

A Comparison of Canadian and Chinese Student Motivations to Visit Japan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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A Comparison of Canadian and Chinese Student Motivations to Visit Japan

Background and Objectives: Despite having unique cultural and natural tourism resources, Japan has faced a tourism deficit for several years. The Japanese government launched the Visit Japan Campaign in 2003 to address the deficit and increase the number of international tourists, but the tourism deficit persists. Understanding travel motivation is considered essential to attract visitors and enhance marketing strategies. The purpose of this research was to compare Canadian and Chinese students' motivations to visit Japan based on push and pull motivation factors. The research also examined students' destination attribute preferences and views about Japan.

Methodological Approach: The study used survey research and adopted a convenience sample of 80 respondents which included 41 Canadian students and 39 Chinese students at Thompson Rivers University. The 3-page questionnaire included measures with either 3 point or 5 point Likert-type scales to measure motivations and preferences.

Key Findings: The results of the responses by the Canadian and Chinese students revealed differences as well as similarities in travel motivations to visit Japan. With respect to push motivation factors, desire to acquire more knowledge about Japan was the most important reason for visits by both groups. The results for the pull factors suggested that unique or beautiful natural environments and historical places attract the Canadian students while Chinese students are more interested in expenditure factors. Chinese students were more interested in experiencing the modern culture of Japan while Canadian students were attracted by Japanese traditional cultures and places. It seems differences in cultural background are associated with motivational differences; and therefore, Japan needs to acknowledge these differences to develop effective marketing strategies for each market.

STATEMENT OF INTENDED AUDIENCE

This report was written for a business audience, especially those who work for Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) and who are involved in inbound tourism in Japan. These organizations have faced challenges to increase the number of international visitors although this has been partly achieved by a “Visit Japan” campaign. By recognizing the motivational differences in two different cultural groups of students, they will be able to develop new products and appropriate marketing strategies for each market in order to achieve more successful tourism visitation.

INTRODUCTION



Japan has faced a tourism deficit for several years and launched the Visit Japan Campaign in 2003 in order to increase the number of international visitors to Japan. The government set a goal of inbound tourism to attract 10 million international tourists annually by 2010. According to the Japan National Tourism Organization report (2008), Japan recorded the highest number of visitors,

approximately 8.35 million visitors, in 2007 but still needs to attract another 2 million foreign tourists to Japan annually in the next 2 years. The Chinese market may have an important role in improving this situation since China's outbound tourism has been expanding, and Japan has gradually caught the attention of Chinese tourists (Kohno, 2008).

In addition, through my experience in Canada, many people seem to have a positive image of Japan and know many aspects of Japanese culture such as car brands and foods. However, only a few students consider Japan as a future travel destination. Examining travel motivations is critical for understanding international tourist interests and expectations, and valuable to further Japanese tourism development.

Inbound tourism is involved with diverse groups of people, and travel motivations may vary depending on cultural background. Kim and Prideaux (2005) advised destinations that fail to understand the cultural aspects of motivations will lose potential visitors; however, once they successfully identify the primary travel motives, they can be in a stronger position and maximize the appeal and promotions in target markets. By comparing the travel motivations between Canadian and Chinese students at Thompson Rivers University (TRU), differences may be found between these two groups. The findings will help to inform the strategies to enhance Japanese tourism marketing and to stimulate more foreign tourists to visit Japan.

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to compare Canadian and Chinese students' motivations. Specifically, the objectives of the project were as follows:

- (1) To describe students' destination attribute preferences in general,
- (2) To describe their views about Japan,
- (3) To describe their travel motivations to visit Japan, and
- (4) To test for differences in the above factors.

Limitations

This was a pilot study; therefore, the following limitations need to be considered when interpreting the results.

- 1) **Sampling.** Due to time limitations, a convenience sample of 80 students was chosen for this study. Therefore, the results are not intended to represent Canadian and Chinese students at TRU overall.
- 2) **Student interest.** Some students' attitude toward the survey was very low, and possibly they answered questions without properly reading them.
- 3) **Questionnaire content.** The questionnaire could not cover all the factors and topics mentioned in the literature given the desire to limit the length of the survey.
- 4) **Language.** Errors may have occurred because of the wording and misunderstanding of questions, especially, for Chinese students whose first language is not English.

Definition of Term

"China" refers to only Mainland China, not including Hong Kong and Taiwan

BACKGROUND

Japan as a Tourist Destination

Negative perceptions

Japan has not used their unique cultural and natural tourism resources effectively to attract international visitors. The recent travel and tourism competitiveness report announced that Japan ranked at the bottom among developed nations (Kyodo World News Service, 2009). Although Japan scored high for health and hygiene, cultural resources, and ground transportation infrastructure, it scored low on price competitiveness and the affinity of the country for travel and tourism. Additionally, Japan has been perceived as an expensive, inaccessible tourist destination in the world for a long time because of the language barrier, frequent earthquake occurrence and high cost of living (Okamura, 2008).

Foreign travellers' stimulation to visit Japan is blocked by these perceptions, and it resulted in generating a huge travel deficit in Japan. However, the perception has changed in the last several years because of the weakened Japanese yen and popularity of Japanese cultures such as food and animation.

Negative Perceptions
Expensive = High cost of living
Inaccessible = Language barrier

Tourism resources in Japan

Being rich in history and nature, Japan has 14 UNESCO World Heritage Sites such as ancient temples and shrines, atomic bomb dome, and Shiretoko national parks (Japan-guide.com, 2008). Distinctive 4 seasons also contribute to embellishing these destinations bringing beautiful scenery such as cherry blossoms in spring and red and yellow leaves in autumn. Adding to those resources, advanced technology and high quality products have added value to Japanese tourism. For instance, Akihabara, Tokyo, has recently become a famous destination for the purchase of electronic appliances and devices and where anime or comic lovers gather. Therefore, Japanese tourism will be able to meet a variety of travel needs and expectations from overseas travellers by utilizing the abundance of these unique resources.

Present Japanese Inbound Tourism

The effect of a “Visit Japan” campaign

The Japanese government launched a “Visit Japan” campaign in 2003, and the number of international visitors to Japan has been increasing since then. Approximately 8.35 million overseas travellers visited Japan in 2007, an increase of 13.8% compared with the figure in 2006 (Japan National Tourism Organization, 2008). The Japan National Tourism Organization (2008) reported the factors influencing the increase in the number of visitors from each country in 2007 as follows.



Canada

- The strong Canadian dollar
- The effect of “Visit Japan” campaign
- Special events for the anniversary of Japan-Canada tourism exchange

China

- Holding the celebration of the 35th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations
- Favourable Chinese currency
- The effect of “Visit Japan” campaign
- Reinforcement of transportation
- Increase in demand for tours to Japan during holidays

As shown above, currency exchanges as well as promotional campaigns seem to have impacts on the movement of inbound tourism.

Rural tourism in Japan

Current tourism policies promote expansion of not only the traditional hubs including Tokyo, Kyoto and Nara, but also rural areas for local revitalization (Soshiroda, 2005). An example of local revitalization is Niseko, Hokkaido, which has been revitalized through tourism development as a ski resort and has become a popular destination among Asian and Australian tourists. Although it is located far from major destinations, the unique factors such as quality of snow, hot springs, and common time zones attract visitors through word of mouth (Japan National Tourism Organization, 2007). With the popularization of green tourism, Japanese rural areas could be a key tourism resource to activate Japanese inbound tourism (Hoshihara, 2008).

The movement toward local revitalization would probably encourage a greater variety of tourism products and unique experiences for international tourists.

The effect of the “Visit Japan” campaign and the weak Japanese yen helped to increase the number of international visitors in 2007. In the future, rural tourism will be an important resource for tourism development in Japan

Definitions of Travel Motivations

A motivation study is regarded as an important element to investigate travel choice and behaviour, to understand the decision-making process and to evaluate travel satisfaction (Pearce & Lee, 2005; Snepenger, King, Marshall, & Uysal, 2006). Several researchers (Kim & Jogaratnam, 2002; Goossens, 2000, Rittichainuwat, Qu, & Mongkhonvanit, 2008) found that people decide to travel in order to satisfy their particular needs. Examples of the definitions of travel motivation are as follows.

- “[A] dynamic process of internal psychological factors that generate a state of tension or disequilibrium within individuals” (Crompton & McKay, 1997, p.427).
- “[A] combination of needs and desires [that] affect[s] the propensity to travel in a general sense” (O’Leary & Deegan, 2005, p.247).

Furthermore, according to Leiper, there are three factors motivating people to travel:

- “1) some needs, a state of felt deprivation, which might be satisfied by a trip,
- 2) information, knowledge and/or feeling about the satisfaction of those needs, and
- 3) positive expectation that travel will satisfy needs” (as cited in Rittichainuwat et al., 2008, p7).

Consequently, psychological factors and satisfying one’s needs would be important concepts with respect to travel motivations.

Motivation Theories

A variety of travel motivation theories exist such as Plog's allocentric-psychocentric theory, travel career approach theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, Beard and Ragheb's leisure motivation scale theory, Iso-Ahola's motivation theory, and push and pull theory (Pearce, 2005; Pearce & Lee, 2005; Snepenger et al., 2006; Goossens, 2000). Two theories, travel career approach theory and push and pull theory, are described below.

Travel Career Approach Theory

Travel career ladder led by Pearce examined the change in people's travel motivation in relation to their travel experience (Pearce, 2005; Pearce & Lee, 2005). According to Pearce (2005), this theory illustrates motivation with five different levels: relaxation needs at the lowest level followed by safety/security needs, relationship needs, self-esteem and development needs, and self actualization/fulfilment needs at the highest level. Travellers ascend the ladder with their travel experience and can also be in more than one level.

However, several researchers criticised the ladder concept because tourists' needs can change not only with travel experience but also with life cycle and over time (Rittichainuwat et al., 2008). Accordingly, current studies focus more on travel career patterns, a reformulation of the travel career ladder into three layers of motivations (see Figure 1). It focuses more on the change of motivational patterns through their life style change and travel experience (Pearce, 2005). As travellers become older and gain more travel experience, they move toward the outer layer. In this way, this theory describes how people's travel motivation is affected by their life stage and travel experiences.

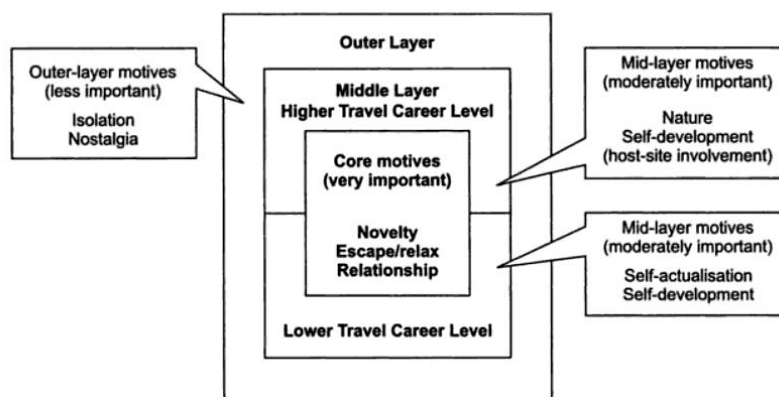


Figure 1: Travel Career Patterns concept (Pearce, 2005, p79)

Push and Pull Theory

Push and pull factors have widely been used in past studies, and various definitions were found for each push and pull factor.

	Push factors	Pull factors
Dann (1981)	Internal drives that motivate people to travel including the need for escape, novelty, and self-esteem	Attractiveness or choice of the destination which stimulates people to travel through marketing and promotion
Goossens (2000)	Consumer dispositions	Marketing stimuli
Crompton (1979)	Socio-psychological motives which show the desire to go on a vacation	Cultural motives associated with destination choice

The push and pull travel motivation theory has been discussed in a number of motivation studies as a foundation of motivation theory development (Goossens, 2000; Kim, & Jogaratnam, 2002; Rittichainuwat, et al., 2008). For example, Iso-Ahola's motivation theory proposed four dimensions of motives: personal seeking, personal escape, interpersonal seeking and interpersonal escape. These four dimensions are regarded as push factors (Snepenger et al., 2006). Also, Goossens (2000) developed a hedonic tourism motivational model based on push and pull factors. He asserted that the combination of push and pull dimensions as well as hedonic responses would stimulate people to go on a trip. These examples show that push and pull factors are the foundation for many studies on travel motivations.

Push and pull theory is suitable to measure the motivational differences between two student nationality groups rather than employing travel career approach theory

TRAVEL CHARACTERISTICS OF CANADIAN AND CHINESE TOURISTS

Canadian Tourists

The number of Canadian overseas travellers has grown since 2002, and the amount of money spent during their travels has grown in proportion to the number of tourists (Tourism Ireland, 2007). Because of a geographical factor, the USA is the top destination visited by Canadians followed by Europe and Bermuda and the Caribbean (Tourism Ireland, 2007; Ontario Tourism Ministry, 2007). TAMs (Ontario Tourism Ministry, 2007) reported that the most popular activity for Canadians is shopping and dining, and Canadian travellers enjoy purchasing clothing, shoes, and jewellery as well as having local foods. Nevertheless, none of these activities is considered as a major reason to go on a trip.

Travel motivations of Canadian tourists

TAMs showed that Canadians tend to choose a destination based on their desired destination in their mind rather than ambition for specific activities and travel experience. Over 80% of Canadians go traveling to relieve their stress, and about 60% of them travel to enhance their knowledge and for mental stimulation (Ontario Tourism Ministry, 2007). Safety and health concerns as well as comfort are important elements for Canadian tourists when they plan a trip. Furthermore, another report (Tourism Ireland, 2007) reported that Canadian tourists take more trips in winter time in order to pursue the warm weather, and their preferred activities are visiting historical sites, exploring cities and villages, and joining outdoor activities.

Similarly, considering Canadian tourists as a part of American tourists (based on geographical proximity and cultural similarities), Kim and Prideaux (2005) stated that Americans traveling to Korea have high motivations on culture/ history and socialization while low motivations on social status and escaping from everyday routine. Since Japan may be considered to be similar to Korea by North Americans, those people may have similar expectations of Japan. Other than those motivations, Rittichainuwat, et al. (2008) suggested that North American tourists pay more attention to cultural attractions and like to visit remote areas for an authentic cultural experience and pristine nature.

Canadian people travel to reduce stress and enhance their knowledge

Safety and health concerns are an important element in choosing a destination

Chinese Tourists

In recent years, Chinese outbound tourism is rapidly expanding with the economic growth that has brought more disposable incomes to Chinese households. Morita et al. (2007) reported the popular destinations for Chinese travellers, and Asian countries including Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, Thailand, and Korea occupy the top 5 destinations.

Despite demand for overseas travel, the Chinese government has imposed restrictions on outbound travel. Chinese citizens must have adequate income levels and acquire official permission from the Chinese government in order to travel to foreign countries (Zhang & Heung, 2002). In addition, Approved Destination Status (ADS) limits the destinations where Chinese travellers are able to visit (Kim, Guo & Agrusa, 2005). Japan was added to the ADS list in 2000.

Travel motivations of Chinese tourists

Chinese tourists are “curious, optimistic, and status-conscious”

Safety and beautiful scenery are the most important elements when choosing a destination

Hanqin and Lam (1999) studied Chinese travellers’ motivation to visit Hong Kong and found that Chinese travellers tend to value “a unique, modernized, friendly, and convenient place for holidays” (p. 592). These results may be applied to Japan since Japan serves a similar function as Hong Kong from the Chinese tourists’ perspectives. Kohno (2008)

emphasizes that Japan has diverse resources to attract more Chinese tourists including shopping, traditional culture, delicious food and attractive resorts. For example, affluent Chinese tourists, who used to go shopping in Hong Kong, are now likely to visit Japan for shopping because of the high piracy level in Hong Kong.

Another study indicated that, for Chinese tourists, the most important attributes in choosing a destination are safety and beautiful scenery while the level of economic development and shopping are the least important attributes (Kim et al., 2005). Based on these attributes, Australia is the most preferable destination for Chinese travellers whereas Japan and South Korea are the least favourite destinations due to the similarity in cultures. Similarly, Decima Research (2007) found that Chinese tourists are driven by destinations which are “clean, safe, friendly, scenic, inexpensive, and have easy visa regulations”. Kim et al. (2005) also pointed out that Chinese people are likely to expect the following attributes in Japan and Korea: convenience, shopping,

low travel cost, economic development and well-equipped facilities, two of which are considered as the least important attributes for Chinese travellers.

Finally, Decima Research (2007) described the characteristics of the Chinese tourists as “curious, optimistic, and status-conscious”. For example, Chinese tourists are stimulated by well-known places and enjoy telling their travel story to friends and relatives. It seems that Chinese tourists’ motivation depends on the destinations; nevertheless, they are likely to be attracted by famous and unique destinations.

Past studies showed motivational differences between Canadian and Chinese tourists in general. Similarly, *students’* motivations to visit Japan may vary with nationality.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

This study used survey research designed to compare the travel motivations to visit Japan between Canadian and Chinese students at TRU.

Sample Selection

The population was Canadian and Chinese students at TRU. According to TRU World, there were 447 Chinese students at TRU in the fall semester 2008, and this number did not include students from Taiwan and Hong Kong. As for Canadian students, approximately 8,500 students were registered in the fall semester. Assuming a response rate of 90%, the desirable total sample was approximately 80 students which would provide a margin of error of $\pm 10\%$ with 90% confidence level. At least 30 responses were needed from each Canadian and Chinese student group so the two groups could be compared statistically.

Instrumentation

The survey questionnaire was 3 pages long with 50 statements and was designed to be completed in 5 to 10 minutes (see Appendix A). Although Chinese students were part of the sample, only an English version of the questionnaire was prepared. The survey questions were developed based on past studies. In order to measure the travel motivations, 3 point and 5 point Likert-type scales were used. There were five sections on the survey and details are described below.

- A) *Choosing a destination.* This section included 12 statements to investigate how each destination attribute is important for Canadian and Chinese students when they choose a place to visit. Items were mainly borrowed from the study of Lehto, et al. (2002). Items from TAMs questionnaire (Statistics Canada, 2006) and the study by Kim et al., (2005) were also referred to in question development. Responses were measured by using 3 point Likert-type scale (1= Not important to 3 = Highly important)
- B) *Views about Japan.* This section included 10 statements to describe Canadian and Chinese students' attitude toward and perception about Japan. Statements were developed based on personal interests and past studies (Okamura, 2008; Kohno, 2008). Responses were measured by using 5 point Likert-type scale (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree).
- C) *Reasons to visit Japan.* This section included 15 statements to identify push motivation factors for visiting Japan. Items were mainly borrowed from the study by Hanqin and Lam (1999) and divided into 5 factors: knowledge, prestige, enhancement of human relationship, relaxation, and novelty. Also, motivation items in the study by Kim and Prideaux (2005) were employed in order to adapt statements into travel motivations to visit Japan. Responses were measured by using 5 point Likert-type scale (1 = Not at all important to 5 = Extremely important)
- D) *Destination Attractiveness.* This section included 13 items to describe pull motivation factors for visiting Japan. Four pull motivation factors: expenditures, attractions, natural environment, and others, were chosen from previous studies and used to develop items relating to Japan (Hanqin & Lam 1999; Kim, Jogaratnam, & Noh, 2006). In order to adapt the items into Japanese attractiveness, statements were developed referring to popular activities in Japan and the characteristics of Canadian and Chinese students discussed in the

previous section (Japan National Tourism Organization, 2007; Kohno, 2008). Responses were measured by using 5 point Likert-type scale (1 = Not at all important to 5 = Extremely important).

E) *Demographics*. This section was developed based on the study by Kim and Jogaratnam (2002) and included 8 demographics questions as follows: 1) sex, 2) nationality, 3) program, 4) age, 5) main source of finance, 6) preferred length of overseas trip, 7) preferred travel group size, and 8) if they have been to Japan or not.

Data Collection

The data collection began on October 30th, 2008, and all questionnaires were collected by November 17th, 2008. Potential respondents were identified by asking their nationality before giving the questionnaire. The survey was conducted on the TRU campus by visiting classes such as the Japanese class on November 4th and the business class on November 5th following permission from the instructors. Thirteen responses were collected from the Japanese class, and 22 responses were collected from the business class. The rest of them were individually collected by me and by my friends on campus. In total, 83 questionnaires were collected but 3 of them were removed due to an excessive amount of missing data and unanswered questions of nationality. After elimination, the final sample size was 80 (96.4%).

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed by using the SPSS software. Descriptive statistics and frequencies were computed for all variables. Independent sample t-tests were employed to test for significant differences between the two sample groups related to destination choice, views about Japan, and travel motivations to visit Japan.

RESULTS

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the 80 Canadian and Chinese students at TRU who responded to the survey.

Sex

The sample was over-responded by females (73.8%) compared to males (26.2%).

Age

The majority of the respondents (95%) were under 25 years of age whereas only 5% of the respondents were over 25 years old, which included only Canadian students.

Program

Over 50 % of the respondents study business followed by tourism (30%) and arts (8.8%).

Main source of income

Statistically significant differences were found between Canadian and Chinese students ($p = .020$). Students' main finance source is parents or family (62.8%) followed by self-savings (19.2%) and loans (12.8%). By comparing the means of the two groups, Canadian students are more likely to obtain finance from their self-savings (30%) and student loans (25%). On the other hand, Chinese students are apt to rely on their parents and family (84.2%).

Preferred length of overseas trip

Statistically significant differences were also found between the two groups ($p = .000$). The most preferred length of an overseas trip was 1-3 weeks (51.9%) followed by over 4 weeks (25.3%) and 4-6days (21.5%). One to three weeks (Canadian = 52.5%; Chinese = 51.3%) were most preferred length of overseas trips for both groups. Nevertheless, trips of over 4 weeks (45.0%) were the second preferred length of a trip by Canadians although 4-6 day trips (41.0%) were the second for Chinese students. In short, Canadian students are likely to prefer longer trips than Chinese students.

Preferred travel group size

A group of two (37.2%) is the most preferred group size followed by a group of 4 people (26.9%) and 3 people (16.7%). It seems both groups prefer travelling with an even number of people.

Have been to Japan or not

Only 7 respondents (8.8%) had been to Japan more than once, and 5 of them were from China. Because of the geographical proximity, it seems that Chinese tourists have more opportunities to visit Japan at relatively lower prices compared with Canadian students.

Table 1: Respondent Characteristics

	Total (N=80)		Canadian Students (N=41)		Chinese Students (N=39)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Sex						
Male	21	26.2%	10	24.4%	11	28.2%
Female	59	73.8%	31	75.6%	28	71.8%
Age						
Under 20	13	16.5%	10	25.0%	3	7.7%
20-25	62	78.5%	26	65.0%	36	92.3%
26-30	3	3.8%	3	7.5%	0	0.0%
Over 30	1	1.3%	1	2.5%	0	0.0%
Nationality						
Canadian	41	51.2%	41	100.0%	0	0.0%
Chinese	39	48.8%	0	0.0%	39	100.0%
Program						
Tourism	24	30.0%	13	31.7%	11	28.2%
Business	41	51.2%	18	43.9%	23	59.0%
ESL	3	3.8%	0	0.0%	3	7.7%
Arts	7	8.8%	7	17.1%	0	0.0%
Other	5	6.2%	3	7.3%	2	5.1%
Main Source of Finance						
Assistantship/ Scholarship	1	1.3%	1	2.5%	0	0.0%
Parents / Family	49	62.8%	17	42.5%	32	84.2%
Self-savings	15	19.2%	12	30.0%	3	7.9%
Loans	10	12.8%	10	25.0%	0	0.0%
Other	3	3.8%	0	0.0%	3	7.9%
Preferred Length of Overseas Trip						
1-3 days	1	1.3%	0	0.0%	1	2.6%
4-6 days	17	21.5%	1	2.5%	16	41.0%
1-3 weeks	41	51.9%	21	52.5%	20	51.3%
Over 4 weeks	20	25.3%	18	45.0%	2	5.1%
Preferred Travel Group Size						
Individual	5	6.4%	2	5.0%	3	7.9%
Two	29	37.2%	15	37.5%	14	36.8%
Three	13	16.7%	8	20.0%	5	13.2%
Four	21	26.9%	10	25.0%	11	28.9%
Over five	10	12.8%	5	12.5%	5	13.2%
Have you ever been to Japan?						
Yes	7	8.8%	2	4.9%	5	12.8%
No	73	91.2%	39	95.1%	34	87.2%

Choosing a Destination

Table 2 provides the destination attributes preferred by Canadian and Chinese students when they choose a destination. Both Canadian (M=2.89) and Chinese (M=2.72) students are most concerned about personal safety. Similarly, a standard of hygiene and cleanliness was also rated high by both Canadian (M=2.51) and Chinese (M=2.46) student groups. Therefore, there is no doubt that positive perceptions of safety and cleanliness are essential elements for both groups of students in determining the travel destination.

Shopping opportunities and outdoor activities

A statistically significant difference was found in terms of shopping opportunities. The result revealed that, on average, Chinese students (M=2.44) preferred shopping more than Canadian students (M=2.02). Although differences were not noted statistically, on average, Canadian students (M=2.39) tended to put more value on outdoor activities compared to Chinese students (M=2.10).

As shown in the results, their preferences were opposite regarding shopping opportunities and outdoor activities. Chinese students placed a relatively high importance on shopping opportunities which were the least important attributes for Canadian students. In the same way, Canadian students placed relatively high importance on outdoor activities which were the least preferred attributes for Chinese students. This result may be due to Canadian students being more familiar with and access to abundant natural resources and a well-equipped environment. In contrast, assuming that many of the Chinese students are from a big city like Beijing and Shanghai, they have not grown up in similar circumstances as Canadian students and had fewer chances to experience outdoor activities. As a result, their attentions tend to move towards shopping or other leisure activities which do not require natural resources.

Table 2: Choosing a Destination

	Canadian Mean	Chinese Mean	P-value
Shopping opportunities	2.02	2.44	.013*
Outdoor activities	2.39	2.10	.060
Outstanding scenery	2.49	2.32	.196
Availability and ease of access to travel information	2.49	2.34	.258
Personal safety	2.80	2.72	.367
Environmental quality	2.49	2.38	.439
Good weather	2.24	2.36	.488
Inexpensive travel cost	2.34	2.42	.588
Different cultural and historical resources	2.32	2.38	.616
Trying local foods	2.39	2.46	.628
Standards of hygiene and cleanliness	2.51	2.46	.671
Well-equipped tourism facilities	2.29	2.32	.867

*P ≤ 0.05

Key Findings:

- Personal safety and a standard of hygiene are the most important destination attributes for both student groups
- Differences were found in the importance of shopping opportunities

Views about Japan

Results describing views about Japan are shown in Table 3. Overall, most students from both groups seem to have positive perceptions about Japan. For example, relatively higher means were seen in the politeness and friendliness of Japanese people as well as their desire to visit Japan in the near future. Yet, Chinese students seem to have more concerns and negative perceptions about Japan compared to Canadians.

It was noted in the literature that Japan's negative images were likely due to the language barrier, frequent earthquake occurrence and high cost of living. The results of the current study revealed similarities with the images described in the literature.

In terms of the views about Japan, there were 4 significant differences between the two groups.

The acquaintance with history

Chinese students (M=2.92) tend to have higher hostility compared to Canadian students (M=1.46). This result may be due to the history and memory of the Japanese movement during the Second World War, especially in China. Although the level of hostility is not high, it suggests that historical background may affect perceptions about Japan.

Preference of interacting with Japanese people

Canadian students (M=3.85) are more interested in communicating with Japanese people compared to Chinese students (M=3.33). Also, since North Americans tend to be more outgoing than Asian people, Canadian students may have higher willingness to communicate with local people.

The desire to study or work in Japan

Canadian students (M=2.90) compared to Chinese students (M=2.33) rated higher on the desire to either study or work in Japan. As Chinese students have already experienced study abroad, their desire to study in Japan may be lower than Canadians.

Perceptions about the acts of God

Chinese students (M=3.58) rated higher on fear of earthquakes and typhoons compared to Canadians (M=3.00). Because of the similarity in geographical features, Chinese students may have experienced those events and know better how damaging they can be. Particularly, the Sichuan earthquakes in 2008 might still be fresh in their minds as they caused severe damage to the area.

Key Findings

- Both groups have relatively positive perceptions about Japan. Specifically, they see Japanese people as friendly and polite.
- Chinese students are more likely to have negative perceptions about Japan.

Table 3: Views about Japan

	Canadian Mean	Chinese Mean	P-value
I have hostility toward Japan because of its history	1.46	2.92	.000*
I like interacting with Japanese people	3.85	3.33	.007*
I would like to study or work in Japan	2.90	2.33	.012*
I fear earthquakes and typhoons	3.00	3.58	.023*
Japanese people are polite and friendly	4.20	3.90	.094
Japan is too busy and crowded	3.39	3.67	.184
Traveling to Japan is expensive	3.37	3.59	.228
I would like to visit Japan in the near future	3.76	3.62	.505
I am worried about the language barrier in Japan	3.17	3.31	.571
I prefer Japanese brand electronic appliances	3.29	3.36	.711

*P ≤ 0.05

Reasons to Visit Japan

Table 4 describes reasons to visit Japan, which are also considered as push factors in motivation theories. Reasons to visit Japan were divided into 5 motivational factors: knowledge, prestige, enhancement of human relationship, relaxation, and novelty. Main reasons to visit Japan in the future are to enhance their knowledge and to seek novelty, which were rated as the most or second most important factor.

Overall, the means of the Canadian students are relatively higher than that of Chinese students in terms of the knowledge, enhancement of relationship, relaxation, and novelty. However, the prestige factor was slightly higher for Chinese students although it was also rated relatively low from both groups of students. As respondents are still students, their interests in prestige are still low, or Japan may not yet be regarded as a reputable destination for them.

Statistically significant differences were found in the following factors.

Knowledge

Most items from the knowledge factor showed the statistically significant differences. Enhancing knowledge is one of the most important reasons to travel to Japan especially for Canadian students. For instance, they are willing to visit historical and cultural sites in Japan (M=3.85) as well as experience the Japanese lifestyle (M=3.68). For Chinese students, lower levels of importance were reported regarding knowledge. This result may be affected by the cultural similarities in Japan and China. However, Chinese students (M=3.92) put more value on trying Japanese food in Japan, which was the highest mean among all items.

Enhancement of human relationship

Canadian students, again, scored higher on meeting Japanese people (M=3.68) and making friends with others (M=3.61). As mentioned in the section of the Views about Japan, Canadians are friendlier and enjoy interacting with people. On the other hand, Chinese students are less likely to have the desire to meet new people through their trip to Japan compared to Canadian students.

Relaxation and novelty

In the same way as above, Canadian students had a higher likelihood of seeking relaxation and novelty as reasons to visit Japan. Consistent with past studies, the result showed that Canadian people tend to travel in order to relieve their stress and seek stimulation. Furthermore, differences in cultures may be attractive and unique for Canadians and have resulted in the higher means for novelty. Also, Chinese students scored a higher mean on the image that Japan is crowded and busy in Table 3, and subsequently they do not see Japan as a destination for relaxation.

Key Findings:

- The main reasons to visit Japan in the future were:
 - to enhance knowledge, and
 - to seek novelty.
- Differences in reasons to visit Japan were found except in the prestige factor
- Canadian students seem to have stronger internal drives to visit Japan

Table 4: Reasons to Visit Japan

	Canadian Mean	Chinese Mean	P-value
Factor 1: Knowledge	3.70	3.18	
Visiting historical and cultural sites in Japan	3.85	2.79	.000*
Increasing knowledge about Japanese culture	3.68	2.74	.000*
Experiencing a different lifestyle	3.80	3.28	.021*
Trying Japanese food	3.46	3.92	.055
Factor 2: Prestige	2.90	2.99	
Purchasing Japanese products and showing them to others	2.56	2.86	.247
Taking pictures and showing them to others	3.44	3.23	.438
Going places my friends have not visited	2.70	2.87	.560
Factor 3: Enhancement of Human Relationship	3.21	2.72	
Meeting Japanese people	3.68	2.84	.001*
Making friends with others through visiting Japan	3.61	2.92	.004*
Visiting friends or relatives	2.35	2.41	.843
Factor 4: Relaxation	3.60	2.89	
Escaping from daily routine	3.59	2.64	.000*
Releasing daily stress	3.63	2.92	.006*
Resting and relaxing physically	3.59	3.11	.062
Factor 5: Novelty	3.70	3.00	
Finding thrills or excitements	3.90	3.13	.001*
Rediscovering myself	3.49	2.87	.013*

*P ≤ 0.05

Destination Attractiveness

Table 5 shows the pull factors or destination attractiveness of Japan. Destination attractiveness was also categorized into 4 factors: expenditures, attractions, natural environment, and others. The natural environment was the most important factor to attract Canadian students while expenditures were the most important factor for Chinese students. More specifically, both groups rated seeing beautiful scenery the highest at the item level.

Interestingly, shopping was again, the least important item for Canadian students. In contrast, Chinese students rated seeing sports game as the least important activity. No significant difference was found regarding the natural environment and other factors including visiting a sister city, seeing sports game, and experiencing the tea ceremony and craft making.

Comparing the two groups statistically, significant differences were found in 2 factors: expenditures and attractions.

Expenditures

Chinese students tend to be attracted by activities such as shopping, eating Japanese food, and experiencing night life and entertainment. This outcome may indicate that Chinese students are more willing to spend money in Japan compared to Canadians. In addition, Japan can be an alternative shopping destination to Hong Kong for Chinese students as Kohno (2008) discussed in her report.

Attractions

Canadian students scored higher on visiting Japanese traditional places such as old temples and shrines (M=3.88) as well as Japanese gardens (M=3.76) whereas Chinese students rated higher on visiting theme parks (M=3.67). Since Canada is a young country and does not offer ancient cultural places like China, Japanese historical places are attractive for Canadian students. Their responses in this section clearly proved the contrast in their interests in Japanese culture.

There is certainly a tendency for Chinese students to be attracted by Japanese modern culture and places. Conversely, Canadian students are stimulated more by Japanese traditional culture as well as the country's pristine nature.

Key Findings:

- Natural environment was the most attractive tourism resource between both groups.
- Canadians were driven by Japanese historical sites.
- Chinese students were stimulated by shopping opportunities and theme parks in Japan.

Table 5: Destination Attractiveness

	Canadian Mean	Chinese Mean	P-value
Factor 1: Expenditures	3.23	3.78	
Shopping (e.g. electronic appliances, clothing)	2.59	3.64	.000*
Eating at authentic Japanese restaurants	3.46	3.85	.110
Experiencing night life/ entertainment (e.g. Karaoke, Geisha)	3.63	3.85	.406
Factor 2: Attractions	3.44	3.39	
Visiting old temples and shrines	3.88	3.15	.006*
Visiting Japanese gardens	3.76	3.15	.015*
Visiting theme parks (e.g. Tokyo Disneyland, Universal Studio)	3.07	3.67	.025*
Visiting animation museums and shops	2.90	3.23	.200
Visiting modern cities and experiencing high technology	3.37	3.51	.500
Visiting hot springs	3.63	3.62	.940
Factor 3: Natural Environment	3.63	3.45	
Seeing beautiful scenery (e.g. cherry blossoms, mountains)	4.10	3.87	.333
Going to ski hills/ beaches	3.15	3.03	.667
Factor 4: Others	2.95	2.58	
Visiting the sister city of Kamloops, Uji	2.93	2.51	.134
Seeing sports game (e.g. baseball, sumo)	2.68	2.29	.155
Experiencing tea ceremony and craft making	3.24	2.95	.281

*P ≤ 0.05

CONCLUSIONS

This research was designed to investigate motivational differences to visit Japan between Canadian and Chinese students. The results of the responses revealed motivational differences as well as similarities (see Figure 2).

Similarities

Similarities between both Canadian and Chinese students were characterized as:

- preferred travel group size was 2 or 4,
- safety and high standards of hygiene and cleanliness were critical factors when choosing a travel destination,
- they had a strong image that Japanese people are polite and friendly although negative perceptions such as cost and congestion existed in their mind,
- desire to acquire more knowledge about Japan was the most important reason to visit Japan, and
- beautiful Japanese scenery was the most appealing element while watching the sports games in Japan was the least.

Differences

Canadian students were more likely to:

- prefer longer length of trips, which were from at least 1 week to over 1 month,
- have positive views about Japan in general,
- expect opportunities to become involved with Japanese people as well as to experience relaxation and novelty,
- value outdoor activities while shopping is the least important activity, and
- be fascinated by the beautiful natural environment and historical places

On the other hand, Chinese students tended to:

- prefer short length of trips, which were from 4-6 days to 3 weeks,
- appear less willing to interact with Japanese and have more negative perceptions likely because of history and the potential for natural disasters,
- be more interested in expenditure activities such as shopping and dining in Japan, and
- were stimulated by Japanese modern culture such as visiting theme parks and modern cities

It appears that Canadian students are attracted by Japanese traditional cultures and places while Chinese students are more interested in experiencing the modern culture of Japan. This result may have come from the fact that Japanese cultures have been developed based on Chinese culture in ancient time; therefore, more similarities exist between Japan and China compared with other destinations in Europe and the Americas. In addition, Canadian students have fewer opportunities to experience old cultures because of their short history. It seems differences in cultural background are associated with perceptual and motivational differences; and therefore, Japan needs to acknowledge these differences to develop effective marketing strategies for each market.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings verified the differences between the two student groups, and it is essential for Japan to develop appropriate strategies for each target market through research. Marketing recommendations arising from this study are as follows:

For both Canadian and Chinese markets

Eliminate the negative perceptions. Japan is already recognized for its high standards of safety, hygiene and cleanliness; therefore, negative perceptions, such as the cost and crowding image should be dealt with. The Japan National Tourism Organization already has a section on “Affordable Japan” on their website. It should be promoted not only on the website but also on a

larger scale along with the promotion of culture and the natural environment of Japan. Furthermore, although Tokyo is a famous place among the international travellers, development of rural tourism can create a new perception of Japan and eliminate the busy image as well.

Strengthen awareness of the natural environment. Since seeing the beautiful scenery is the most attractive element of Japan, the magnificence of Japanese nature should be emphasized in advertisement and promotion activities. Adding to the well-known cherry blossoms and autumn leaves in Japan, 3 UNESCO world natural heritage sites and scenery in the countryside can be pushed more actively to attract visitors.

For the Canadian market

Emphasize Japanese traditional cultures. As the results revealed, the interest in Japanese traditional cultures and places were remarkably high among Canadian students. Japan seems to be recognized as a destination abundant in cultural and historical sites. It is necessary to emphasize those unique resources and cultural differences compared with Western cultures for further marketing and a promotional activity.

Develop long-haul trip packages. Canadian students prefer long-haul trips, and there are physical distances between Canada and Japan. Therefore, it is required to develop comprehensive packages and travel planning tools to match their market demand. In addition, they are likely to seek authenticity, and a long-haul stay will offer more opportunities to experience authentic Japanese culture. Adding and promoting outdoor activities in the packages may also be effective in attracting more Canadian tourists considering their travel preferences.

Encourage rural tourism development and promotion. As mentioned above, Canadian students are seeking authentic experiences and are intrigued by traditional Japanese culture. Rural areas have the elements to offer those tourism products and experiences. These areas will provide more opportunities to interact with local people as well as the natural surroundings will help visitors to relax. Considering these factors, rural tourism can offer a chance to experience Japanese life style and broaden their knowledge about Japan, which are the important reasons to visit Japan.

For the Chinese market

Showcase Japanese modern culture. Chinese students are attracted by Japanese modern culture and places such as night life, animation museums, and theme parks. Besides Tokyo Disney Resort and Akihabara, Japan needs to be promoted as a destination where people can experience distinctive modern culture and advanced technology so that more Chinese people would be attracted to Japan. Since Chinese students scored high on taking pictures and showing them to friends, unique up-to-date spots which cannot be seen in other destinations may need to be developed.

Reinforce shopping and dining experience. Tokyo might be a perfect destination for Chinese students considering the extremely high interest in Japanese food and shopping. Recently, Michelin published a Tokyo version of the guidebook, and Tokyo is now perceived as one of the top gourmet destinations. Adding to the dining, well-known shopping districts are concentrated in Tokyo. Shops and restaurants in Tokyo need to enhance multilingual services by preparing multilingual signs and staff for foreign travellers.

Develop short trip packages. Chinese students seem to prefer compact short-haul trips. The Golden route in Japan will still meet Chinese tourists' needs. However, the Golden route needs additional shopping features and Japanese dining opportunities to successfully satisfy their travel experience in Japan. Developing convenient transportation access will also have an important role in achieving compact trips.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Survey Questionnaire

See attached

Canadian and Chinese Students' Motivations to Visit Japan

Hello, my name is Yumiko Suzuki. I am a 4th year student in the Bachelor of Tourism Management program. I am conducting a survey about a comparison of Canadian and Chinese students' motivations to visit Japan. The purpose of this survey is to identify TRU Canadian and Chinese students' motivations to visit Japan by examining 1) destination attributes, 2) views about Japan, 3) travel motivations to visit Japan, 4) attractiveness of Japan, and 5) demographics. This survey will take 5-10 minutes to complete. Also, your participation is voluntary and the information you provide will be kept confidential. I greatly appreciate your participation.

Part A: Choosing a Destination

Please circle the number that indicates whether each of following items are not important, somewhat important, or highly important when choosing your travel destination in general.

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Highly Important
Different cultural and historical resources	1	2	3
Trying local foods	1	2	3
Personal safety	1	2	3
Environmental quality	1	2	3
Standards of hygiene and cleanliness	1	2	3
Inexpensive travel cost	1	2	3
Availability and ease of access to travel information	1	2	3
Outdoor activities	1	2	3
Shopping opportunities	1	2	3
Well-equipped tourism facilities	1	2	3
Good weather	1	2	3
Outstanding scenery	1	2	3

Part B: Views about Japan

Please indicate how strongly disagree or agree with the statements below.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I would like to visit Japan in the near future	1	2	3	4	5
I would like to study or work in Japan	1	2	3	4	5
I prefer Japanese brand electronic appliances	1	2	3	4	5
I like interacting with Japanese people	1	2	3	4	5
Japanese people are polite and friendly	1	2	3	4	5
I fear earthquakes and typhoons	1	2	3	4	5
I am worried about the language barrier in Japan	1	2	3	4	5
Traveling to Japan is expensive	1	2	3	4	5
Japan is too busy and crowded	1	2	3	4	5
I have hostility toward Japan because of its history	1	2	3	4	5

Part C: Reasons to Visit Japan

How important is each item below assuming that you are going to visit Japan?

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Extremely important
Visiting historical and cultural sites in Japan	1	2	3	4	5
Increasing knowledge about Japanese culture	1	2	3	4	5
Experiencing a different lifestyle	1	2	3	4	5
Trying Japanese food	1	2	3	4	5
Taking pictures and showing them to others	1	2	3	4	5
Going places my friends have not visited	1	2	3	4	5
Purchasing Japanese products and showing them to others	1	2	3	4	5
Meeting Japanese people	1	2	3	4	5
Making friends with others through visiting Japan	1	2	3	4	5
Visiting friends or relatives	1	2	3	4	5
Escaping from daily routine	1	2	3	4	5
Releasing daily stress	1	2	3	4	5
Resting and relaxing physically	1	2	3	4	5
Finding thrills or excitements	1	2	3	4	5
Rediscovering myself	1	2	3	4	5

Part D: Destination Attractiveness

How important is each item below if you had the opportunity to visit Japan?

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Extremely important
Shopping (e.g. electronic appliances, clothing)	1	2	3	4	5
Eating at authentic Japanese restaurants	1	2	3	4	5
Experiencing night life/ entertainment (e.g. Karaoke, Geisha)	1	2	3	4	5
Visiting theme parks (e.g. Tokyo Disneyland, Universal Studio)	1	2	3	4	5
Visiting Japanese gardens	1	2	3	4	5
Visiting modern cities and experiencing high technology	1	2	3	4	5
Visiting old temples and shrines	1	2	3	4	5
Visiting animation museums and shops	1	2	3	4	5
Visiting hot springs	1	2	3	4	5
Seeing beautiful scenery (e.g. cherry blossoms, mountains)	1	2	3	4	5
Going to ski hills/ beaches	1	2	3	4	5
Seeing sports game (e.g. baseball, sumo)	1	2	3	4	5
Experiencing tea ceremony and craft making	1	2	3	4	5
Visiting the sister city of Kamloops, Uji	1	2	3	4	5

Part E: Personal Characteristics

Please circle the number that best describes you

Sex: 1 = Male 2 = Female	Program: 1= Tourism 2= Business 3= ESL 4= Arts 5= Other	Age: 1 = under 20 2 = 20-25 3 = 26-30 4 = over 30	Main Source of Finance: 1 = Assistantship/scholarship 2 = Parents/family 3 = Self-savings 4 = Loans 5 = Other
Nationality: 1 = Canadian 2 = Chinese			
Preferred length of overseas trip: 1 = 1-3 days 2 = 4-6 days 3 = 1-3 week 4 = over 4 weeks	Preferred travel group size: 1 = Individual 2 = Two 3 = Three 4 = Four 5 = Over five	Have you ever been to Japan? 1 = Yes 2 = No If yes, how many times?	

Thank you for your valuable feedback!

Appendix B: Additional Figure

Figure 2: Comparison of Motivation Factors of Canadian and Chinese Students

