text{propensity, resistance})$$

Goeldner & Ritchie (2008) explained propensity as “a person’s predisposition to travel (p. 363)”, which includes their willingness to travel, types of travel experiences and types of destinations considered which are related to destination attributes. On the other hand, resistance is also related to the attractiveness of different destinations. Goeldner &

Ritchie (2008) suggested some attributes that influence tourism demand such as economic distance, cultural distance, cost of tourist services, quality of service and seasonality. Economic distance was defined as “the time and cost involved in traveling from the origin to the destination area and back (p. 364).” In normal cases, higher economic distances cause higher resistance, leading to lower tourism demand. Cultural distance refers to the cultural differences between the origin and destination areas; therefore, their relationship could be that of an inversely related one since people are more willing to travel to a destination with a similar culture as the place they live.

The seasonality effect is dependent on different destinations, but the relationship between quality of service and tourism demand is obvious; the higher the quality of service such as those relating to infrastructure, hotels, and restaurants, the higher the tourism demand. However, amongst all the attributes, the relationship between cost of services, value for money, and tourism demand is the most straightforward and has attracted researchers for years. The tremendous influence of price has been recognized from both theoretical and industrial perspectives.

Dwyer, Forsyth and Rao (1999) pointed out several determinants of demand for tourism such as socio-economic and demographic factors, qualitative factors and price factors. Socio-economic and demographic factors include population, income in origin country, leisure time, education and occupation; qualitative factors, that which could be changed over time, include variables such as tourism appeal, image, quality of services, and destination marketing and promotion; and prices factors, referring to the cost of tourism, include prices related to food and drinks, accommodation, transportation and

entertainment. Amongst these factors, price factors were the biggest influence to tourism demand (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999; Crouch, 2011).

Destination competitiveness

Researchers, organizations and policy makers have paid much attention to the subject of competitiveness in recent years. However, there are no universally accepted definitions of competitiveness (Feurer & Chaharbaghi, 1994). Newall (1992) explained competitiveness as a process to produce more and better quality goods and services that are marketed successfully to consumers at home and abroad. Similarly, Scott and Lodge (1985) defined competitiveness as a country's ability to create, produce and distribute products and services, both domestically and internationally. Feuerer and Chaharbaghi (1994) argued that the concept of competitiveness should be considered depending on different markets, shareholders and customer values.

When the subject of competitiveness is applied to the tourism industry, it is much easier to define. D' Hauteserre (2000, p. 24) defined tourist destination competitiveness as "the ability of a destination to maintain its marketing position and share and/or improve upon them through time." Hassan (2000, p. 239) suggested that the idea of destination competitiveness also includes "a destination's ability to create and integrate value-added products that sustain its resources while maintaining market position relative to competitors." Dwyer and Kim (2003) also suggested that a destination should have the ability to meet visitor needs on different aspects of the tourism experience or to offer better goods and services than other destinations.

Since managing destination competitiveness has become a major interest in recent years, many researchers have been stimulated in this area and interests regarding destination competitiveness have originated from three different focuses: specific destinations, particular aspects or general models, and theories.

For the specific destinations, in the early 1990s, Ahmed and Krohon (1990) studied United States as a tourism destination. Other studies targeted North America such as Toronto (Carmicheal, 2002), Canadian ski resorts (Hudson, Ritchie and Timur, 2004) and Las Vegas (Chon and Mayer, 1995). For the Asia-Pacific region, Hong Kong (Enright and Newton, 2004), China (Wang, Hsu & Swanson, 2012), and South Korea (Kim et al., 2001) have attracted researchers' attention. Out of North America and the Asia- Pacific region, destinations such as South Africa (Botha, Crompton and Kim, 1999), Spain and Turkey (Kozak, 2003; Kozak and Rimmington, 1999; Caber, Albayrak & Matzler, 2012) and European cities (Mazanec, 1995) have also been studied.

Since researchers agreed on the complication of competitiveness, Waheeduzzan and Ryans (1996) once divided the notion of competitiveness into four major groups of thought: the comparative advantage and price competitiveness perspective, the strategy and management perspective, the historical and socio-cultural perspective, and the development of national competitiveness. Studies such as destination management (Baker, Hayzelden, and Sussmann, 1996), destination marketing (Buhalis, 2000), quality management of destinations (Go and Govers, 2000), environmental protection of destinations (Hassan, 2000; Mihalic, 2000), and price competitiveness (Dwyer, Forsyth,

and Rao, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c) have made huge contributions to the destination competitiveness study.

Although, studies of specific destinations from different aspects have contributed to this topic, they are still limited to the object of study. Since none of these studies could be generalized, more research effort has sought to develop general models of destination competitiveness to pursue particular aspects or general models and theories. Crouch and Ritchie (1999) developed the most commonly used model based on Porter's (1998) framework of the "diamond of national competitiveness" and Smith's (1776) comparative advantages theory. The conceptual model of tourism destination competitiveness is determined by four major components including "core resources and attractors", "supporting factors and resources", "destination management", and "qualifying determinants" (Crouch and Ritchie, 1999, p.146). The core resources and attractors include primary elements such as accommodation facilities, food services, transportation facilities, major attractions, culture and history, special events, and activities. Physiographic factors are also included within this component such as climate and landscape. The supporting factors and resources include educational establishments and tourism infrastructure and provide the foundation to build a successful tourism industry. Destination management focuses on the activities and strategies that enhance the appeal of the core resources. Finally, qualifying determinants include some critically important variables such as location, overall costs and safety. Overall, this conceptual model identifies 36 attributes for covering all four factors of destination competitiveness.

Aside from the conceptual model developed by Crouch and Ritchie (1999), Heath (2002) built a model of destination competitiveness to enhance the competitiveness of South Africa. This model consists of components that he considers “foundations” and “the cement.” “Foundations” include key attractors of the destination such as accommodation, infrastructure and airline capacity and “the cement” includes other items such as communication, partnerships, information, and performance measurements. This model also emphasizes various key success drivers of the tourism destination. Dwyer and Kim (2003) further developed their own model considering national and firm competitiveness theory. The primary elements of their model include natural resources such as mountains and lakes; heritage resources such as language, cuisine, culture and customs; created resources such as tourism infrastructure, special events and festivals; and supporting resources such as accessibility and quality of services. Destination management is also considered an important component in this model. A strong interaction between destination management and tourism demand has been shown to influence the destination competitiveness.

Summary

This chapter reviewed previous literature on tourism demand and its determinants, as well as the theoretical foundations of competitiveness. In addition, it highlighted the interrelationship between tourism demand and destination competitiveness. This review also summarized the literature regarding destination competitiveness. As the most important part of the tourism industry, destination competitiveness plays an important role for destinations and tourists’ decision-making process.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Research consideration

As mentioned previously in the literature review, researchers prefer to choose a specific tourism destination to study destination competitiveness. Japan and South Korea, two of Chinese tourists' most popular outbound destinations, have many similarities and differences. Although they are both close to mainland China and offer high quality urban tourism experiences, they also have very different cultures and customs. These similarities and differences may directly influence destination competitiveness and Chinese tourism demand. For this reason, it is crucial to pay attention to the strengths and weaknesses of the destinations so that they can avoid overlapping and unhealthy competition in their development. The results from this study will lead to the improvement of tourism development of both destinations and encourage them to devise their own suitable strategies for improving their tourism industry and attracting more Chinese tourists in the future.

Research questions

The main purpose of this study is to better understand the destination competitiveness of Japan and South Korea and to contribute to the development of the tourism industry in the Asia-Pacific region. The following research questions are addressed:

RQ1: For Chinese tourists to Japan and South Korea, are there any significant differences between the perceived importance and actual satisfaction of specific destination attributes?

RQ2: Are there any significant differences in actual competitiveness between Japan and South Korea?

RQ3: Is there any correlation between destination competitiveness and tourism demand?

Research instruments

In an effort to study the differences of competitiveness between Japan and South Korea, a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches were used in this study. Qualitative approaches consisted of five in-depth interviews with a bilingual researcher to examine tourism experts' understanding of standards and values on destination competitive attributes. Also, five agents were very cooperative in granting brief interviews, each lasting approximately 20 minutes. Their responses provided important information on the backgrounds of Chinese outbound tourists and potential destination competitive attributes.

In general, all their answers were extremely helpful and relevant to factors influencing the attractiveness of a destination such as climate, visual appeal, well-known landmarks, natural landscape, and cuisine (Chon & Mayer, 1995, Dwyer & Kim, 2003, Enright & Newton, 2004, Kozak & Rimmington, 1999). Travel agents who were interviewed also noted some related cultural attributes such as notable history,

differences in culture, special events and festivals, and local way of life. Some other supporting attributes such as nightlife, quality of service, entertainment, museums and galleries, music and performances, theme parks, high quality accommodation, air transport infrastructure, and ground transport infrastructure were also proposed as destination competitiveness related attributes.

The initial survey questionnaire was developed in English first by Ms. Ge and Dr. Kim. One Chinese student who is bilingual but not involved with this research translated the questionnaire into Chinese. To ensure the accuracy of the translation and to prohibit language bias, another Chinese American student who is bilingual but not involved this research translated the Chinese version of questionnaire into English and this was compared with the original English version.

There were two sections to the questionnaire. In the first section, the respondents were asked about their demographic information, gender, age, level of education, income, and travel experience. In the second section, the respondents were asked to rate the importance of certain destination competitiveness attributes before going on the trip. After their tour concludes, they were again asked to rate their satisfaction with those destination competitiveness attributes. The ratings were implemented with a 5- point Likert scale with 1= very unimportant/ strongly dissatisfied, 2= unimportant/ dissatisfied, 3= neither, 4= important/ satisfied, and 5= very important/ strongly satisfied.

The Research Sample

Survey respondents were contacted through tour operators from five Chinese travel agencies recruited for this in-depth interview. Then, survey questionnaires were distributed through the tour operators to tourists in Beijing, Shanghai, Changchun, Xi'an and Suzhou. Just before tour groups (each tour group consisted of around 20 people) headed to S. Korea or Japan, the tourists were asked to participate in the survey to evaluate the importance of certain attributes. Then, after their trip, the same group of participants was asked to again evaluate their satisfaction with the destination. The participants were informed of the purpose of the study before they filled out the questionnaire and then they were asked to fill out the questionnaire and return it to their tour guide immediately after completion. Then, the tour guide scanned the completed questionnaire and sent them to the researcher Ms. Ge in the United States as a PDF form. Ms. Ge, who is a main researcher of this study, coded the data into SPSS format for analysis. All procedure and survey instrument were approved by Auburn University Human Subject Committee (AUHSC). No hazards are associated with this project and the confidentiality of all information was strictly protected. Five agencies including China International Tourism Service, Beijing, Spring Tour Agency, Shanghai, Suzhou Travel Service, Shenzhen, Guangdong, Changchun Travel Service, Changchun, Jilin, and Xian Travel Agency, Xian, Shanxi were involved in this study. After being coded into SPSS format, incomplete questionnaires were eliminated from the sample size. Of the questionnaires collected, 83 were unusable and 228 were coded into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 18.0.

Data Analysis

The scanned and returned questionnaires were coded into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 18.0. Descriptive and frequency analysis, T-test (Importance and performance test), and mapping were conducted to compare the differences between perceived importance and actual satisfaction and the differences in actual competitiveness between Japan and South Korea.

In addition, interviews with the travel agents were employed to ensure the validity of the content in this study. Destination competitiveness related attributes selected for the questionnaire survey were based on a combination of previous research and interview results from travel agents. The importance-performance analysis (IPA) tool was used to analyze the data. The idea of IPA originated from Martilla and James (1977) in the late 1970s. In this study, the median values were used as the crossing point to separate the grid into four quadrants. In quadrant I, attributes are perceived to be very important to the respondents and received high satisfaction ratings. In quadrant II, attributes are deemed less important to the respondents while still receiving high satisfaction ratings. For quadrant III, attributes are of low importance and also received low satisfaction ratings. Finally, for quadrant IV, these attributes are of high importance to the surveyed, but its actual performance (competitiveness) is low. The importance-performance analysis showed the combined measures of importance and actual competitiveness for each destination. If statistically significant differences between the importance and actual destination competitiveness of some tourism attributes are found, tourism marketers may use this information to develop strategies to overcome that weakness to improve their destinations.

Summary

This chapter described the methodology of the instrument design, as well as the sampling and data collection. Both qualitative and quantitative measurements were employed to ensure the validity of this study. Questionnaires were designed based on destination competitiveness models through literature review, with several changes made according to the specific destinations and feedback from the five in-depth interviews. Chinese tourists who used those five agencies were recruited and distributed the survey before their trip and collected data after they finished their trip.

Chapter 4: Results

Overview

This chapter presents the results obtained from the hard copy questionnaires. First, demographic information of the respondents is presented. Second, the relationship between importance and performance for Japan and South Korea was mapped and actual destination competitiveness is compared using Paired Sample T test.

Demographics

Table 1 reveals the demographic information of the tourists who visited Japan and South Korea. Among tourists who visited Japan, the gender was balanced: 67 were female (53.2%) and 59 were male (46.8%). However, there was a big gender disparity among tourists who visited South Korea; 75 were females (73.5%) while only 27 were males (26.5%).

Out of all the tourists who traveled to Japan, 7.9 % of them fell in the age range of 19-29. Another 22.2% of respondents were 30-39 years old, 34.1 % were 40-49 years old, 19.0% were 50-59 years old, 12.7 % were 60 years old , and 4% were 70 years old or above. The marital status of respondents were divided into six categories: with 4.8% falling into single, 16.7% falling into married with no child, 65.9% falling into married with one child, 5.6% falling into married with more than one child, and none of them falling into divorced and widowed.

The majority of respondents had a high educational background; 7.1 of respondents replied that they had finished only high school, 34.1% had attended a two-year college, 39.7% had obtained a bachelor's degree, and 19.1% had earned a master's degree or higher.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents I

		Japan		South Korea	
		Frequency (n=126)	Percent 55.3	Frequency (n= 102)	Percent 44.7
Gender	Female	67	53.2	75	73.5
	Male	59	46.8	27	26.5
Age	19-29	10	7.9	0	0
	30-39	28	22.2	6	5.9
	40-49	43	34.1	26	25.5
	50-59	24	19.0	54	52.9
	60-69	16	12.7	14	13.7
	Over 70	5	4.0	2	2.0
Marital status	Single	6	4.8	0	0
	Married with no child	21	16.7	2	2.0
	Married with one child	83	65.9	81	79.4
	Married with more than one child	7	5.6	15	14.7
	Divorced	9	7.1	4	3.9
	Widowed	0	0	0	0
Education	Less than high school	0	0	0	0
	High school	9	7.1	11	10.8
	Two- year college Degree	43	34.1	68	66.7
	Four- year college Degree	50	39.7	23	22.5
	Masters	18	14.3	0	0
	PhDs or professional degree (MD or JD)	6	4.8	0	0

Among tourists who visited South Korea, 5.9% of respondents fell in the age range of 30-39, 25.5% of respondents were 40-49 years old, 52.9 % were 50-59 years old, 13.7% were 60-69 years old, and 2.0% were 70 years old. The marital status of the respondents were also divided into six categories: with none of the respondents falling into single, 2.0% falling into married with no child, 79.4% falling into married with one

child, 14.7% falling into married with more than one child, 3.9% falling into divorced, and none of them replied as widowed. The majority of the respondents had a high school education or above; 10.8% of respondents replied that they had finished only high school, 66.7% had attended a two-year college, 22.5% had obtained a bachelor's degree, and none of them had a earned master's degree or higher.

Compared with tourists who visited Japan, tourists who visited South Korea exhibited characteristics such as having a higher female to male ratio, being older, and having a lower education background. The tour guides who were interviewed in this study provided some possible explanations. They suggested that the main reason South Korea attracted more female Chinese tourists than males was that South Korean TV shows have been popular among Chinese women for years and that those TV shows have had a huge influence on the people who watched them. Middle-aged females are the biggest fan of South Korean TV shows and the different life styles, courtesies, customs, and culture that appeared in those shows became the main attractions for Chinese female tourists. Moreover, middle-aged people also happened to have greater purchasing power than younger people and have more time and energy to dedicate to watching TV shows. Therefore, since they have more motivation and a stronger ability to afford international trips, it seems reasonable for middle-aged Chinese females to be the biggest group of tourists to South Korea.

The lower educational level issue has to do with a very important historical event in China called the Cultural Revolution, which started in Oct, 1966 and ended in Oct, 1976. According to *Discovering China* (2004), the Cultural Revolution threatened China

for ten years and it had a tremendous impact on many people, especially young students in fields such as economics. During that period of time, the Chinese “SAT” exam was cancelled and young students who were of an appropriate age for college were denied the opportunity to attend. After the Cultural Revolution ended, very few of these students received the opportunity to enroll in a college to earn a bachelor’s degree. Since those making up the majority of the tourists to South Korea are aged 50-59, which would also be the ages of those same students affected by the Cultural Revolution that may explain the lower education level.

Table 2: Demographic Profile of Respondents II

		Japan		South Korea	
		Frequency (n=126)	Percent 55.3	Frequency (n= 102)	Percent 44.7
Occupation/Job	Non- employed	0	0	3	2.9
	Individual business (Self-employed)	22	17.5	2	2.0
	Government/ Military	24	19.0	15	14.7
	Sales/ Marketing	6	4.8	0	0
	Government owned organization	28	22.2	34	33.3
	Senior management/ executive	8	6.3	0	0
	Middle management	6	4.8	0	0
	Manufacturing	5	4.0	0	0
	Clerical/ administration assistant	1	0.8	0	0
	Professional (Doctor, Lawyer, Teacher)	7	5.6	9	8.8
	Labor	0	0	0	0
	Trade/ Technician (Electrical, plumber, Construction)	9	7.1	7	6.9
	Farming/ Fishing	0	0	0	0
	Students	5	4.0	0	0
	Retired	5	4.0	5	4.0
	Others	0	0	0	0

Income	< \$24,000	3	2.4	5	4.9
	\$ 24, 001- \$ 40, 000	21	16.7	38	37.3
	\$ 40, 001- \$ 55, 000	41	32.5	42	41.2
	\$ 55, 001- \$ 70, 000	39	31.0	15	14.7
	\$ 70, 001- \$ 85, 000	15	11.9	2	0.9
	\$ Over \$ 85,001	7	5.6	0	0

According to the Table 2, the occupation of the respondents was divided into 16 different categories. Tourists who are involved with individual business (17.5%, 2.0%), Government/ Military (19.0%, 14.7%), Government owned organization (22.2%, 33.3%), professionals (5.6%, 8.8%), and Trade/ Technician (7.1%, 6.9%) comprise almost the whole market. One of the tour guides suggested that students also make up a large portion of tourists to both countries. However, since this study was conducted among people who were above 19 and most of the students were younger than the age of 19, only a low percentage of students were involved in this study. For tourists who visited Japan, the household annual incomes of the respondents were almost equally divided among the four income level categories, with 16.7% falling into \$24,001- \$40,000, 32.5% falling into \$40,001 to \$55,000, 31.0% falling into \$55,001 to \$70,000, and 11.9% falling into \$70,001 to \$85,000. For tourists who visited South Korea, the household annual incomes mainly fell into three levels, 37.3% falling into \$24,001- \$40,000, 41.2% falling into \$40,001- \$ 55,000 and 14.7% falling into \$55,001- \$70,000. According to Los Angeles Times (2010), the Japanese government issued tourists visas to Chinese citizens who earn more than \$ 8,800 a year. Since China established a one Child policy in 1979(Discovering China, 2004), a normal Chinese family was considered to consist of three people, which puts the annual household income requirement for international travel at around \$24,000.

Table 3: Trip Characteristics of Respondents

		Japan		South Korea	
		Frequency (n=126)	Percent 55.3	Frequency (n= 102)	Percent 44.7
Travel experience	Never	19	15.1	39	38.2
	1-3 times	52	41.3	49	48.0
	4-6 times	27	21.4	14	13.7
	7-9 times	22	17.5	0	0
	More than 10 times	5	4.0	0	0
Information source	Online	36	28.6	17	16.7
	Travel guidebook	12	9.5	5	4.9
	Family/ friends	40	31.7	73	71.6
	Travel agency	36	28.6	7	6.9
	Others	2	1.6	0	0
Purpose of travel	Family vacation	33	26.2	38	37.2
	Anniversary/ Honeymoon	15	11.9	10	9.8
	Business trip	30	23.8	0	0
	Shopping	22	17.5	0	0
	Visiting friends and relatives	4	3.2	0	0
	Leisure	20	15.9	34	33.3
	Travel with friends	1	0.8	20	19.6
	Attend conference	0	0	0	0
	Education/ Learning purpose	1	0.8	0	0
	Others	0	0	0	0
Revisit intention	Very unlikely	0	0	0	0
	Unlikely	1	8	0	0
	Neutral	37	29.4	19	18.6
	Likely	69	54.8	54	52.9
	Very likely	19	15.1	29	28.4
Recommend to others	Very unlikely	0	0	0	0
	Unlikely	2	1.6	0	0
	Neutral	45	35.7	0	0
	Likely	60	47.6	35	34.3
	Very likely	19	15.1	67	65.7

Table 3 showed the travel experience, information source, and purpose of travel of all the tourists in this study. Among all the respondents, 74.6% of them had international travel experience in the last three years and 11.8% travelled internationally more than seven times in the last three years. Internet (23.2%), family/ friends (49.6%) and travel agency (18.9) were shown to be the biggest sources of information when

tourists choose the destination. As one of the fastest developing countries, the power of internet does not seem as strong in China as it does in the US. The highest percentage of respondents received information from their family/ friends, which makes a positive word of mouth even more important for marketers who try to develop the Chinese market. Tourists visited South Korea mainly for family vacation (37.2%), anniversary/ honeymoon (9.8), having fun with friends (19.6%), and leisure (33.3%). The results showed that the purpose of visiting Japan is more complicated. Among the respondents who visited Japan, 26.2% of them were for family vacation, with 11.9% falling into anniversary/ honeymoon, 23.8% falling into business trip, 17.5% falling into shopping, 3.2% falling into visiting friends and relatives, 0.8% falling into education, and another 0.8 falling into travelling with friends. The purpose of travel is strongly affected by the season. Tour guides mentioned that May is a good choice for leisure tourism and family vacation since there is a long holiday in this month; however, December and January are the busiest season for business travel since both countries have large businesses (Japan: Sony, Toshiba, Toyota, Honda; South Korea: Samsung ,Hyundai Group, KIA) in China. The beginning and the end of a year is usually busy season for annual conferences and business trips. Since this survey was conduct during May, the majority of respondents replied to be travelling for vacation and leisure.

According to the results, 69.9% (either “Likely” or “Very Likely”) of respondents indicated that they would revisit Japan and the number for South Korea was 81.3% (either “Likely” or “Very Likely”). For the last question, 62.7% (either “Likely” or “Very Likely”) of respondents who visited Japan would recommend the trip to other

while 100% (either “Likely” or “Very Likely”) of those visiting South Korea would do so.

Importance and Performance analysis

Importance of attributes

Table 4: The attributes importance ranks and scores (Japan)

Importance of attributes	Japan	
	Mean	Std.
29 Personal safety	4.94	0.23
37 Well- known landmarks	4.79	0.41
36 Visual appeal	4.69	0.46
35 Value for money	4.63	0.53
7 Cuisine	4.57	0.57
34 Low cost/ price of product	4.54	0.55
27 Political stability	4.52	0.59
30 Suitability of destination price	4.52	0.56
14 Geographic location	4.44	0.56
5 Cleanness and sanitation	4.33	0.64
25 Natural landscapes (Parks)	4.31	0.69
16 Service providers quality	4.25	0.67
17 High quality accommodation	4.18	0.74
8 Delicate tourism attractions	4.06	0.99
28 Quality of ICT (Internet, Telephone, Broadband)	3.91	0.72
9 Different culture	3.85	0.81
11 Friendliness of people	3.84	0.82
4 Climate	3.83	0.62
22 Local way of life	3.76	0.95
13 Ground transportation infrastructure	3.75	0.67
18 Historic places	3.65	0.76
19 Interesting festivals	3.63	0.65
31 Special events	3.6	0.66
12 Easy to get Visa	3.59	0.86
15 Healthcare facilities (Hospital, Pharmacy)	3.55	0.8
20 Interesting architecture	3.52	0.82
3 Convenient air flight schedule	3.39	0.67
24 Music and performances	3.35	0.75
10 Entertainment facilities	3.22	0.69
23 Museums and galleries	3.22	0.8
21 Recreational opportunity (Ski, Golf, Biking, Hiking, etc)	3.21	0.82
33 Theme parks	3.1	0.77

32	Shopping	3.06	1.06
2	Accessibility of the destination	3.03	0.54
26	Nightlife	3.02	0.89
1	Access to information	2.98	0.6
6	No language barrier	2.79	0.71
38	Casinos	2.41	0.87

Note: the number in the first column means the question number. Std. means the standard deviation of each mean.

Table 4 lists the ranks and scores of the importance of certain destination attributes. Tourists who visited Japan had a very high expectation of personal safety, well-known landmarks, visual appeal, value for money, cuisine, low price products, and political stability while attributes such as man-made resources and cultural related attributes such as entertainment facility, museum and galleries recreational opportunity, theme parks, historic places, interesting festivals, interesting architecture, and music and performances ranked near the bottom of the list. For a country like Japan with a long history and rich culture, it seems interesting for cultural related attributes to be rated so low. Since this study focused on the Chinese market, one possible explanation relates to the complicated history between China and Japan, which has potentially seriously affected Chinese tourists' interest in Japanese culture and history. Another possible explanation was made based on Gearing's theory (1974) that there may be differences between what tourists say and what tourists do. According to the results, nature related attributes such as well-known landmarks and visual appeal, safety related attributes such as personal safety and political stability, and money related attributes such as value for money were considered the most important. Climate, language barrier, and some supporting factors such as ground transportation infrastructure and high quality of accommodation were also considered to be important, but not as important as safety, tourism attractions, and value for money.

Table 5: The attributes importance ranks and scores (South Korea)

Importance of attributes		South Korea	
		Mean	Std.
29	Personal safety	4.95	0.22
8	Delicate tourism attractions	4.75	0.45
37	Well- known landmarks	4.72	0.45
35	Value for money	4.69	0.53
7	Cuisine	4.66	0.62
36	Visual appeal	4.62	0.53
34	Low cost/ price of product	4.5	0.54
14	Geographic location	4.48	0.59
25	Natural landscapes (Parks)	4.46	0.68
30	Suitability of destination price	4.41	0.65
5	Cleanness and sanitation	4.4	0.66
9	Different culture	4.36	0.69
17	High quality accommodation	4.29	0.7
11	Friendliness of people	4.24	0.71
22	Local way of life	4.11	0.72
16	Service providers quality	4.1	0.67
27	Political stability	4.09	0.98
18	Historic places	4.06	0.76
19	Interesting festivals	3.94	0.69
20	Interesting architecture	3.89	0.72
4	Climate	3.83	0.72
31	Special events	3.83	0.77
13	Ground transportation infrastructure	3.69	0.7
28	Quality of ICT (Internet, Telephone, Broadband)	3.6	0.63
12	Easy to get Visa	3.51	0.79
15	Healthcare facilities (Hospital, Pharmacy)	3.4	0.75
21	Recreational opportunity (Ski, Golf, Biking, Hiking, etc)	3.36	0.83
24	Music and performances	3.36	0.83
3	Convenient air flight schedule	3.33	0.65
23	Museums and galleries	3.26	0.81
33	Theme parks	3.25	0.78
32	Shopping	3.21	0.84
10	Entertainment facilities	3.18	0.7
2	Accessibility of the destination	3.02	0.51
1	Access to information	2.93	0.53
6	No language barrier	2.88	0.75
26	Nightlife	2.86	0.93
38	Casinos	2.54	0.93

The most important attributes, according to respondents who visited South Korea in Table 5, are personal safety, dedicated tourism attractions, well- known landmarks,

value for money, cuisine, visual appeal, and low price of products. Compared with the results from people who visited Japan, the attributes on top of the list were almost the same, indicating the high importance of safety, money, and tourism attractions. Chinese tourists were shown to be more interested in Korean culture than Japanese culture. According to the Table 5, different culture, friendless of people, local way of life, historic place, interesting festivals and architecture, and special events appeared near the top.

Overall, Chinese tourists showed the biggest interest in tourism attractions and took money and safety issue very seriously. Chinese tourists also showed different interest levels for cultural related attributes depending on the country. Other supporting factors, such as ground transportation infrastructure, health care facilities, high quality of accommodation, and quality of service providers are also important to Chinese tourist, but affected the decision making process much less.

Performance of attributes

Table 6: The performance ranks and scores (Japan)

Performance of attributes		Japan	
		Mean	Std.
14	Geographic location	4.29	0.97
5	Cleanness and sanitation	4.2	0.93
4	Climate	3.98	0.87
36	Visual appeal	3.98	0.91
8	Delicate tourism attractions	3.88	0.95
29	Personal safety	3.87	0.85
32	Shopping	3.86	0.87
37	Well- known landmarks	3.85	0.85
27	Political stability	3.84	0.81
25	Natural landscapes (Parks)	3.82	0.92
16	Service providers quality	3.68	0.83

3	Convenient air flight schedule	3.67	0.73
17	High quality accommodation	3.66	0.9
28	Quality of ICT (Internet, Telephone, Broadband)	3.66	0.88
12	Easy to get Visa	3.65	0.66
13	Ground transportation infrastructure	3.64	0.73
35	Value for money	3.63	0.87
34	Low cost/ price of product	3.6	0.85
30	Suitability of destination price	3.56	0.76
15	Healthcare facilities (Hospital, Pharmacy)	3.52	0.77
2	Accessibility of the destination	3.43	0.65
1	Access to information	3.41	0.68
6	No language barrier	3.36	0.73
18	Historic place	3.33	0.75
7	Cuisine	3.23	0.81
31	Special events	3.17	0.67
19	Interesting festival	3.14	0.65
22	Local way of life	3.1	0.7
11	Friendliness of people	3.09	0.8
20	Interesting architecture	3.06	0.6
10	Entertainment facility	3.02	0.75
24	Music and performances	2.98	0.58
26	Nightlife	2.97	0.83
21	Recreational opportunity (Ski, Golf, Biking, Hiking, etc)	2.96	0.81
23	Museums and galleries	2.94	0.54
33	Theme parks	2.93	0.78
9	Different culture	2.9	0.7
38	Casinos	2.72	0.74

In this study, the first stage is to determine what Chinese tourists deem to be important in picking a travel destination and the second stage is to find out how those specific destinations actually performed. Table 6 shows the actual competitiveness (satisfaction) of certain attributes in Japan according to Chinese tourists. Among all the attributes, the mean scores ranged from the highest having a rating 4.29 to the lowest having a rating of 2.72. According to Table 6, Japan's main strengths were geographic location, cleanness and sanitation, climate, visual appeal, dedicated tourism attractions, personal safety, and shopping. Its greatest weakness is in museums and galleries, different culture, and casinos.

Table 7 shows the ranks and scores of the destination competitiveness of South Korea. Cultural related attributes such as cuisine, different culture, historic place, local way of life, museums and galleries, and interest festival performed highly according to Chinese tourists. Other than cultural related attributes, well-known landmarks, natural landscapes, and tourism attractions were also on the top of the list. According to the results, South Korea shows a very strong competitiveness in its own culture, including local way of life, special events, and festivals. Cuisine was also seen as one of the strengths.

Table 7: The performance ranks and scores (South Korea)

Performance of attributes	South Korea	
	Mean	Std.
7 Cuisine	4.43	0.72
9 Different culture	4.21	0.71
18 Historic place	4.21	0.65
22 Local way of life	4.18	0.67
23 Museums and galleries	4.18	0.7
19 Interesting festival	4.13	0.74
36 Visual appeal	4.13	0.54
24 Music and performances	4.11	0.74
5 Cleanness and sanitation	4.1	0.54
20 Interesting architecture	4.07	0.77
37 Well- known landmarks	4	0.56
31 Special events	3.97	0.8
27 Political stability	3.92	0.64
11 Friendliness of people	3.91	0.63
35 Value for money	3.9	0.5
4 Climate	3.89	0.46
14 Geographic location	3.83	0.66
25 Natural landscapes (Parks)	3.81	0.59
29 Personal safety	3.8	0.89
8 Delicate tourism attractions	3.79	0.63
30 Suitability of destination price	3.75	0.45
34 Low cost/ price of product	3.75	0.45
12 Easy to get Visa	3.31	0.73
17 High quality accommodation	3.31	0.78
16 Service providers quality	3.3	0.76

3	Convenient air flight schedule	3.28	0.62
32	Shopping	3.22	0.67
13	Ground transportation infrastructure	3.18	0.64
15	Healthcare facilities (Hospital, Pharmacy)	3.09	0.56
28	Quality of ICT (Internet, Telephone, Broadband)	3.06	0.52
1	Access to information	3.04	0.53
2	Accessibility of the destination	3.04	0.51
21	Recreational opportunity (Ski, Golf, Biking, Hiking, etc)	2.99	0.43
10	Entertainment facility	2.94	0.42
26	Nightlife	2.9	0.43
33	Theme parks	2.88	0.59
38	Casinos	2.8	0.51
6	No language barrier	2.79	0.47

For tourists from mainland China, language barrier will always be present when they plan to travel to other countries. Except for the region/country of Taiwan, there is no other country that speaks Chinese. This could be one of the most important reasons for why Chinese tend to use travel agencies when they travel abroad and this could also explain why language barrier was shown to be relatively unimportant to Chinese tourists when they decided where to go. Los Angeles Times (2010) suggested that both Japanese and South Korean governments have opened their arms to Chinese tourists through relaxed tourism related policies. Even though related attributes such as accessibility of the destination, ease of obtaining a visa, access to information, and convenience of air flight schedule did not show up on the top of the list, they still performed well. After the earthquake and the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident, Chinese tourists had avoided traveling to Japan for a while, but there has been a recent resurgence. Chinese tourists returned to Japan in big numbers after tumbling in 2011 by 26% to 1.4 million (Yuka, 2012). In 2006, around 900,000 Chinese tourists visited South Korea, making up around 26% of the total number of foreign tourists to South Korea. Three years later, in 2009,

this number increased to 1.2 million (Yuka, 2012). The future of tourism to both these countries appears to be strong.

IPA results

The IPA approach is to combine measures of both importance and performance together into a two dimensional grid and the mean scores of importance and performance were used to decide four quadrants within a plot (Oh, 2001). Figures 1 and 2 show the results for all the destination attributes plotted in the four quadrants.

Figure 1: The IPA grid for Japan

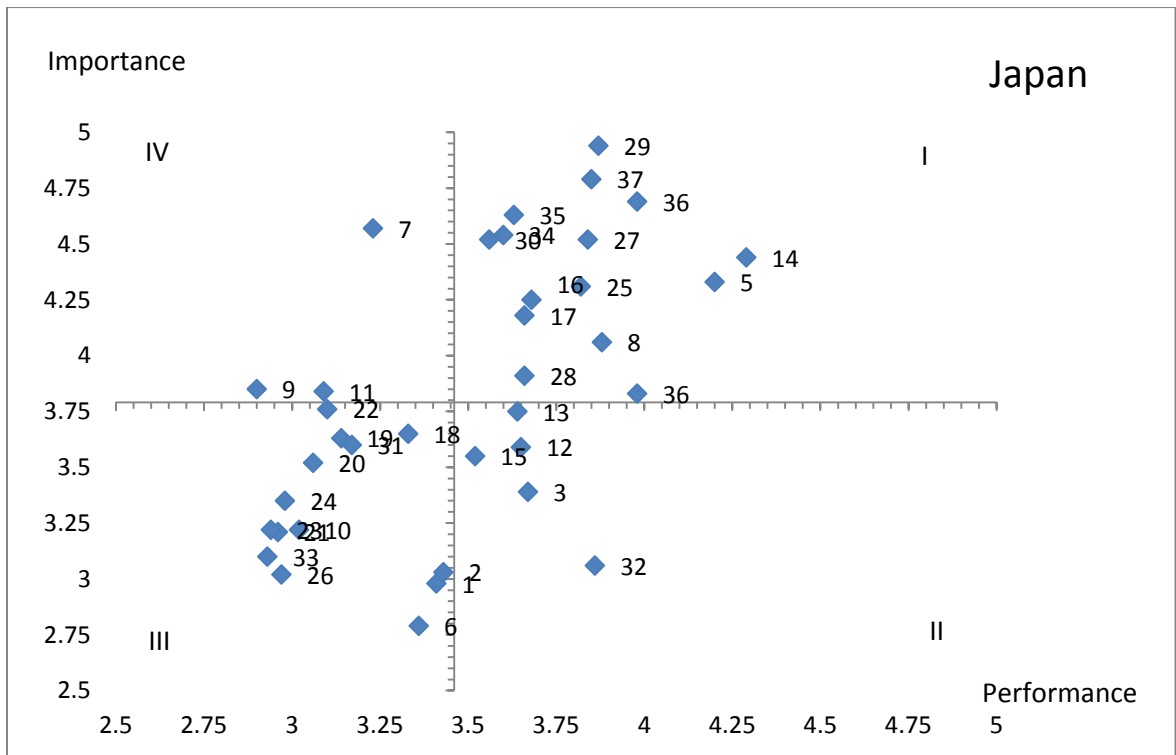


Figure 1 shows the IPA results for Japan. High importance and high performance attributes are located in Quadrant I; some examples are personal safety (29), well-known

landmarks (37), visual appeal (36), geographic location (14), value for money (35), political stability (27), low cost/ price of product (34), cleanness and sanitation (5), natural landscape (25), delicate tourism attractions (8), and quality of ICT (28).

Quadrant II includes attributes that are low in importance but high in relative competitiveness and those attributes may identify as “wasted effort”. However, nothing was “wasted” for tourists. Take “shopping (32)” for example; the importance of shopping appears to be low, but the standard deviation is high, meaning some of the tourists rated shopping as a very important reason for choosing Japan as their destination. The IPA grid was created based on the average score of attributes but it ignores some special cases and personal preferences. Therefore, even though some attributes fall into Quadrant II and III, it does not mean they are unimportant and should not be ignored by destination marketers. Quadrant III identifies an area of low priority, including attributes that are neither particularly competitive nor important. Some of these attributes are local way of life (22), interest festivals (19), historic place (18), museums and galleries (23), nightlife (26), no language barrier (6), casinos (38), entertainment facilities (10), and music and performance (24). Quadrant IV includes attributes such as cuisine (7), different culture (9), and friendliness of people (11) that warrant special attention. Since China has a rich history in food, many Chinese people are very passionate about it so cuisine (7) is definitely an important attribute for Chinese tourists. A reason for its relatively lower performance rating may be because some of the tourists feel uncomfortable with the raw food offered in Japan; this holds especially true for middle-aged people or older, which make up a large portion of the surveyed. The other two attributes, different culture (9) and friendliness of people (11), are clearly related with previously discussed historic issues and may be ameliorated with time.

Figure 2: The IPA grid for South Korea

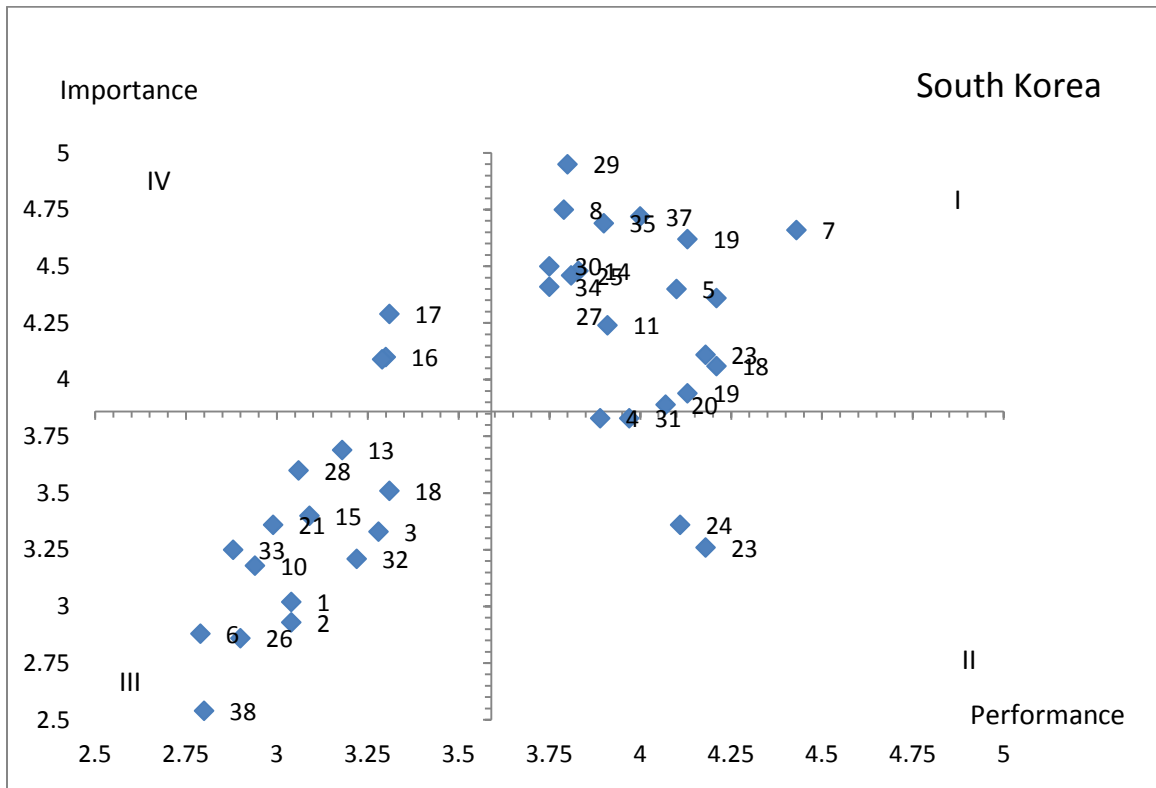


Figure 2 shows the IPA results for South Korea. In the case of South Korea, attributes such as cuisine (7), delicate tourism attractions(8), interesting festivals(19), friendless of people (11), personal safety (29), political stability (27), suitability of destination price(30), value for money (35), and low cost/price product (34) are considered to be highly important and very competitive. Quadrant II includes attributes that are low in importance but high in relative competitiveness; examples are museums and galleries (23) and music and performances (24). Quadrant III includes attributes such as ground transport infrastructure (13), quality of ICT (28), healthcare facilities (15), convenient air flight schedule (3), recreational opportunity (21), theme parks (33),

shopping (32), access to information (1), casinos (38), and nightlife (26) and are considered to be less competitive and less important among all the tested attributes. The most important attributes to look will be the ones in Quadrant IV, which are service provider's quality (16) and high quality accommodation (17) with high importance but low performance. These attributes reflected the shortage of tourism industry in South Korea. Interestingly, compared with the IPA results of Japan, most of the cultural related attributes fall into Quadrant I while very few attributes fall into Quadrants II and IV, representing a high satisfaction with Chinese tourists.

The results indicate that both countries should maintain its strong competitiveness in safety and natural resource related attributes which are at the heart of tourism promotion efforts. In addition, Japan should focus more on cultural and historic related attributes and build a healthy, normal political relationship with China. On the other hand, South Korea should keep developing its advantages in cultural related attributes considering they are the main attractions to Chinese tourists and continue improving supporting factors such as accommodation facilities and other facilities to ensure tourists a comfortable trip.

Paired sample T-test

Tables 8 and 9 highlight the mean importance and performance values of Japan and South Korea for each of the 38 attributes and the I/P difference scores for each variable. If the value of alpha (sig.) is less than 0.05, there is a significant difference between importance and performance of the attribute.

Table 8: Analysis of I/P variable scores (Japan)

	Attributes	Mean Importance	Mean Performance	I/P Differences	Sig.
1	Access to information	2.98	3.41	-0.43	.000
2	Accessibility of the destination	3.03	3.43	-0.4	.000
3	Convenient air flight schedule	3.39	3.67	-0.28	.001
4	Climate	3.83	3.98	-0.15	.128
5	Cleanness and sanitation	4.33	4.2	0.13	.216
6	No language barrier	2.79	3.36	-0.57	.000
7	Cuisine	4.57	3.23	1.34	.000
8	Delicate tourism attractions	4.06	3.88	0.18	.154
9	Different culture	3.85	2.9	0.95	.000
10	Entertainment facility	3.22	3.02	0.2	.025
11	Friendliness of people	3.84	3.09	0.75	.000
12	Easy to get Visa	3.59	3.65	-0.06	.482
13	Ground transportation infrastructure	3.75	3.64	0.11	.243
14	Geographic location	4.44	4.29	0.15	.172
15	Healthcare facilities (Hospital, Pharmacy)	3.55	3.52	0.03	.797
16	Service providers quality	4.25	3.68	0.57	.000
17	High quality accommodation	4.18	3.66	0.52	.000
18	Historic place	3.65	3.33	0.32	.001
19	Interesting festival	3.63	3.14	0.49	.000
20	Interesting architecture	3.52	3.06	0.46	.000

21	Recreational opportunity (Ski, Golf, Biking, Hiking, etc)	3.21	2.96	0.25	.016
22	Local way of life	3.76	3.1	0.66	.000
23	Museums and galleries	3.22	2.94	0.28	.001
24	Music and performances	3.35	2.98	0.37	.000
25	Natural landscapes (Parks)	4.31	3.82	0.49	.000
26	Nightlife	3.02	2.97	0.05	.662
27	Political stability	4.52	3.84	0.68	.000
28	Quality of ICT (Internet, Telephone, Broadband)	3.91	3.66	0.25	.005
29	Personal safety	4.94	3.87	1.07	.000
30	Suitability of destination price	4.52	3.56	0.96	.000
31	Special events	3.6	3.17	0.43	.000
32	Shopping	3.06	3.86	-0.8	.000
33	Theme parks	3.1	2.93	0.17	.073
34	Low cost/ price of product	4.54	3.6	0.94	.000
35	Value for money	4.63	3.63	1	.000
36	Visual appeal	4.69	3.98	0.71	.000
37	Well- known landmarks	4.79	3.85	0.94	.000
38	Casinos	2.41	2.72	-0.31	.005

According to Table 8, there are no significant differences between importance and performance for attributes such as climate (4), cleanness and sanitation (5), delicate tourism attractions (8), easy to get visa (12), ground transport infrastructure (13), geographic location (14), healthcare facilities (hospital, pharmacy) (15), nightlife (26), and theme parks (33). For some attributes such as access to information (1), accessibility of the destination (2), convenient air flight schedule (3), no language barrier (6), shopping (32) and casinos (38), the I/P differences appear to be negative, which means the performance of those attributes was higher than expected. For the rest of the attributes, cuisine (7), different culture (9), entertainment facilities (10), friendliness of people (11), service provider's quality (16), high quality of accommodation (17),

historic place (18), interesting festival (19), interesting architecture (20), recreational opportunity (21), local way of life (22), museums and galleries (23), and quality of ICT (28), they are considered to be lower than expected. Further improvements for these attributes are necessary for Japan.

Table 9: Analysis of I/P variable scores (South Korea)

	Attributes	Mean Importance	Mean Performance	I/P Differences	sig
1	Access to information	2.93	3.04	-0.11	.124
2	Accessibility of the destination	3.02	3.04	-0.02	.774
3	Convenient air flight schedule	3.33	3.28	0.05	.590
4	Climate	3.83	3.89	-0.06	.520
5	Cleanness and sanitation	4.4	4.1	0.3	.001
6	No language barrier	2.88	2.79	0.09	.307
7	Cuisine	4.66	4.43	0.23	.010
8	Delicate tourism attractions	4.75	3.79	0.96	.000
9	Different culture	4.36	4.21	0.15	.114
10	Entertainment facility	3.18	2.94	0.24	.004
11	Friendliness of people	4.24	3.91	0.33	.001
12	Easy to get Visa	3.51	3.31	0.2	.110
13	Ground transportation infrastructure	3.69	3.18	0.51	.000
14	Geographic location	4.48	3.83	0.65	.000
15	Healthcare facilities (Hospital, Pharmacy)	3.4	3.09	0.31	.001
16	Service providers quality	4.1	3.3	0.8	.000
17	High quality accommodation	4.29	3.31	0.98	.000
18	Historic place	4.06	4.21	-0.15	.156
19	Interesting festival	3.94	4.13	-0.19	.061
20	Interesting architecture	3.89	4.07	-0.18	.072
21	Recreational opportunity (Ski, Golf, Biking, Hiking, etc)	3.36	2.99	0.37	.000
22	Local way of life	4.11	4.18	-0.07	.480
23	Museums and galleries	3.26	4.18	-0.92	.000
24	Music and performances	3.36	4.11	-0.75	.000
25	Natural landscapes (Parks)	4.46	3.81	0.65	.000

26	Nightlife	2.86	2.9	-0.04	.710
27	Political stability	4.09	3.92	0.17	.000
28	Quality of ICT (Internet, Telephone, Broadband)	3.6	3.06	0.54	.000
29	Personal safety	4.95	3.8	1.15	.000
30	Suitability of destination price	4.41	3.75	0.66	.000
31	Special events	3.83	3.97	-0.14	.199
32	Shopping	3.21	3.22	-0.01	.924
33	Theme parks	3.25	2.88	0.37	.000
34	Low cost/ price of product	4.5	3.75	0.75	.000
35	Value for money	4.69	3.9	0.79	.000
36	Visual appeal	4.62	4.13	0.49	.000
37	Well- known landmarks	4.72	4	0.72	.000
38	Casinos	2.54	2.8	-0.26	.012

Table 9 shows the results for destination attributes in South Korea. There are no significant differences between importance and performance for attributes such as access to information (1), accessibility of destination (2), convenient air flight schedule (3), climate (4), no language barrier (6), different culture (9), easy to get visa (12), historic place (18), interesting festivals (19), interesting architecture (20), local way of life (22), nightlife (26), special events (31), and shopping (32). Only three attributes: museums and galleries (23), music and performance (24) and casinos (38) show a positive I/P score, representing a higher actual performance than tourists' expectations. The rest of the attributes, cleanness and sanitation (5), cuisine (7), delicate tourism attractions (8), entertainment facility (10), friendliness of people (11), ground transportation infrastructure (13), geographic location (14), healthcare facilities (15), service providers quality (16), high quality accommodation (17), recreational activities (21), natural landscape (25), political stability (27), quality of ICT (28), personal safety (29), suitability of destination price (30), theme park (33), low cost/ price of product (34),

value for money (35), visual appeal (36), well- known landmarks (37), and casinos (38) showed to have significant differences between Importance and performance.

Table 10: Comparative importance scores (Japan vs. South Korea)

	Attributes	Mean Importance Japan	Mean Importance S. Korea	Differences	Sig
1	Access to information	2.98	2.93	0.05	.456
2	Accessibility of the destination	3.03	3.02	0.01	.892
3	Convenient air flight schedule	3.39	3.33	0.06	1.000
4	Climate	3.83	3.83	0	.846
5	Cleanness and sanitation	4.33	4.4	-0.07	.530
6	No language barrier	2.79	2.88	-0.09	.497
7	Cuisine	4.57	4.66	-0.09	.500
8	Delicate tourism attractions	4.06	4.75	-0.69	.000
9	Different culture	3.85	4.36	-0.51	.001
10	Entertainment facility	3.22	3.18	0.04	.769
11	Friendliness of people	3.84	4.24	-0.4	.010
12	Easy to get Visa	3.59	3.51	0.08	.147
13	Ground transportation infrastructure	3.75	3.69	0.06	.830
14	Geographic location	4.44	4.48	-0.04	.227
15	Healthcare facilities (Hospital, Pharmacy)	3.55	3.4	0.15	.652
16	Service providers quality	4.25	4.1	0.15	.461
17	High quality accommodation	4.18	4.29	-0.11	.930
18	Historic place	3.65	4.06	-0.41	.000
19	Interesting festival	3.63	3.94	-0.31	.000
20	Interesting architecture	3.52	3.89	-0.37	.012
21	Recreational opportunity (Ski, Golf, Biking, Hiking, etc.)	3.21	3.36	-0.15	.288
22	Local way of life	3.76	4.11	-0.35	.001
23	Museums and galleries	3.22	3.26	-0.04	.622
24	Music and performances	3.35	3.36	-0.01	1.000
25	Natural landscapes (Parks)	4.31	4.46	-0.15	1.000
26	Nightlife	3.02	2.86	0.16	.619
27	Political stability	4.52	4.09	0.43	.005
28	Quality of ICT (Internet,	3.91	3.6	0.31	.120

	Telephone, Broadband)				
29	Personal safety	4.94	4.95	-0.01	1.000
30	Suitability of destination price	4.52	4.41	0.11	.240
31	Special events	3.6	3.83	-0.23	.086
32	Shopping	3.06	3.21	-0.15	.426
33	Theme parks	3.1	3.25	-0.15	.379
34	Low cost/ price of product	4.54	4.5	0.04	.716
35	Value for money	4.63	4.69	-0.06	.625
36	Visual appeal	4.69	4.62	0.07	.682
37	Well- known landmarks	4.79	4.72	0.07	.633
38	Casinos	2.41	2.54	-0.13	.448

Table 10 shows the significant differences between importance scores for the two countries. According to the results, most of the differences appear in cultural related attributes such as delicate tourism attractions (8), different culture (9), friendliness of people (11), historic place (19), interesting architecture (20), and local way of life (22). Tourists visiting Japan seemed to have less of an interest in culture and history, which could be explained by the history between China and Japan. On the other hand, tourists who visited South Korea showed more interest in the culture, especially local way of life.

Table 11: Comparative performance scores (Japan vs. South Korea)

	Attributes	Mean Performance Japan	Mean Performance S. Korea	Differences	Sig
1	Access to information	3.41	3.04	0.37	.005
2	Accessibility of the destination	3.43	3.04	0.39	.001
3	Convenient air flight schedule	3.67	3.28	0.39	.003
4	Climate	3.98	3.89	0.09	.501
5	Cleanness and sanitation	4.2	4.1	0.1	.792
6	No language barrier	3.36	2.79	0.57	.000
7	Cuisine	3.23	4.43	-1.2	.000
8	Delicate tourism attractions	3.88	3.79	0.09	1.000

9	Different culture	2.9	4.21	-1.31	.000
10	Entertainment facility	3.02	2.94	0.08	.566
11	Friendliness of people	3.09	3.91	-0.82	.000
12	Easy to get Visa	3.65	3.31	0.34	.001
13	Ground transportation infrastructure	3.64	3.18	0.46	.000
14	Geographic location	4.29	3.83	0.46	.004
15	Healthcare facilities (Hospital, Pharmacy)	3.52	3.09	0.43	.001
16	Service providers quality	3.68	3.3	0.38	.063
17	High quality accommodation	3.66	3.31	0.35	.224
18	Historic place	3.33	4.21	-0.88	.000
19	Interesting festival	3.14	4.13	-0.99	.000
20	Interesting architecture	3.06	4.07	-1.01	.000
21	Recreational opportunity (Ski, Golf, Biking, Hiking, etc)	2.96	2.99	-0.03	.276
22	Local way of life	3.1	4.18	-1.08	.000
23	Museums and galleries	2.94	4.18	-1.24	.000
24	Music and performances	2.98	4.11	-1.13	.000
25	Natural landscapes (Parks)	3.82	3.81	0.01	.604
26	Nightlife	2.97	2.9	0.07	.281
27	Political stability	3.84	3.92	-0.08	.000
28	Quality of ICT (Internet, Telephone, Broadband)	3.66	3.06	0.6	.000
29	Personal safety	3.87	3.8	0.07	.469
30	Suitability of destination price	3.56	3.75	-0.19	.001
31	Special events	3.17	3.97	-0.8	.000
32	Shopping	3.86	3.22	0.64	.000
33	Theme parks	2.93	2.88	0.05	1.000
34	Low cost/ price of product	3.6	3.75	-0.15	.145
35	Value for money	3.63	3.9	-0.27	.010
36	Visual appeal	3.98	4.13	-0.15	.357
37	Well- known landmarks	3.85	4	-0.15	.132
38	Casinos	2.72	2.8	-0.08	.217

Table 11 shows the results of performances between Japan and South Korea.

There are many significant differences between the two countries. Starting with the supporting factors such as access to information (1), accessibility of the destination (2),

convenient air flight schedule (3), no language barrier (6), easy to get visa (12), ground transport infrastructure (13), healthcare facilities (15), quality of ICT (28), although South Korea has good supporting facilities, Japan may have even better ones. Following with the cultural factors such as cuisine (7), different culture (9), friendliness of people (11), historic place (18), interesting festivals (19), interesting architecture (20), museums and galleries (23), music and performances (24), and special events (31), the results again show the cultural strength of South Korea. In comparing the price related attributes, South Korea seems to have more of an advantage in that aspect.

Table 12: Comparative Importance-Performance scores (Japan vs. South Korea)

	Attributes	Mean Difference IM-PF Japan	Mean Difference IM-PF S. Korea	F-value	Sig
1	Access to information	-.4365	-.1078	9.006	.003
2	Accessibility of the destination	-.3968	-.0196	12.238	.001
3	Convenient air flight schedule	-.2778	.0490	6.870	.009
4	Climate	-.1587	-.0588	0.500	.480
5	Cleanliness and sanitation	.1270	.3039	1.676	.196
6	No language barrier	-.5714	.0882	25.306	.000
7	Cuisine	1.3413	.2256	75.473	.000
8	Delicate tourism attractions	.1825	.9608	234.367	.000
9	Different culture	.9444	.1569	31.850	.000
10	Entertainment facility	.2603	.2353	0.054	.816
11	Friendliness of people	.7540	.3235	8.379	.004
12	Easy to get Visa	-.0635	.1961	3.070	.081
13	Ground transportation infrastructure	.1032	.5098	9.525	.002
14	Geographic location	.1508	.6471	11.228	.001
15	Healthcare facilities (Hospital, Pharmacy)	.0238	.3137	4.719	.031
16	Service providers quality	.5714	.7941	2.616	.107
17	High quality accommodation	.5238	.9804	9.177	.003
18	Historic place	.3175	-.1471	11.449	.001

19	Interesting festival	.4841	-.1863	26.889	.000
20	Interesting architecture	.4603	-.1765	21.877	.000
21	Recreational opportunity (Ski, Golf, Biking, Hiking, etc)	.2540	.3725	.706	.402
22	Local way of life	.6587	-.0685	23.661	.000
23	Museums and galleries	.2778	-.9118	82.130	.000
24	Music and performances	.3651	-.7451	58.028	.000
25	Natural landscapes (Parks)	.4921	.6471	1.192	.276
26	Nightlife	.0476	-.0392	0.321	.572
27	Political stability	.6825	.7941	.702	.403
28	Quality of ICT (Internet, Telephone, Broadband)	.2540	.5392	5.657	.018
29	Personal safety	1.0794	1.1471	0.311	.578
30	Suitability of destination price	.9524	.6569	6.157	.014
31	Special events	.4286	-.1373	18.976	.000
32	Shopping	-.7937	-.0098	25.950	.000
33	Theme parks	.1667	.3725	2.396	.123
34	Low cost/ price of product	.9444	.7451	2.944	.088
35	Value for money	1.0079	.7843	3.384	.067
36	Visual appeal	.7143	.4902	3.651	.057
37	Well- known landmarks	.9366	.7157	3.976	.047
38	Casinos	-.3096	-.2647	.088	.767

Table 12 shows the comparative Importance-Performance scores of Japan and South Korea. In the last few paragraphs, the differences between comparative importance and comparative performances for both countries have been discussed. However, an important issue to discuss is that the two groups of respondents may have had different standards when evaluating each destination. Since none of these respondents evaluated both countries, another comparative statistical test has been done to compare the differences of IM- PE (differences between Importance and Performance) of Japan and South Korea. Seventeen attributes were shown to have no significant differences between Japan and South Korea, such as convenient air flight schedule (3) climate (4), cleanness and sanitation (5), entertainment facility (10), easy to get Visa

(12), service providers quality (16), recreational opportunity (21), natural landscapes (25), nightlife (26), political stability (27), personal safety (29), theme parks (33), low cost/ price of product (34), value for money (35), visual appeal (36), well- known landmarks (37), and casinos(38). Significant differences are shown between the two countries for the remainder of the attributes: access to information (1), accessibility of the destination (2), no language barrier (6), cuisine (7), delicate tourism attractions (8), different culture (9), friendliness of people (11), ground transportation infrastructure (13), geographic location (14), healthcare facilities (15), high quality accommodation (17), historic place (18), interesting festival (19), interesting architecture (20), local way of life (22), museums and galleries (23), music and performances (24), quality of ICT (Internet, Telephone, Broadband) (28), suitability of destination price (30), special events (31) and shopping (32). Among these factors, most of them are cultural-related, representing the different attitudes of Chinese tourists towards Japanese and Korean culture. Some are supporting factors and related to facilities.

Multiple regression

Table 13: Regression results of revisit intention and IM-Performance variables (Japan vs. S. Korea)

	Attributes	Japan			S. Korea		
		Beta	t-value	Sig	Beta	t-value	Sig
2	Accessibility of the destination	-.371	-3.995	.000			
7	Cuisine	.140	2.077	.04			
11	Friendliness of people				.251	2.799	.006
35	Value for money	.187	2.654	.009			

Table 13 shows the regression results of revisit intention of Chinese tourists to both countries. According to the results, four attributes are listed in this table, accessibility of the destination (2), cuisine (7), friendliness of people (11) and value for money (35). Among these attributes, three of them, accessibility of the destination (2), cuisine (7) and value for money (35), are considered to affect Chinese tourists' intention to revisit Japan. Chinese people are interested in all types of food and cuisine is also one of the most important attributes when Chinese tourists consider when choosing where to visit. Japanese cuisine is prepared in a healthy way and maintaining its natural flavor is very important in food preparation. According to this study, some middle-aged Chinese tourists may feel uncomfortable about eating raw fish in Japan, but this will likely be less of an issue for younger generations, who are more open to all types of ethnic food. Japan should make full use of its advantages on cuisine. The cost of visiting Japan has been high in the past years, and the cost is affordable to middle- class Chinese families. Japan is also a good place for shopping, especially for designer bags, clothes and jewelry; the price of luxury products is much lower in Japan than it is in China. Emphasizing the value of money will attract more tourists to Japan and encourage return visitors. Accessibility of destination has also been shown to influence the intention to revisit. Japan has no specific policies to encourage revisitation such as by simplifying the visa application process for people who revisit. Friendliness of people also affects the revisit intention of Chinese tourists; marketers should spend more money on advertising the friendliness of people in South Korea to encourage revisits. The overall intention of revisit is high (Japan, 69.9% and South Korea, 81.3%), showing a bright future for tourism in both countries.

Table 14: Regression results of recommend to others and Performance variables (Japan vs S. Korea)

		Japan	S. Korea
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	Attributes	Beta	t-value	Sig	Beta	t-value	Sig
12	Easy to get Visa				.159	2.799	.006
28	Quality of ICT (Internet, Telephone, Broadband)				-.214	- 2.786	.007
32	Shopping				-.127	- 2.161	.034

Table 14 shows the regression results of Chinese tourists' intention to recommend destinations to others. Three attributes are shown to affect tourists' intention to recommend South Korea to their friends. It is important to highlight "easy to get Visa" to potential tourists because it will stimulate their willingness to travel South Korea. For the other two attributes, quality of ICT and shopping, it seems unnecessary to emphasize quality of ICT and shopping since Hong Kong and Japan have absolute advantages on shopping in the Pacific Asia and quality of ICT is good in both countries. There is no attribute shown in regression results for Japan.

Summary

This chapter illustrated the statistical results of this study. The demographic information of the respondents, including age, income, gender, education, occupation, travel experience, and their purpose of travel, were presented first. The mean scores and standard deviation of 38 variables were calculated and analyzed to interpret the overall satisfaction of the destinations, and its relationship to the demographic information was explained. In addition, from the Importance- Performance Analysis, the strengths and weakness were easily observed from IPA grid. Lastly, the correlation between tourism demand and destination competitiveness is also briefly discussed. The results,

addressing the research questions as well as the implications and suggestions for future research, are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Overview

This chapter addresses the purpose of this study and the research questions. The results of the study are discussed, and possible explanations are given for the differing performance of the two tourism destinations. The implications of the results are examined. Lastly, both academic and practical implications are illustrated, and limitations and future research are discussed.

Purpose of the research

This study has achieved the primary purpose as proposed in Chapter 1: to compare the destination competitiveness of two of the largest Chinese outbound tourism destinations: South Korea and Japan. More specifically, the purposes of study are: 1) to identify Chinese tourists' perceived importance for both destinations; 2) to compare the differences between perceived importance and actual performance; 3) to compare the competitiveness between Japan and South Korea and 4) to determine the correlation between tourism demand and destination competitiveness. This study was designed specifically for Chinese market and many historic events traditions were involved.

Addressing the research questions

Each of the three research questions is examined in light of the reported findings of this study. Answers to the following questions are described as follows.

RQ1: Are there any significant differences between Chinese tourists' perceptiveness and actual competitiveness on image attributes in Japan and South Korea?

Starting with Japan, significant differences between importance and performance are found according to the results. Specifically, of the 38 variables measured in the survey, only 11 variables are identified as not significantly different: climate (4), cleanness and sanitation (5), delicate tourism attractions (8), easy to get Visa (12), ground transport infrastructure (13), geographic location (14), healthcare facilities (hospital, pharmacy) (15), nightlife (26), quality of ICT (Internet, Telephone, Broadband) (28), theme parks (33), and casinos (38). Of the other 27 variables, the differences between the importance and performance are statistically significant. For those attributes identified as significantly different, one group performed beyond tourists' expectation while the other group needs improvement. According to the results, Japan needs to pay attention to its cultural related attributes, due to history between China and Japan; however, the improvements may not be easy to make. Nonetheless, the impact may fade with time, especially among young generations. Besides that, Japan should also maintain its strong competitiveness in offering high quality and luxurious travel experiences in the future.

For South Korea, 14 out of 38 attributes are identified as not significantly different: access to information (1), accessibility of destination (2), convenient air flight schedule (3), climate (4), no language barrier (6), different culture (9), easy to get visa (12), historic place (18), interesting festivals (19), interesting architecture (20), local way

of life (22), nightlife (26), special events (31), and shopping (32). Among these attributes, most of them belonged to cultural related attributes and others are related to government policies. Since there are no significant differences between importance and performance, these attributes performed as well as tourists expected. Among the rest of 24 attributes, attributes related to supporting facilities seem to fall short of tourists' expectations, especially for attributes such as access to information (1), accessibility of the destination (2), convenient air flight schedule (3), no language barrier (6), cuisine (7), different culture (9), entertainment facilities (10), friendliness of people (11), service provider's quality (16), high quality of accommodation (17), historic place (18), interesting festival (19), interesting architecture (20), recreational opportunity (21), local way of life (22), museums and galleries (23), quality of ICT (28), shopping (32) and casinos (38). The "I/P differences" scores appear to be negative, which means the performance of those attributes was higher than expected. For the remained of the attributes, Since the largest potential group to visit South Korea is middle-aged women, who tend to be very fastidious about their travel experiences and also freely share the word of mouth of their experiences to their like-aged friends, this group holds a significant influence over the market. Therefore, destination marketers should give serious attention to this group and design more touristic activities that will attract people within this group.

RQ2: Are there any significant actual competitiveness differences between Japan and South Korea?

Table 12 answers the second research question for this study. No significant differences are found between Japan and South Korea for seventeen attributes:

convenient air flight schedule (3) climate (4), cleanness and sanitation (5), entertainment facility (10), easy to get Visa (12), service providers quality (16), recreational opportunity (21), natural landscapes (25), nightlife (26), political stability (27), personal safety (29), theme parks (33), low cost/ price of product (34), value for money (35), visual appeal (36), well-known landmarks (37), and casinos (38). Significant differences are found between the countries for the other 21 attributes: access to information (1), accessibility of the destination (2), no language barrier (6), cuisine (7), delicate tourism attractions (8), different culture (9), friendliness of people (11), ground transportation infrastructure (13), geographic location (14), healthcare facilities (15), high quality accommodation (17), historic place (18), interesting festival (19), interesting architecture (20), local way of life (22), museums and galleries (23), music and performances (24), quality of ICT (Internet, Telephone, Broadband) (28), suitability of destination price (30), special events (31) and shopping (32).

RQ3: Is there any correlation between destination competitiveness and tourism demand?

According to Table 13 and 14, there is correlation between destination competitiveness and tourism demand. In this study, tourism demand includes two parts, revisit tourists and potential tourists. In the questionnaire, respondents were asked about their intention to revisit and their willingness to recommend this destination to their friends and make them potential tourists. According to the survey results, 69.9% (either “Likely” or “Very Likely”) of respondents who visited Japan indicated that they would visit Japan again and 81.3% (either “Likely” or “Very Likely”) were willing to revisit South Korea. For the last question of recommending to friends, 62.7% (either “Likely”

or “Very Likely”) of respondents who visited Japan and 100% (either “Likely” or “Very Likely”) of respondents who visited South Korea showed their willingness to recommend destinations to their friends. The results from multiple regression show correlation between destination competitiveness and intention of revisit. Three attributes were shown to affect Chinese tourists’ intention to revisit Japan: accessibility of the destination (2), cuisine (7) and value for money (35). Friendliness of people (11) is the only attribute that affects the revisit intention of Chinese tourists to South Korea however. Three attributes are shown to affect tourists’ intention to recommend South Korea to their friends, including easy to get visa, quality of ICT, and shopping while there is no attribute shown to affect respondents’ intention to recommend Japan to their friends.

Contribution and significance

This study makes several contributions to enrich the academic literature. First, this study focused on one specific big market, China, and explained in detail the uniqueness of this market. As a developing country, there is very few research based on China. Although the result cannot be generalized, it is more focused. Compared with some other studies, this study involved the history, culture, and living habit of China and Chinese people so that it can be applied to the real world.

Secondly, this study compared two destinations and determined the competitiveness of each. Most of the studies in this area focused on one destination and found out its strengths and weaknesses. However, this study not only found out the strengths and weakness of both destinations but also explained how to make full use of

those own advantages in to show their uniqueness and avoid unhealthy competition. Since Japan and South Korea are two of the biggest tourism destinations of Chinese tourists, competition naturally exists between them. This study provides a big picture view for destination marketers to see the risks and opportunities.

Implications

One of the important purposes of this study was to find out each destination's own advantage and make full use of it. Japan has more advantages in shopping and offering high quality and luxurious travel experiences. Compared to South Korea, Japan also has advantages in its famous tourism attractions, Mount Fuji and Hokkaido. Even though Japan received low scores on its cultural related attributes, its own season and festival for Sakura, Japanese famous flower, still attracts millions of foreign tourists every year. Additionally, Tokyo owns the only Disneyland in Asia. This study was conducted during May when students were still in school so the importance and performance scores of theme were not high. According to some the tour guides' previous experiences, from July to August, many Chinese parents took their kids to Disneyland for vacation. The situation may change after Shanghai build its own Disneyland, but at least for now, a large number of Chinese tourists visit Tokyo Disney every year.

South Korea does not have the famous tourism attractions such as Japan's Mount Fuji, although though the destination of Jeju Island is developing very quickly and attracted many Chinese tourists, especially new couples taking wedding pictures and spending their honeymoon. Despite this, it has not yet reached the level of Mount Fuji and Hokkaido. Regardless, South Korea clearly has its own advantages in its cultural

activities and attracting women. Since most of the women are not rational on consumption, especially for skin care products, the future of tourism in South Korea is very positive. In the recent years, more and more Chinese have accepted the idea of plastic surgeries. Medical tourism is a new trend for those Chinese who visit South Korea where people can receive the best plastic surgeries. Even though there was no specific number to reflect the actual popularity of the medical tourism because it was difficult to access this group, this trend cannot be ignored. Another advantage for South Korea is its recreational opportunity such as skiing and horse riding. South Korea should use its advantage in attracting many women and try to expand their market to the other family members as well.

Some other strategies were made through the data analysis, such as maintaining a normal political relationship with Chinese government. Since tourism is so sensitive and it can be affected by many things such as politics and natural disasters, it is difficult to make a strategy that will ensure a bright future ahead. All that marketers can do is to prepare for what they can and hope for the best.

Limitations

Like any other study, this study has three main limitations. First, this study was conducted during May rather than the entire year, and the season may affect the results. For example, the beginning and the end of a year is the hot season for business trips and the summer is the best time for family vacations and educational trips. Since the seasonality may bias the results, this study conducted interviews with tour guides and their knowledge and experiences may help to avoid the bias.

Second, even though Chinese prefer to use travel agencies to visit foreign countries, there are still some Chinese tourists who travel by themselves and thus, cannot be reached to participate in the study. Even though there is no certainty that this small group of tourists would have differences on perceptions and satisfaction about their travel experiences, this can still be considered as a limitation for this study.

Third, due to the limited time to collect data, the sample size was not big enough. The results could be more precise with a larger sample size.

Lastly, the results for this study will only work for a certain period, which cannot be avoided. Like most of the studies, there was also a timing issue involved. After ten years, the South Korean TV show may not be as popular as it is today or even more popular but not only among women but also men and kids. Still, for the next few years, the results of this study will fit the real market barring any natural disasters or political changes.

Future Research

Considering the limitations of this study, several directions are provided for future research. Future research should conduct a survey for the whole year to avoid the seasonality impact. Moreover, this study only collected data from 228 respondents, and further studies may employ a larger sample size. This study contacted five travel agencies located in different areas of China and tried to avoid the geographical impact. Future research should try to get access to those who do not use travel agencies to travel

to each destination, such as by conducting a survey in the airport and combining the data collected from those who use travel agencies to make the data even more persuasive.

This study picked two popular destinations for Chinese tourists and compared their own competitiveness and weakness. A future study can expand the study scope to a broader area, such as Europe and North America.

Conclusions

This study has identified the comparative competitiveness for two destinations, Japan and South Korea. Remarkable differences in performances between two destinations were revealed. Japan should make full use of its natural landscapes and well-known tourism attractions, and pay more attention in advertising its cultural uniqueness and attractiveness. South Korea clearly has a better image among middle-aged Chinese people, especially women. Marketers should create more activities that may attract those women and their families and maintain their advantages on its cultural activities such as traditional food, clothes, wedding ceremonies, and other interesting events.

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Appendix: Survey Instrument

Questionnaire:

Destination Perceptions of Tourism for Chinese Tourists: A Comparison between Japan and South Korea

We are interested in your knowledge and opinions about tourist destinations. Answer each question as best you can. All answers will be kept strictly confidential and will be only used by the researcher for statistical purpose.

1. What is your gender?

- Male Female

2. What is your age?

- 19-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60 – 69 Over 70

3. What is your marriage status?

- Single Married with no child Married with one child
 Married with more than one child Divorced Widowed

4. What is your highest educational level?

- Less than high school High School Two-year College Degree
 Four-year college Degree Masters PhDs or professional degree (MD or JD)

5. What is your occupation/job?

- Non-employed Individual business (self-employed)
 Government/military Sales/marketing
 Government owned organization Senior management/executive
 Middle management Manufacturing
 Clerical/administration assistant
 Professional (Doctor, Lawyer, Teacher, etc.) Labor
 Trade/technician (Electrical, Plumber, Construction) Farming/ Fishing
 Students Retired Others

6. What is your approximate household income? Please use the following scale (US dollars) or please type your approximate income in YUAN.

- < \$ 24,000 \$ 24,001 – \$ 40,000 \$40,001 - \$55,000
 \$55,001 - 70,000 \$70,001 - \$85, 000 over \$85,001 +

RMB _____

7. In the last 3 years, how many international trips have you taken?

- Never 1-3 times 4-6 times 7-9 times More than 10 times

8. What country are you visiting this time?

- Japan South Korea Others (please specify) _____

9. What source of information do you use when planning travel activities?

- Online Travel guidebook Family/friends Travel agency Others

10. What is your purpose of travel this time?

- Family vacation
 Business trip
 Visiting friends and relatives
 Travel with friends
 Education/ learning purpose
 Anniversary/ Honeymoon
 Shopping
 Leisure
 Attend conference
 Others _____

11. How important do you think below travel attributes before you choose the destination? (1, least important5, most important)

1. Access to information	1	2	3	4	5
2. Accessibility of the destination	1	2	3	4	5
3. Convenient air flight schedule	1	2	3	4	5
4. Climate	1	2	3	4	5
5. Cleanness and sanitation	1	2	3	4	5
6. No language barrier	1	2	3	4	5
7. Cuisine	1	2	3	4	5
8. Delicate tourism attractions	1	2	3	4	5
9. Different culture	1	2	3	4	5
10. Entertainment facility	1	2	3	4	5
11. Friendliness of people	1	2	3	4	5
12. Easy to get Visa	1	2	3	4	5
13. Ground transport infrastructure	1	2	3	4	5
14. Geographic location	1	2	3	4	5
15. Healthcare facilities (hospital, Pharmacy)	1	2	3	4	5
16. Service provider's quality	1	2	3	4	5
17. High quality accommodation	1	2	3	4	5
18. Historic place	1	2	3	4	5
19. Interesting festivals	1	2	3	4	5
20. Interesting architecture	1	2	3	4	5
21. Recreational opportunity (ski, golf biking, hiking, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
22. Local way of life	1	2	3	4	5
23. Museums and galleries	1	2	3	4	5
24. Music and performances	1	2	3	4	5
25. Natural landscape (parks)	1	2	3	4	5
26. Nightlife	1	2	3	4	5
27. Political stability	1	2	3	4	5
28. Quality of ICT (Internet, telephone, broadband)	1	2	3	4	5
29. Personal Safety	1	2	3	4	5
30. Suitability of destination price	1	2	3	4	5
31. Special events	1	2	3	4	5
32. Shopping	1	2	3	4	5
33. Theme parks	1	2	3	4	5
34. Low cost/price of product	1	2	3	4	5
35. Value for money	1	2	3	4	5
36. Visual appeal	1	2	3	4	5
37. Well- known landmarks	1	2	3	4	5
38. Casinos	1	2	3	4	5

12. How much are you satisfied with following attributes from the destination you chose?

Strongly

Strongly

Dissatisfied

Satisfied

1. Access to information	1	2	3	4	5
2. Accessibility of the destination	1	2	3	4	5
3. Convenient air flight schedule	1	2	3	4	5
4. Climate	1	2	3	4	5
5. Cleanness and sanitation	1	2	3	4	5
6. No language barrier	1	2	3	4	5
7. Cuisine	1	2	3	4	5
8. Delicate tourism attractions	1	2	3	4	5
9. Different culture	1	2	3	4	5
10. Entertainment facility	1	2	3	4	5
11. Friendliness of people	1				
12. Easy to get Visa	1	2	3	4	5
13. Ground transport infrastructure	1	2	3	4	5
14. Geographic location	1	2	3	4	5
15. Healthcare facilities (hospital, Pharmacy)	1	2	3	4	5
16. Service provider's quality	1	2	3	4	5
17. High quality accommodation	1	2	3	4	5
18. Historic place	1	2	3	4	5
19. Interesting festivals	1	2	3	4	5
20. Interesting architecture	1	2	3	4	5
21. Recreational opportunity (ski, golf biking, hiking, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
22. Local way of life	1	2	3	4	5
23. Museums and galleries	1	2	3	4	5
24. Music and performances	1	2	3	4	5
25. Natural landscape (parks)	1	2	3	4	5
26. Nightlife	1	2	3	4	5
27. Political stability	1	2	3	4	5
28. Quality of ICT (Internet, telephone, broadband)	1	2	3	4	5
29. Personal Safety	1	2	3	4	5
30. Suitability of destination price	1	2	3	4	5
31. Special events	1	2	3	4	5
32. Shopping	1	2	3	4	5
33. Theme parks	1	2	3	4	5
34. Low cost/price of product	1	2	3	4	5
35. Value for money	1	2	3	4	5
36. Visual appeal	1	2	3	4	5
37. Well- known landmarks	1	2	3	4	5
38. Casinos	1	2	3	4	5

13. How do you describe yourself among below personal adjectives?

	Strongly disagree				Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Organized	1	2	3	4	5

2. Classy	1	2	3	4	5
3. Poor	1	2	3	4	5
4. Stylish	1	2	3	4	5
5. Friendly	1	2	3	4	5
6. Modern	1	2	3	4	5
7. Traditional	1	2	3	4	5
8. Popular	1	2	3	4	5
9. Romantic	1	2	3	4	5
10. Wealthy	1	2	3	4	5
11. Family oriented	1	2	3	4	5
12. Adventurous	1	2	3	4	5
13. Active	1	2	3	4	5

14. How likely are you to visit this destination again?

- Very unlikely
 Unlikely
 Don't know
 Likely
 Very likely

15. How likely do you recommend this destination to others?

- Very unlikely
 Unlikely
 Don't know
 Likely
 Very likely

16. What cities did you visit on your trip? List all
