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Outline of Proposed Research Project Working Perception of China as a tourist country: Western tourists' point of view 2. Brief of Context:

The principal research area of this study is to identify the perception of Western tourists about China as the final destination place. The research will highlight the potential avenues that are available for Chinese tourism industry which will ensure that the best options are available for the tourists. With the help of this study, China can work on developing crucial elements of its tourism industry to meet the requirements of the Western tourists.

3. Brief description of location (scope) of the study:

The exceptional growth rate of Chinese tourism industry and its bright future mandate the need of working on the factors that contribute to the satisfaction of the customers. In this research, the researcher has done extensive research on the impact of hospitality on tourists from Western countries of the world.

The culture of West and that of China are very different and there is a need to explore the factors that contribute to maximizing the level of satisfaction for the tourists. Literature review has shown that it is the intangible services like hospitality that is the core reason of maximum customer satisfaction in tourism industry.

4. Purpose of the study (including key research questions):

The main research objective of the study is “ to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the tourism and hospitality industries of China as perceived by Western tourists and enhance the strong points while overcoming the weak areas so that the industries can be boosted and tourism in the country can reach to its desired position”.

The key research questions that will be addressed are:

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- 1 To analyse the factors that will contribute to the satisfaction level of Western tourists in China.
 - 2 To understand the Western tourists' perception about the services provided to them by the service providers in the tourism and hospitality industries.
 - 3 To analyse the impact of hospitality on the level of satisfaction of the Western tourists in China.
 - 4 To identify the weak areas of the hospitality industry of China and work on them so that there are more avenues for revenue generation.
 - 5 To explore the methods so as to improve the tourism experience of the Western tourists in China.
5. Overview of key literature (references, citations and details):

Tourism Industry

Tourism industry has been growing at an exceptional rate and it is expected that it will continue to expand more in the future. The most important aspect that the tourists consider when deciding about their travel destinations are the information gathering process. The tourists use variety of sources to gather sufficient information. As Gursoy and McCleary (2004) have stated that tourist information is the most valuable concept and the two vital aspects that are given utmost consideration comprise of the image that the tourists have about the destination and the selection mechanism that the tourists conduct to make their final destination choice.

China's Tourism and Hospitality Industry

The study of World Trade Organisation, cited by Enright and Newton (2005), indicated that China's economy is growing at an accelerating rate and since it is entering the growth phase, it has been successful in attracting various

international business organisations either for starting their operations or doing huge amount of investments.

Chinese government has made sure that it can attract huge number of tourists by developing effective plans and for more than ten years, it has been aggressively doing extensive efforts to change the country's image from an industrial place to a tourist attraction destination. Jia (2010) and Wang et al. (2008) in their studies concluded that the government has provided the tourism industry mandatory resources that will support the development of the tourist market and make successful contribution in the progressions of the country's economy.

The diverse range of tourism resources have proven to be beneficial for attracting the tourists of both international and domestic levels who visit various parts of China that indirectly creates a demand for the country's products and services.

Western tourists' perception about China

In the service industry, the most important determinant of their quality level is the satisfaction of customers with the services that are offered by the companies and its employees. Likewise, in case of the hospitality industry of China, the tourists will be attracted to the country if there will be a wide range of options for attraction venues for the tourists, excellent standards of hotels for staying that have all the necessary facilities as determined by the tourists' needs and service provided by the employees of the hotels (Sirikudta et al., 2010).

From the study of Falsconi (2009), it was found that the Western tourists compare their tourists destinations on the basis of three most important elements i. e. travel characteristics, travel preferences and interests of the <https://assignbuster.com/change-the-ethic-form-for-your-dissertation/>

tourists. The studies done by Wang (2008) and Shu-Yun (2009) concluded that the Western tourists prefer to visit the places that have all the facilities that they are looking for that ranges from the extensive range of attractions and tourist places to luxurious hotels.

In order to have the best leisure trip, the destinations are selected on the basis of tourist attractions that they have to offer and easy availability of information about the destination places (Lau, 2008). The Western tourists do a lot of research before they take any destination decision and for that China needs to make sure that all the detailed information about the attractive venues are accessible by them (Wang, 2008).

Problematic areas highlighted by Western tourists

Although China is trying its best to become the number one destination for tourism for the Western tourists but there are some problems that these tourists have faced during their visits in China. In the international context, cultural difference is the main area of concern and Chinese tourism and hospitality industry needs to minimize the culture gap that is stopping tourists from visiting China (Hu et al., 2009).

The major area of attention for China's hospitality industry is the Human Resource that is rendering its services to these Western tourists. For decades, Chinese government is putting a lot of effort to train staff to meet the standards at international level but it has not proven to be successful as there is lack of proper training courses for them. However, the staff performance has increased over the past few years but still there is ample room for growth (Jin Jang, 2009).

The studies of Wang (2008) and Zhang and Wu (2004) revealed that Western visitors have given low rating to the hospitality industry's service level which

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affects their tourism experience in the country. Hence, if the service quality is enhanced, the tourists will be satisfied and it will have a positive impact on the tourism and hospitality industries of China.

According to Falasconi (2009) and Li (2012), the Western tourists consider many factors when they are making decision about their destination selection. The most important factor highlighted by the research is that they are concerned about the hotel room quality along with the amenities provided to them.

Language is the main problem encountered by the Western tourists. The work of Li and Wang (2011) showed that the tourist suffers from not knowing the Chinese language and some tourists have missed flights and boarded wrong buses because they were unable to communicate in the local language. The most criticised aspect of China by the international tourists is the local infrastructure in China which is undeveloped.

The difference in the queuing behaviour between Chinese and Western tourists is another barrier issues as Gerbeau (2001), cited by Heung, Tsang and Cheng (2009) suggested that the queuing time acceptable by the European tourists is 22 minutes on average but it varies from country to country like in case of British tourists the time can be 25 minutes which is acceptable for queuing whereas in case of tourists from France the time is less than that for British tourists. Hence, queuing looks like something very small but it has its impacts on the tourists. It can be seen that the impact of different events on the tourists is dependent upon the culture they are associated with.

The study done by Heung, Tsang and Cheng (2009) towards queuing depict that there are clear differences in preferences of the Chinese tourists and <https://assignbuster.com/change-the-ethic-form-for-your-dissertation/>

that of the Western tourists regarding forming queues. The study found that the Chinese tourists preferred to have a waiting system through which they can wait with their family and friends and this aspect of waiting is most important whereas fairness of queuing system is not that important.

Hofstede (1984 cited by Heung, Tsang & Cheng 2009) defines culture as a distinguishing factor between different groups of people. These groups are formed through the combined programming of mind. That means culture is responsible for shaping the minds of people and it is this shaping that determines the pattern of thinking in different people. The main difference between Western cultures and cultures of Asia is the pattern of society; in West, individualism is dominant whereas in non-Western part of the world the culture is dominated by collectivism.

According to Hofstede (1993 cited by Heung, Tsang & Cheng 2009), the Western part of the world has a tendency of being an individualistic society whereas countries of East tend to be more collective. Hence China has the culture of being collectivistic and people like to belong to a group whereas the Western people would like to be more concerned for their own interests. Eating has become one of the very important aspects of tourism. Reynolds (1994 cited by Shu-Yun, 2009) suggests that food is an important factor in tourism in addition to factors like attractions, accommodation, transportation and activities in tourism. The research done by Shu-Yun (2009) showed that majority of tourists from West (Australia) to China prefer to live in Bed & Breakfast setup in order to know the local culture.

Shu-Yun (2009) in their study concluded that the tourists choose that country for their travelling that has a culture similar to theirs as they want to minimize their risk of cultural shock. In addition to culture, they are less

willing to try new food and that is why Western tourists like to have their cultural and traditional food items in the menu of the hotels rather than only Chinese food items. There are many areas of research in China's hospitality and tourism industries as cultural shock, language issues, interaction patterns and food unavailability are the main research areas identified by Li (2012).

Destination Branding

In order to attract the tourists to China, the country will have to take steps for branding itself as the best place for tourists. Since the tourists are motivated by various factors to visit a place such as the past experiences in the country, opinion of friends and family members about the destination, information available on various sources and personal interests, the concerned authorities need to brand itself as the best place for the tourists (Wang, 2008). Hence, the tourism marketers need to first develop an understanding about the factors that will attract the tourists and will help them in satisfying and fulfilling their needs and expectations respectively.

6. Proposed methodology (attach draft research tools: questionnaires, interview questions and/or schedule, etcetera):

In order to gather all the necessary data, the researcher will employ a descriptive method using the quantitative approach. A questionnaire will be distributed among the respondents to get their opinion about China as a tourist country. The questionnaire is shown in the Appendix section which has been finalised after doing a pilot study.

7. Identification of the research population and include your sampling procedure:

Since the researcher has limited contacts, the sample size will comprise of

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about 100 participants. The research population is the students and staff of the University of Bedfordshire who has either travelled to or is planning to visit China. The participants will be selected on the basis of Judgmental sampling. Since the researcher will be approaching selective people, the accessibility to the concerned participants will be limited. Therefore, by the help of judgmental sampling, representative sample will formed for effective and accurate results of the research.

In addition to the online survey, self-administered surveys of ten top management people of leading companies will be conducted to gain in-depth information about various important aspects of the country. The respondents will be selected on the basis of convenience sampling as those people who were easily accessible were contacted.

8. Identification of potential risks to participants (including anonymity):

The potential risks to the participants are disclosure of confidential information and reluctance of providing detailed information about their opinions related to the topic of study. The participants might give bias responses which can affect the quality of the data collected.

9. Statement how risks will be minimised and/or avoided:

The confidentiality of respondents will be maintained by keeping the filled questionnaires at appropriate places where people cannot have access to them. The researcher will seek guidance from the supervisor on an ongoing basis so that there are no problems in the research process. The random sampling method will be used to ensure that the data is objective. It will be ensured that the research process is completed on time by following the deadlines as specified by the advisor.

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Appendix I - Questionnaire for the research

Personal Information:

Gender:

Male

Female

Age: _____

Enrolled in programme: _____

(In case of prospective student, identify the programme in which you are currently enrolled with the name of the institution)

Thank you for taking out time for the survey, your co-operation will be highly appreciated and confidentiality will be maintained regarding the information provided.

Q1. Which is the best country destination for tourism?

Q2. Why is country selected as the first choice?

Q3. What are the factors that need to be considered when selecting the tourism destination?

Reputation of the country

Places for tourist visits

Availability of amenities in hotels

Location of hotels

Culture of the country

Availability of food

Transportation facilities

Customer service provided by hotels' employees

Others, please specify _____

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Rank the factors in order of priority (1 being most important and 3 being less important)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Q4. Rank in order of priority, where you search for information about your favourite destination places for tourism?

1. Google _____

2. Facebook _____

3. Twitter _____

4. Country's Tourism website _____

5. Family _____

6. Relatives _____

7. Others, please Specify _____

Q5. Have you ever visited China?

Yes

No (If No, got to Q9)

Q6. How was your visit to China?

Excellent

Good

Average

Poor

Q7. What were the problems that you faced while your stay in China?

1.

2.

3.

Q8. What are your suggestions for improving the tourism in China?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Q9. Do you consider Internet marketing important for awareness about tourism selection?

Yes

No

Q10. What are the most effective mediums for marketing the country as final destination selection for tourism? (Select only three options)

Television advertisements

Newspapers advertisements

Radio

Brochures

Country sponsored events

Social networking site such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn.

Web blogs

E-mails

Others, please specify _____

Q11. What is your viewpoint about the current marketing activities of China for attracting the tourists? What are your suggestions for Chinese government to attract more tourists?

Q12. Kindly rate your agreement or disagreement level with the following statements of China on scale of 1-5.

(1= Agree, 2= Partially Agree, 3= Disagree, 4= Strongly Disagree, 5= Don't know)

1. Western style hotels are good to stay at during tourism
2. Prefer western food during tourism
3. Tourism involves trying new food
4. Attitude of employees during providing the service is very important.
5. Culture of China is main reason for choosing China as tourist destination
6. Food shock is huge in China
7. Language is the main barrier in China for Western tourist
8. Western environment in China can bring more tourists to China
9. A combination of Chinese food and Western food can satisfy good hospitality need of Western tourists
10. Most motivating tourist attraction in China