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Narrative Analysis of Online Traveling Community: An Explorative Study of Chinese-speaking visitors Sharing Their Travel Experiences in Norway.

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Narrative Analysis of Online Traveling Community: An Explorative
Study of Chinese-speaking visitors sharing Their Travel Experiences
in Norway.

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Abstract

The research focus concerned with Norway's online destination image and experience among Chinese visitors based on the social stimuli content in the User-generated content travel community. It will not only look into the contributors' profile but also gain insight knowledge about the perception of this specific destination among from the potential visitors. The research methods use explorative study with narrative analysis technique. The main finding is describing the before, during and after the trip among Chinese-speaking visitors in Norway.

List of Abbreviations

ICTs

Information and communication technologies

UGCs

User-generated contents

WOM

Worth-of-mouth

eWOM

Electronic worth-of-mouth

TDI

Tourism Destination Image

COI

Country of Origin Image

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 The research focus

Tourism communication combines communication techniques, marketing concepts, as well as information about what can destination offer. It is considered a strategic tool for marketing in tourism industry (Boyer & Viallon, 1994; Hu, Marchiori, Kalbaska, & Cantoni, 2015). Ever since the communication and marketing opportunities offered by Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) entered the tourism industry, the industry itself has been facing intensive change in the global (Buhalis & O'Connor, 2005; Hu et al., 2015).

Tourism destination has provided a great opportunity to use online communication tools for promotion destinationa globally. In addition, ICTs allowed the generation of electronic word-of-mouth, which in turn gathers countless online discourses (Hu et al., 2015). These discourses are becoming an incredible influence when the prospective travelers make a final decision regarding their tourism destination. Especially, the search engines are likely to direct the traveler towards user-generated contents (UGCs), such as travel blog, online travel communities, travel review websites (Z. Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). It might be analyzed as an efficient source of information for further investigation of the online image of different objects, for instance tourism destinations (Hu et al., 2015). Online user-generated contents have been widely adopted by prospective travelers to search, organize, share, and annotate their travel stories and experiences through blogs and micro blogs (e.g., Blogger and Twitter), online communities (e.g., Facebook, Yelp, TripAdvisor), media sharing sites (e.g., Flickr and YouTube), social knowledge sharing sites (e.g., Wikitravel and Qiongyou), and other tools in a collaborative way (Leung, Law, Van Hoof, & Buhalis, 2013).

Even though online user-generated contents have pros and cons to the destination image, it

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is no doubt that UGCs to tourism destination related industry has a revolutionary effect; hence it is worth going deep in its relevant research. This study is concerned with Norway's online destination image and experience among Chinese visitors based on the social stimuli content in the User-generated content travel community.

It will not only look into the contributors' profile but also gain insight knowledge about the perception of this specific destination among from the potential visitors.

1.2 The research background and research objectives

According to Keating and Kriz (2008), Leung, Li, Fong, Law, and Lo (2014) and (Zhang, Yan, & Ye, 2008), after the Chinese economy reformed and opened its door to international visitors and investors in 1978, China started quite late in tourism development. However, being one of the largest countries in Asia Pacific region, in the past few decades China has become one of the leading forces in the global economy and global tourism development.

The annual report of China outbound tourism development has considered the overview of the outbound visitors situation of the 2013. This report shows in 2013, China had over 98 million persons travelling to a foreign country, a number higher than the total population of some of the European countries.. From this number, Chinese outbound traveling is a huge market for the rest of the world. From the report about the Chinese consumption overseas, it has reached over 128 billion US dollars. In 2012, Chinese outbound expenses became the first, surpassing Germany and U.S. In 2013, the report shows that the difference between Chinese expenses and that of other countries have become bigger and bigger; therefore, in no doubt, China is becoming one of the top most outbound consumption countries will be recognized worldwide (China Tourism Academy, 2014).

There are some major events affecting China and Norway's diplomatic relationship. Since the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to a jailed Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo in 2010, China

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has effectively thrown Norway into diplomatic and economic deep freezer. Since the event in 2010, nearly all high-level bilateral meetings have been cancelled, and Beijing has imposed selected economic conferences on Norway (B. D. Baker, 2014). Slumping salmon market share is the closest sign of the commercial freezer felt by the salmon farmers (Milne, 2013). From a market share of over 90% of fresh salmon in China before 2010, Norway's share had dropped to 30% by mid-2014 due to Chinese officials claim that Norwegian fish is "unhealthy". In addition, a number of Norwegian politicians, business people and journalists have been refused visas to visit China (B. D. Baker, 2014; Milne, 2013; Talaksen, 2015). Moreover, this event is not only hurting the fishing industry, but Norway's tourism sector as well. The Nordic Page reports that Hurtigruten, the Norwegian curies line, was banned in China about their advertising campaign ("China Bans Norway's tourism Promotion," 2012).

However, the diplomatic relations situation between China and Norway does not seem to stop the strong growth of Chinese tourists visit to Norway. According to Innovation Norway (2013) and Bostock and Sandelson (2015), Chinese overnight guests have witnessed a largest growth of over 64% compared to 2012 and 240% in the past 5 years. The estimated average daily spending per Chinese person is about 8,140kr, but the duration of a Chinese tourist's stay is relatively short. Therefore, Norwegian tourism industry should take into Chinese outbound visitors account to considering studying Norway as premier tourism destination to attract more Chinese potential visitors.

Thus, this exploratory study aims to analyze the blog post content on online travel community related to Mainland Chinese visitor experience in Norway, approaches of content analyses. There is a need to examine textual information provided to understand the complete structure of destination image in the online market space. Accordingly, the specific study objectives include:

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1. To explore the destination image of Norway among Chinese contributors on online travel community.
2. To determine the main attractions or locations mentioned most often in the blog post.
3. To identify if Chinese have special interest while traveling to Norway
4. To profile the contributors personal information and First-time visitors vs. revisits in Norway
5. To identify the contributor's knowledge about Norway before travel to Norway
6. To draw implications and recommendations for the use of the online community in tourism marketing

1.3 The outline of research methodology

In this study, one tourism destination has been chosen as a case study for the investigation of online tourism image covered in online media. To fulfill the purpose of this study, a qualitative strategy had been adopted. One Chinese leading online travel community - Qiongyou, as prospective visitors, and Norway, as a prospective place to be visited, has been analyzed in this research. In order to have inclusive findings, this study applied both deductive and inductive techniques within the broad content analysis approaches.

A three-step process has been implemented in order to collect UGCs about Norway in the Chinese travel community. Step one comprised online query and UGCs collection. Step two was marked by Pre-screening content and select the usable posts.; While the third step included Narrative analysis to code the usable data and quantitative technique to profile contributors and travel notes.. In addition, coders were asked to indicate if the author of the post was a first time traveler to Norway; or a two or more times experienced visitor to Norway.

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All posts were collected in Mandarin Chinese. Then translated in English in order to report the analysis, and back translated for validity.

1.4 The Structure of the Dissertation

Five chapters follow this introduction. Chapter 2 is about literature review, introducing UGCs and tourism destination, destination image versus destination experience performance, online communication of Norway tourism, and Chinese outbound tourism and social media. Chapter 3 is on methodology, presenting in detail the methodology used in this research. Chapter 4 presents the results, illustrating the findings of the empirical study followed by a discussion of the results. In Chapter 5, the discussion the findings and explores the implication from the study for academic research and practical management and goes ahead to the recommendations for the future research. The final Chapter 6, the conclusions and limitations of the study are discussed.

1.5 Contribution of the research

This study is concerned with Norway's destination image among Chinese visitors based on the UGCs in the online community. It aims help the Norwegian tourism products and services industry to have a better understanding of what do Chinese visitor expect from Norway during their trip and what they have experienced. For instance, which tourism attractions do Chinese visitors mention the most, what products do Chinese visitors need? By using qualitative content analysis, the study can identify Norwegian tourism destination image to contribute the basic fundamental knowledge for further study about Chinese tourists market in Norway.

Chapter 2 Literature review

2.1 The Role of Image in Consumer Behavior

Regarding marketing literature, an image could be considered as a holistic, sensory method of encoding, processing, and evoking information (Thompson & Hamilton, 2006). In tourist industry, country's images, are mental pictures of states and localities. Drawing on consumer behavior theory, what motivates consumers' purchase decision is not the "true attributes of product"; instead, it is individuals' perceptions driven via their mental image towards these products (Kotler 2011). In other words, perceived image of products, countries particularly in tourism industry, significant influence consumers/tourists' preference and further shape their purchase precision.

Through the processing of images, people could simplify their decision via "creating symbolic representations to represent a network of salient meaning"(Stern, Zinkhan, & Jaju, 2001, p. 201). People usually associate objects such as countries and tour destinations with image which imposes specific meanings. The strength of the image towards the objects is defined via the consumers' personal perception of the world or previous experience with the country or tour destination. How the image information has been processed and encoded, as Stern et al. (2001) highlights, affects the consumers' behaviour.

Generally, within the realm of global marketing, there are two dominant constructs that cope with country as image and the impact this has on consumer behaviour. Country of origin image (COI), is the first concept, which has been developed via existing marketing works to represent the bias in consumer perceptions towards products/services due to the country where they originate (Bloemer, Brijs, & Kasper, 2009)). Tourism destination image (TDI), as another concept, originates from the tourism literature focusing on consumers' expectation of tour products ((Mossberg & Kleppe, 2005; Qu, Kim, & Im, 2011). Since the current study sits in

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tourism stream dealing with Chinese tourists' expectation and perception towards Norway, TDI as a theoretical concept would be better beneficial for facilitating an understanding of the relationship between image and consumer behaviour.

2.2 Tourism Destination Image

2.2.1 Definition of TDI and Its Formation Process

Since the 1970s, TDI has been seen as a crucial element in the management of tourism resource and the development of promotion strategy (D. A. Baker & Crompton, 2000; Stepchenkova & Mills, 2010)(Pike 2007 Existing evidence have shown that a destination's perceived image exerts a strong influence on the behavior pattern of the potential tourist and consequently is an essential indicator for predicting the future trends in the tourism industry (D. A. Baker & Crompton, 2000). In other words, destination image is an integral and influential part of the traveller's decision process and consequently travel behaviors (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Gallarza, Saura, & García, 2002).

Over the history, research related to TDI has gone through three developmental stages. According to Tseng, Wu, Morrison, Zhang, and Chen (2015), the first one started when Gunn proposed the development of TDI into organic, induced, and modified-induced image. This means that individual TDI is gradually formed via receiving impact from individual original perception towards the destination, influential agents (e.g. recommendation of friends), as well as actual contact with the area. Gunn's theoretical framework has been adopted via many subsequent studies and it offers several fundamental definitions and taxonomies of the concept (Tseng et al., 2015).

The second stage of TDI studies mainly focuses on the introduction of attitude theory. Many researchers contributed their efforts to measure consumers' TDI through the application of attitude framework. Specifically, these scholars deconstruct TDI into three hierarchically

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interrelated components, namely cognitive, affective, and conative (Gartner 1995; Pike & Ryan 2004). The second stage of TDI indicates the formation of the concept is not only affected by the personal attributes of individuals but also by various external stimuli which help to shape people's cognitive image.

During the third stage, tourism scholars started to contribute greater recognition and priority to qualitative dimensions of TDI in addition to the quantitative measurement of attitude. In this stage, TDI is eventually seen as a complicated concept which entails attribute-holistic, functional-psychological and common-unique components. Echtner and Ritchie (1993, p. 8) define, "TDI refers to "the perceptions of individual destination attributes...[and] the holistic impression made by the destination. [It]...consists of functional characteristics, concerning the more tangible aspects of the destination, and psychological characteristics, concerning the more intangible aspects. Furthermore, [it]... Can be arranged on a continuum ranging from traits which can be commonly used to compare all destinations to those which are unique to very few destinations."

Destination image studies find their main application in destination branding analysis, focusing on the way destination managers project destination narratives to customers, and on the way customers perceive those messages to enhance their personal travel experience (Tasci, Gartner, & Cavusgil, 2007). However, a standard definition of destination image is far from being established in the tourism research field, and might overlap with related concepts, such as branding and reputation.

2.2.2 Factors Influencing Image Formation

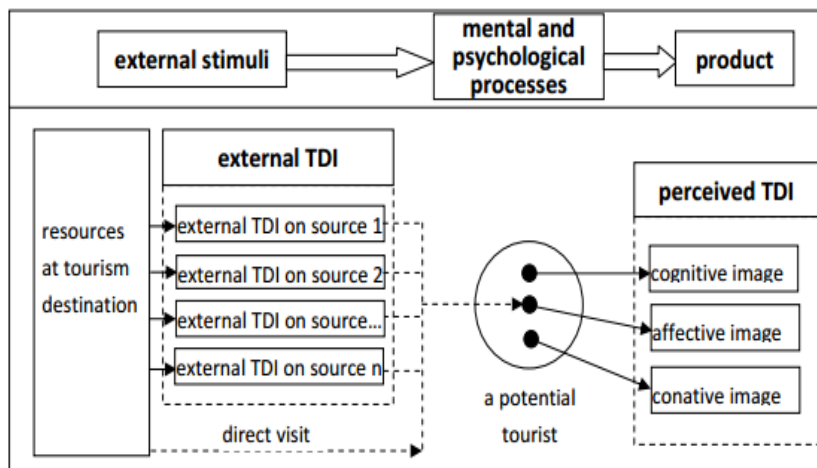
A large body of literature has indicated that information sources, socio-demographic characteristics, travel motivation, and previous travel experience are outstanding indicators of TDI (D. A. Baker & Crompton, 2000; Tseng et al., 2015) Pike (2007) However, this study only

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focuses on information sources since other factors might link with limited effective implication in guiding position and promotion strategy regarding the potential tourism destination. Further, compared to other factors, information resource have been seen as most influential in helping potential travellers to gain first knowledge towards the formation of TDI, especially in the case of newly emerged foreign tourist markets (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991).

The relationship between Information Sources and TDI(s)

Figure 1



Adopted from Pike 2007

As figure 1 state, information sources serve as external stimuli and directly affect individuals' formation of their cognitive component of image (Pike, 2007). They could include symbolic stimuli, such as promotional efforts of a destination through media, as well as social stimuli, such as friends' recommendation or word-of-mouth (Um & Crompton, 1990). Based on prior studies within the context of commercial tourism promotion, information resources that affect TDI could be simply categorized into four groups: 1) travel advertisements and promotional information directly posed by travel agencies; 2) information provided via official department of tourism management; 3) third-party media including social network which offers the reviews and recommendation towards destination; and 4) reviews written by experienced

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travellers and published on their personal blogs, books, and diaries (Croy & Wheeler, 2007; Frias, Rodriguez, & Castañeda, 2008).

The first two sources are commercially related, which means the information offered in the aim of attracting consumers and making profit. The last two sources, however, involve less apparent commercial purpose, which have been considered as more influential on the formulation of TDI (Hanlan & Kelly, 2005). As many empirical studies suggest, word-of-mouth from voluntary experienced travellers and other autonomous independent information sources are the principle medium applied via audiences to form their perception towards a tourist destination (Choi, Lehto, & Morrison, 2007)

2.3 Internet as An Information Source affect TDI

2.3.1 The role of the Internet

The rapid technological evolution and wide spread of the Internet has changed how information is delivered. It has gradually turned into one of the major approaches potential travellers to use to gather information and develop their TDI (Patterson, 2007). From the demand perspective, a growing number of individuals nowadays are using the Internet for information search because it offers more in-depth materials and richer content compared with traditional promotional media (Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2006). As Internet World Stats (2014) suggests, more than 43% of global population today use the Internet for information search.

From the supply side, the Internet has been actively used by hotels, airlines, and travel agencies for marketing purpose due to its inexpensive characteristic in comparison with other promotion media (Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2006). The Internet provides significant opportunities to affect tourists' perceived images, entailing creating virtual experience of

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destination. As the Internet Week's survey reveals, more than two-thirds of the international travel and hospitality companies benefited from the application of Internet in acquiring new customers and maintaining the existing ones (Baloglu & Pekcan, 2006).

2.3.2 User-generated Contents and Its Impact on TDI

Consumers currently are using electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) more to share opinions and experience towards products and services (Burgess, Sellitto, Cox, & Buultjens, 2009). According to Hermida and Thurman (2008) and Z. Xiang and Gretzel (2010), the online platforms provider such as blogs, wikis, podcasts and social networks have been categorized as UGCs, where online users can express their opinions, experience, photos, videos, and more (Table 1). Once these comments are published in the online environment, users could easily have access to these opinions after aggregated and indexed, thus other users could gain the information that they seek for (Hu, Marchiori, Kalbaska & Cantoni, 2015).

Table 1.

Key Types of UGCs Based on Web 2.0

Type of Web 2.0	Definition
Blogs (Weblogs)	Web pages that contain newsgroup-type entries, involving text, images and links to other 'blogs' in a chronological order with the newest posting listed first
Wikis	Websites that allow the user to easily add, remove, edit and/or change its content to suit their individual preferences
Podcasts	The blogging of audio content (i.e. MP3 format) which is accessed on a user-demand basis
Social Networks	Spaces such as MySpace and YouTube, that allow a group of friends, peers or like minded individuals to communicate, chat and share information on topics of interest

Developed from Kolbitsch & Maurer, 2006

As above table indicates, UGCs is an electronic communication phenomenon enabled via the Internet, which allows individuals to collaborate and share comments, profiles, photographs,

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etc. It is a place that mixes “personal opinion, impressions and sentiments, founded and unfounded titbits, experiences, and even rumour” ((Blackshaw & Nazzaro, 2006, p. 6). The appearance of UGCs has changed how information is transmitted and distributed within the tourism sectors. Since the experiential nature of tourism products for which previous quality is hard to ascertain WOM and, more recently, eWOM are much relied on by potential tourists in forming TDI (Burgess et al., 2009). Specifically, tourists today are becoming information providers themselves: with the ubiquity of high-speed Internet access, the popularization of social media and social networks give the most conveniences for sharing traveling experiences. Even a single piece of information could be spread much quicker than the traditional WOM and reach more potential users through e-platforms.

Majority of tourism-related UGCs are representation of the tourist’s experiences, which present feelings and judgments about a certain topic about their trip. Destination image could be viewed as a set of beliefs, ideas, as well as impressions which experienced travellers have of attributes and/or activities available at a certain place (Hu et al., 2015). Since the image is formed through a complicated process of learning and information sharing, UGCs therefore provide great opportunities for individuals to gain in-depth information towards the others’ pre- or post-travel experiences and functional and/or psychological review towards certain travel products. The positive or negative opinions related products, services, or places can eventually influence travel decision-making process of other potential tourists (Hu et al., 2015; Z. Xiang & Gretzel, 2010).

Evidence also show that there is a higher perceived credibility of opinions expressed in UGCs as compared to traditional tourism information sources. For instance, a survey conducted by The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and European Travel Commission (2008, p. 34) suggest that “travellers may trust user-generated reviews more than they trust travel agents’ content: 20% of respondents said that the websites like TripAdvisor were the most reliable

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sources of information; only 12% declared that travel agents' own websites were most reliable, followed by 11% of travellers who chose search engines as a preferred source on travel related information retrieval".

The explanation of above the phenomenon lies in the necessity of consuming tourism products before an evaluation could take place. Online reviews and word-of-mouth (WOM) recommendations on UGCs represent less marketing propose, which make them become a growing and crucial information source due to the perceived independence features (Hermida & Thurman, 2008). Further, as long as tourists trust UGCs, the information provided is likely to exert a persuasive impact on their opinions towards destination image. In other words, due to their credibility, UGCs are seen as the more supportive tool for consumers' travel decisions (Burgess et al., 2009).

Overall, due to its characteristics of credibility and easy-approachability, tourist-related UGCs have gradually gained a relevant power by creating online representation of the destination and leveraging on how audience perceives it.

2.4 Norway Tourism and Chinese Outbound Tourists

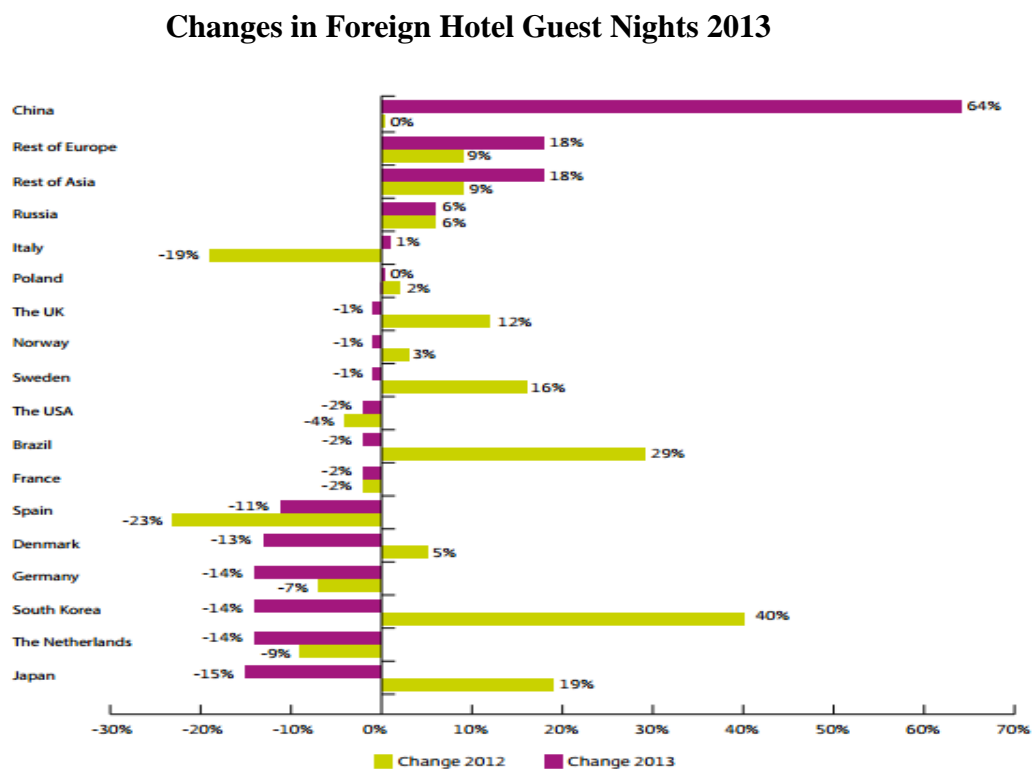
2.4.1 Norway Tourism Competitiveness and Chinese Tourists

The number of international tourist arrivals increased by 4% in 2014 and is expected to grow by 6% to total 5,489,000 persons at the end of 2015 (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2015). The positive growth indicates that the consistent robust of Norway tourist industry. However, other figures also indicate that Norway's tourism is facing significant challenges as well. For example, the number of foreign guest nights at hotels in 2013 decreased by almost 21% compared with 15 years ago (Innovation Norway, 2013). This decline in a long run was partially caused via the increasing cost of living in Norway, which significantly threatens the country's tourism competitiveness (Innovation Norway, 2013).

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Figure 2 indicates the changes in foreign hotel guest nights in 2013. As the figure shows, there was a relatively big increase (64%) of Chinese bed-nights in Norway. Further, as table 2 reveals, Chinese contributed the highest average daily spending (around 8,140 NOK per person per day) in Norway compared to other domestic and international tourists. The above evidence highlights the fact that Chinese tourists have gradually become one of the largest tourist groups in Norway. This further strengthens the significance that Norway tourism should dedicate more efforts to satisfy the growing demands from Chinese tourists in response to meet / maintain its competitive market position.

Figure 2.



Source from: *Innovation Norway 2014*

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Table 1.

Average Daily Spending and Total Spending Per Market

Estimated spending per person	Average daily spending per person (estimate) in NOK	Average total spending per holiday per person (estimate) in NOK
Norway	1,160	7,700
Scandinavia	1,180	7,750
Germany	1,060	15,200
The Netherlands	1,070	16,350
Southern Europe	3,070	30,150
Other country in Europe	2,040	21,600
The USA	2,880	26,650
China*	8,140	32,150
Other country in Asia	4,410	22,550
Other	2,160	19,700
Business travellers from Norway	2,930	5,950
Business travellers abroad	3,550	12,050

Source from: *Innovation Norway, 2014*

Based on existing studies, the Chinese outbound tourists are characterized as middle to upper middle families and/or businessmen. Overseas Chinese students also make up an essential portion of Chinese visitors (Y. Xiang, 2013). Generally, Chinese outbound tourists have more significant knowledge towards China's neighbouring destination including Australia and New Zealand, and also American and the European capitals. In relation to Scandinavia, however, individual knowledge is limited to certain information and perception on the welfare and cold states (Kjær, 2014).

Additionally, Chinese generally prefer group travel, but in the meanwhile, they might not be satisfied if the place is overcrowded with their own nationality (Kjær, 2014). Besides, evidence shows that Chinese outbound tourists usually prefer a full travel schedule and do not like to waste precious time³ (Y. Xiang, 2013). Those people started enjoying journey at home through planning and consulting different sources of information, such as WOM, websites, tour

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agencies, social media, and so the forth. In order to maintain the feeling of security, Chinese are more likely to have all activities organized and scheduled before departure (Kjær, 2014). Obtaining visas might be a challenge for Chinese outbound tourists; however, this issue could be gradually reduced by adopting more tolerant visa policies from destination countries (Y. Xiang, 2013).

2.4.2 Online Platforms of Tourism in Norway

Innovation Norway is the new organization that was formed in 2004 by the four organizations, which are The Norwegian Tourist Board, The Norwegian Trade Council, The Norwegian Industrial and Regional Development Fund, SND and the Government Consultative Office for Inventors, SVO (Innovation Norway, 2015a). Innovation Norway contributes to innovation in business, development in rural areas and development of competitive Norwegian companies. It profiles Norwegian industry and Norway as a tourist destination (Innovation Norway, 2015d). According to Innovation Norway (2015d), tourism is one of the seven sectors that should be prioritized from an overall assessment of the community's future needs or Norwegian business natural advantages. It is a complex institution whose main aim is to market local tourism related product and services towards a number of selected countries. Subsequently, it functions as an education institution to offer a variety of courses and expertise from the tourism industry to strengthen the business and their employees (Innovation Norway, 2015c). Last but not the least, Innovation Norway is also responsible for analysing market data, such as, evaluation and response to the national and international tourism trends, audience studies, market strategies and reports, accommodation statistics, and tourism survey as well as campaign measurement (Innovation Norway, 2015e).

Innovation Norway comprises all the possibilities that the development of Information and Communication technologies (ICTs). On the online market range, Innovation Norway operated

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the tourism sectors mainly as ‘Visit Norway’ with a website <http://www.visitnorway.com>. It serves as the official travel guide to Norway that includes all required information that the potential consumers might look for while preparing a trip to Norway. The website acts as the central unit for online communication, including marketing and sales activities to the products and services. Moreover, both textual and multi- media content that are present on the main website can be adapted and published on partners’ websites and/or distributed via other applications e.g. iPhone applications.

Scandinavia tourism board is formed by Visit Norway and Visit Denmark. These two countries collaborate together in China to promote themselves as tourism destinations. Scandinavia tourism board is actively present in Chinese market, such as the conference workshop with Scandinavia tourism board and Sweden tourism board in Beijing, 2014 (Scandinavia Tourist Board, 2014). At the same time, actively perform Scandinavia tourism board can be found in the different UGCs online platform, such as Qiongyou, Sina Weibo (Chinese version of Twitter).

Chapter 3 Methodology Design

3.1 Introduction

This exploratory study analyses UGCs on online travel community by Chinese-speaking visitors with regard to their experience in Norway in order to gain insight into the visitor's perception of the destination and their needs. This study therefore is not just about perception of a specific destination and, more importantly, it's about taking advantage from the content to be able to develop a better understanding for the Norwegian tourism industry as well as how to market Norway tourism towards Chinese potential visitors.

3.2 Research objectives and research model

The objective of this study was to gain an insight and establish an understanding as to how Chinese-speaking contributors on online travel community platform conceptualized Norway as travelling destination. The following research objectives are:

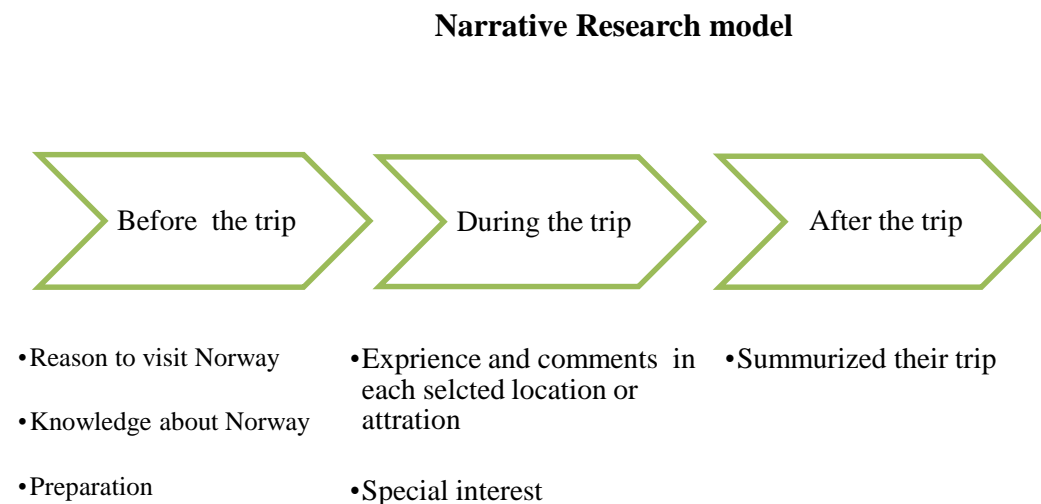
- 1) To explore the destination image of Norway among Chinese contributors on online travel community.
- 2) To determine the main attractions or locations mentioned most often in the blog post.
- 3) To identify if (Chinese) they have special interest while their traveling in Norway
- 4) To profile the contributors' personal information and First-time visitors vs. revisits in Norway
- 5) To identify the contributor's knowledge about Norway before travel to Norway
- 6) To draw implications and recommendations for the use of the online community in tourism marketing

The research model in figure 3 provides an overview of the focus and progress of the

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analyses. The three boxes on the top of the figure indicate the contributors' trip to Norway by chronological order. Under each of the top boxes, it is explained which sub-elements that analyses will consider.

Figure 3.



3.3 Research Design

The literature review demonstrated that knowledge about how Chinese-speaking visitors conceptualized Norway, as destination is quite limited. The lack of scales and former research implies the use of explorative research where identification of phenomena is of more importance than generalization of findings. The employment of a narrative analysis method was therefore chosen. According to Banyai and Glover (2012) and Smith and Weed (2007) both noted that narrative analysis as a research methodology have been used to gain insights in tourist-constructed identities, meaning making associated with their experience, and temporal and spatial characteristics of travel experience. The analysis process involved deconstructing the stories into episodes and quotations, coding these quotations and episodes, and interpreting the relationship between codes.

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Narrative structure or model suggested by Escalas (2004) based on the chronology and causality of the event was used. Events were organized based on their temporal dimensions (beginning, middle, or end of narrative). Bosangit, McCabe, and Hibbert (2009) used structural model of narrative involving a sequence of six elements: abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda. The narrative analysis revealed that “most bloggers told their stories chronologically: their narratives started from the beginning of their trip, when they left their home, included their travel to a destination, their various activities in the destination and finished with the end of their trip” (p. 68). Chronological organizing that is also evident in Berger and Greenspan (2008) narrative analysis of the 2005 Canadian Everest expedition. Therefore the narrative research is build (Figure 3). Apart from employing the narrative analysis methods, quantitative research has been used to profile the data of contributors and travel-note posts.

3.4 Sampling and data collection

There are two major competitors in Chinese-speaking online travel community, which are Qiongyou(穷游) and Mafengwo(蚂蜂窝). Both of the websites mainly rely on their users sharing experience about their trip on community, and conducted the original travel information as user-generated contents. By adding up and re-organizing contents attract more potential users. However, due to the differences of these two website's co-founder, it has been decided the differences that this two companies' future development and type of user group. Mafengwo's contents are mainly focusing on Chinese domestic tourism destinations, while Qiongyou is focusing in outbound tourism destinations. Therefore, Mafengwo has larger amount of users but Qiongyou are targeting lots of overseas Chinese students as well as higher income user groups. According to 李翔昊 (2014), professionals in the industry believe Qiongyou have higher quality and higher standard contents than Mafengwo. In addition, choice of one site

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facilitates an easier analysis of the data given that the contributors tend to use the similar format to write their travel post.

Therefore, Qiongyou as the online travel community has been selected to provide secondary data from the users who have been to Norway and shared their experience on the platform.

Qiongyou was founded in 2004 Hamburg, Germany. By far, it's the biggest outbound travel community in China (穷游网, 2015d). Using the UGCs, it provides original and practical travel guide, travel community and Q&A communication platforms. In addition, it also provides visa, insurances, flight and hotel booking, and car rental service. By the end of 2014, Qiongyou had already reached 40 million users (赵陈婷, 2014). The website has divided the destinations from five continents, to different countries then to different city within the same country. In Europe, it also categorized Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland as Scandinavian (穷游网, 2015b). Among these five countries in Scandinavia, Sweden is the most popular one. Available figures indicate that 11584 users have visited previously Sweden and left 2004 designation reviews (穷游网, 2015c). Norway is the third popular tourist destination, with figures showing that 8264 users have visited and the related commends are soon reaching 1500 (穷游网, 2015a).

In this research paper, a three-step process is performed in order to collect UGCs about Norway in the online travel community.

Step 1 : Online query and UGCs collection.

Data collection was done by manual querying the internal search engine of Qiongyou (<http://www.qyer.com>) in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland section. The keywords used for search were “挪威”, meaning “Norway”. The search was performed by

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selecting the following timeframe: 1st January 2014 to 31st December 2014 to cover a whole year with seasonal tourists. And post type have been selected as “游记帖”, meaning travelling note post. As a result, 388 posts were retrieved.

Step 2. Pre-screening content and select the usable posts.

All the retrieved posts were analyzed, in order to collect those that involve contents related to traveling in Norway. General questions, not related topics and no actually contents in the posts were considered as not usable, such as “2015 Copenhagen trip”, “Fare well Europe trip- Denmark, Iceland and Sweden”, “Northern light”, “September 1,2014 Norwegian visa in Guangzhou- personal Schengen visa application experience (visa application rejected, immediately change to Mauritius”, “any contributor know information about one day return trip from Ålesund to Geiranger Fjord by ferry?”, “December 29, 2014 to January 6, 2015, anybody would like to join me to Finland”, “About Scandinavians airline- Norwegian airline”. The unfinished content of the posts and only pictures or videos in the posts without any written contents are also considered as unusable. For instance, 8 days trip across Denmark, Norway and Sweden, however the post was only updated to their last day in Denmark and didn’t have any further information about the rest of the trip, which comprises Norway and Sweden.

The pre-screening content resulted in 111 (28.6%) travelling note posts that were considered as usable for narrative analysis.

Step 3. Using narrative analysis to code the usable data and quantitative technique to profile contributors and travel notes.

111 usable travel-note posts are coded individually into their own story in a chronological order, which are before, during and after trip in Norway. Then 111 coded individual stories are deconstructed and distributed into the three part that are before, during and after trip in Norway. Then respect the process again, the data deconstruct and distribute to the each sub-elements. At the same time, Google form about contributors’ and travel-

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note information record to gather data.

All posts were collected in Mandarin Chinese, then translated in English in order to report the analysis, and back translated for validity.

Chapter 4 Results

4.1 Description

4.1.1 Sample description (Contributor's profile)

111 travelling-note posts collected were written by 107 contributors given that some of them wrote more than one post for a single trip since they divided parts of the trip to different post.

The study observed a limitation in profiling contributors' demographics information, because majority did not always review themselves in terms of age, gender and the number of visits to Norway. That notwithstanding, the findings show contributors have no problem to review their resident location. The Demographic data analysis was conducted using the statistical program SPSS (see Table 4). Among the 107 contributors, just over 40% of them identify themselves as female, 15% as male, and the remaining 32% do not disclose their gender.

50% of the Chinese-speaking visitors were between the age group 26 and 35 years, while some 27% was below 25 years of age. Only 11% Chinese-speaking visitors were between 36 to 45 years old. Chinese speaking visitors have been divided into two groups, Mainland Chinese resident and Overseas Chinese who could be studying abroad temporarily, working temporarily or permanently or those who moved abroad and live in foreign country permanently. According to the results, over 55% of Chinese-speaking visitors' inbound tourists in Norway are overseas Chinese. The remaining 45% are the resident from Mainland. As the paper mentioned earlier, Norway as a tourist destination for Chinese Speaking visitors remains a relatively new market.

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86.9% of the Chinese-speaking visitors have never ever been to Norway. But 8 contributors have visited Norway two or more times. Two of these 8 contributors have been in Norway for four times and expressed that they never saw enough about Norway and would be willing to have their vocation in Norway every year. Surprisingly, both of these contributors are Mainland Chinese residents. That could be possible explained by the fact that overseas Chinese have bigger opportunity and possibility to travel to another foreign country. On the other hand, it is quite problematic for Mainland Chinese residents to get a visa.

Table 2.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Dimension	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent	
Age Group					
Valid	25 and below	29	27.1	27.1	27.1
	26-35	57	53.3	53.3	80.4
	36-45	12	11.2	11.2	91.6
	46 and above	6	5.6	5.6	97.2
	Unknown	3	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	
Gender					
Valid	Female	43	40.2	40.2	40.2
	Male	16	15.0	15.0	55.1
	Unknown	48	44.9	44.9	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0	
Where are the Chinese-speaking tourists from?					
Valid	Mainland China	48	44.9	44.9	44.9

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Overseas Chinese	59	55.1	55.1	100.0
Total	107	100.0	100.0	

Number of Visits in Norway				
	1 time before	4	3.7	3.7
	2 or more	8	7.5	11.2
Valid	Never	93	86.9	98.1
	Unknown	2	1.9	100.0
	Total	107	100.0	100.0

4.2.1 Data description (travel-note posts profile)

In this part, 6 main topics of the travel-note posts have been analyzed by creating a Google form. And the following questions have been asked and recorded during the coding:

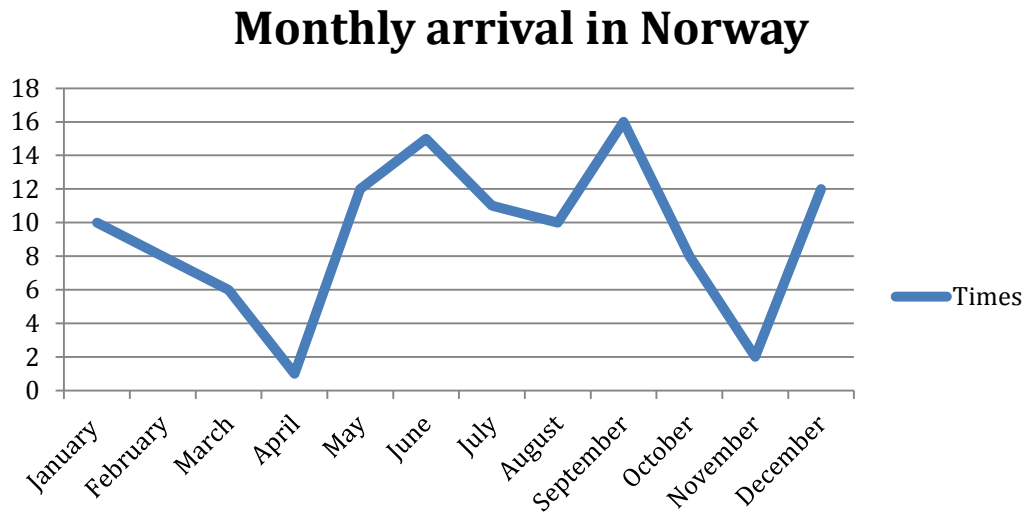
1. Seasonal arrival distribution
2. Travel companion and number of Group size
3. Self-organized trip? Group package tour or other type
4. For how long is their trip in Norway?
5. Is Norway the only destination?
6. Popularity of the destination in Norway

4.2.1.1 Seasonal arrival distribution

The monthly arrival (Figure 4) shows that the months of June and September constitute the peak arrival in Norway among the Chinese-Speaking contributors in Qiongyou. The number of arrival in December is greater than that of July and August. The number of arrival in January, July and August shared the similar.

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Figure 4.
Monthly arrival distribution



4.2.1.2 Type of travel companion and number of group size

Friends and Couple(s) account for 65% as the major type of travel companions; while Family account for only 17%. Surprisingly, 14 (13.1%) of the contributors are solo travelers. Only 1(0.9 %) contributor reported as having been on a business trip. The remaining 4% constitutes students that study in Norway. (See Table 5.)

7 posts are missing the amount of visitors because the contributors didn't review the groups' size. The rest of the 100 posts describe the amount of their companion ($M=3.1$, $SD=2.79$). 2 people's trip is the most frequent mentioned combination to travel together (43 times).

Table 3.
Frequency of the

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Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Numbers of travel companion	100	1.0	26.0	3.100	2.7907
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Type of travel companion

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Business	1	.9	.9	.9
Family	18	16.8	16.8	17.8
Friend or Couple	69	64.5	64.5	82.2
Long-term study program in Norway	3	2.8	2.8	85.0
Short term study Program in Norway	1	.9	.9	86.0
Single solo traveller	14	13.1	13.1	99.1
Unknown	1	.9	.9	100.0
Total	107	100.0	100.0	

Numbers of Group size

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1.0	14	13.1	14.0	14.0
2.0	43	40.2	43.0	57.0
3.0	9	8.4	9.0	66.0
4.0	20	18.7	20.0	86.0
5.0	5	4.7	5.0	91.0

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	6.0	6	5.6	6.0	97.0
	8.0	2	1.9	2.0	99.0
	26.0	1	.9	1.0	100.0
	Total	100	93.5	100.0	
Missing	System	7	6.5		
Total		107	100.0		

4.2.1.3. Self-organized trip, Group package tour or other type

92 out of 107 responses have organized their own trip as the most popular way to travel. Of the 92 responses, 30 of them rent automobile in the destination country and do their own road trip. The remaining 62 of trips travel to different destinations by public transportations, such as coach, ferry, and airplane. Only 6 posts reviewed that they have joined the group package tour. This number includes 2 who are having the package on a cruise ship. 8 travel-note posts are the combination of either self-organized trip with hiking and camping, road trip with camping in tent, or photograph shooting trip, and rest of 1 post identified that they have hired a Chinese-speaking guide in Norway as their driver and tour guide.

4.2.1.4. Length of the journey

As this part illustrates, the limitation of analysis the travel-note post is they don't always identify the information that we looking for. Never the less, in this section, 5 cases are missing information (see Table 6). 102 posts have been analysed. As results indicate, the minimum visits to Norway is 2 days and 26 are the maximum length touring in Norway (M=6.28, SD=3.98).

Table 4.

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Descriptive of Length of the Journey

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Length of the journey	102	2	26	6.28	3.976
Valid N (listwise)	102				

4.2.1.5 Consider Norway as only destination Or Norway as part of Scandinavia destination

Just over 39% (42 trips) of the trips that contributors posted consider Norway as only destination to visit. Thus, Norway is the only destination that contributors are touring. However, 61% (65 trips) of contributors consider Norway as part of the Scandinavia. That means they are not only visiting Norway; but also visiting 4 other Scandinavia countries, which are Denmark, Sweden, Iceland and Finland. Sweden is the most popular Scandinavian destination ahead of Norway, with 53 trips being made to Sweden. Denmark has been visited 38 times by contributors and its companion. Finland only has half of visits of Sweden. Iceland is the least visited country within the Scandinavian region.

4.2.1.6. Popularity of the location or attraction in Norway

The questionnaire on which location(s) or attraction(s) you have been in Norway included multiples checkboxes, because there is big possibility that visitors could be travelling to more than one destination. Therefore, SPSS has been used for the analysis of responses to questions in multiples data set. Results in Table 7 shows the top 14 destinations in Norway. Location and attraction that have been mentioned 4 times or less will be not considered. The top 3 destinations

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are Oslo (23.7%), Bergen (19.1%) and Stavanger (14%). 2 (Bergen and Stavanger) out of the top 3 destinations are located in Fjord Norway area. Follow by the top 3 destination is Tromø (9.4%), Flåm (7.0%), and Geiranger (6.0%). The remaining 8 destination distribute in Trondheim, Voss, 3 famous the hiking destination (Prikestolen, Trolltunga and Kjerag), Lysefjord, Aurland, Ålesund, and last but the not the least Lofoten. The popularity of the three famous hiking destinations (Prikestolen, Trolltunga, and Kjerag) are distributed by the level of difficulties. According to (Innovation Norway, 2015b), Prikestolen has a medium level of difficulty. But both of Kjerag and Trolltunga are at the challenging level.

Table 5.
Top Destination in Norway

\$Top Destination Frequencies

Top Destination in Norway ^a	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Oslo	71	23.7%	67.6%
Bergen	57	19.1%	54.3%
Tromsø	28	9.4%	26.7%
Stavanger	42	14.0%	40.0%
Flåm	21	7.0%	20.0%
Geiranger	18	6.0%	17.1%
Trondheim	4	1.3%	3.8%
Voss	10	3.3%	9.5%
Aurland	2	0.7%	1.9%
Ålesund	2	0.7%	1.9%
Trolltunga	7	2.3%	6.7%
Prikestolen	12	4.0%	11.4%
Kjerag	5	1.7%	4.8%
Lysefjord	9	3.0%	8.6%

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Lofoten	11	3.7%	10.5%
Total	299	100.0%	284.8%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 2.

4.2 Narrative analysis results

In this part, the Narrative analysis is presented by chronological order. Each of the sub-elements is described by the selected quotes from coded, deconstructed stories in 111 travel-note post in online travel community. Each selected quote represents a certain amount of opinions from the Chinese-contributors. Similar and repeat opinions are not considered as the selected quotes. Each of the quotes is numbered from 1 to 388, which is the results of the step 1, 388 posts were retrieved.

4.2.1 Before the trip

This section focuses on the reasons they pick Norway as destination, knowledge about Norway, and preparation for the trip.

4.2.1.1 Why choose Norway ?

The Top reason for Chinese-speaking visitors is most likely similar to the rest of the foreign visitors to Norway; which is the desire to experience the remarkable, mysterious and unique nature that they never had a chance to experience where they live and where they had already been. In this section, visitors have few different areas to review Oslo.

“I have been looking forward to visit Norway for the past 20 years, all because my father brought me a postcard from Norway about aurora known as Northern light. Especially I’m interested in astronomy. Finally, it’s happening. I cannot wait to be there, and finally able to witness myself.”

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-NO.3 Only visit Norway, family trip

“I had a conversation with my colleague, she persuade to visit Scandinavia especially Norway. We need to have some time off ourselves. Norway is full of nature, I think it will calm me down and rethink about my future.”

-No.26 Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Friends trip

“Business trip to Norway, took some time off to visit the country after the busy week only about work in Norway.”

- No.54 only visit Norway, Business trip

“Norwegian’s fjord and troll’s fairytale fascinated me, so mysterious. What driven my husband and me visit Norway as our top 1 must visit country of the year? It’s the stunning scenery and the design of architecture as well as famous Norwegian salmon. We also want to experience the one of the World Happiness country (Norway).”

- No.56 and No.59 only visit Norway, couple trip

“Norwegian’s coast line are disconnect to one and each other. I don’t think you can find this type of landform anywhere else. My family and me are really curious and fascinated about uniqueness of the fjord and landform.”

- No.99 only Norway, family trip

“We are saving up for our honeymoon after we have been married for 7 months. We are big fan of outdoor activities and Norway is well known have a lot of amazing route for hiking. Not to mention we got a chance to meet up friend of mine.”

- No.104 Norway, couple trip, hiking.

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“Never try a package cruise tour before. It actually fits our budget and gets to visit all of the Scandinavia countries. Norway is one of the countries I’m most looking forward. Especially the scenery of the fjords.”

- No.106 cruise package tour across all of the Scandinavia country, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland, couple trip

There are few but outstanding posts where visitors mentioned that they want to experience Norwegian culture and lifestyle to have a better understanding of reasons Norway is one of the most livable and happiest country by United Nations for years in a row.

“I have heard that this year Norwegian National day would celebrate its 200 anniversary, which encouraged me to go to Oslo to have a visit on this special date. Must be really different how they celebrate their national day than how china celebrates it. Love to experience another country’s culture.”

-No.194 1 day in Oslo for national day, solo

“Norway have been always in the top list of the most livable country as well as world happiness report in the world by United Nations. We guess it’s not only the beauty of the nature but the life style and customs. We have been always curious about Norwegian life style and their customs. Just touring on your own will not give you a deeper understanding of their life style. Therefore, we decided to stay with locals and hope we could hang out with them so that this might give a better opportunity to get a better understanding of why Norwegian are one of the happiest people in the world. And experience how to live like a local Norwegian for limited period of time. Therefore, this trip will be slow travel, we are going to few destination, stay there for a while, and take our time to enjoy what Norway offer us.”

-No.202 couple trip 2 times in Norway

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4.2.1.2 Knowledge about Norway find detail quote

According to the travel-note post profile results, 86% of Chinese-speaking travelers have never been to Norway. Results show that the majority of the contributors only have a limited and blurred overview of Norway, mainly in Norwegian salmon, fjords, Northern light, well-developed welfare system, and the impression of top country in world happiness and most livable country.

Few of the contributors expressed that they have no idea about how Norway is so rich since it is such a small country and why and how Norway made it to top country in world happiness report as well as most livable country.

In addition, No collected quotes identify the history about Norway, not even world famous Vikings.

“About Norway, I know almost nothing before visiting beside its high price living and sexual liberation.”

- No.202 5 days in Oslo, Bergen and Stavanger, solo

There are only few posts which identify the reason Norway became wealthy as well as the well-developed welfare system comes with high taxes system.

(Find quote)

Find quote to support

小雨的慢游记

Compared to first time visitors and second or more times visitors are quite different. First time visitors tend to visit to most famous tourist destination. They tended to spend least amount

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of time to visit most sights.

(Find quote)

However, for the return visitors, they would rather focus in same area at a time. For example, the first time visit was hiking in Preikestolen, Kjerag and Trolltunga along with fjords. Second time, Northern light and outdoor activities. Third time was a road trip in summer in Lofoten.

(Find quote)

4.3.1.3 Preparation for the trip

Only one out of 111 posts has been retrieved and identified as barely having made any preparations.

“All I prepared were picked a location in Norway, booked airplane ticket and accommodation, but I’m not sure what waiting for me there, and I don’t even need to apply visa since being in Europe saved lots problem to apply visa.”

-No.67 Norway and Iceland Solo traveler

However, the remaining posts contain lots of information about their preparation. Majority of those preparations are well prepared and planned are similar. The following is the extract to illustrate this preparation;

“After we have decided to visit Norway, I started to prepare for the trip for the past 9 months. I took a detailed look on the requirements for the application of the Norwegian tourist visa. Compare to France and Italy, application of Norwegian tourist visa is complicated and involves long processing time.

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“However, before handing the tourist visa application, it required the applicant to have a detail plan about return flight, accommodation, how to travel from one location to another. That was a lot of preparation before we travel to Norway. We just have to constantly checking the price of the airplane ticket.”

-- No.90 Norway and Iceland, couple trip.

“My husband and I have been browsing on Qiongyou.com to find out what kind of clothes should we bring with us. Finally, today, we have bought the outdoor jacket and hiking shoes since we saw a lot comments on Norway section in Qiongyou that you should bring the proper gear and clothes to wear in the season. Waterproof and windproof is basic requirement.”

-- No.175 Norway Denmark and Sweden, couple trip

“Since we are group of friends travel together, we have to be prepared to bring preserved pickle, some instant noodle and hotpot pastes with us. In case, we are tired of local food, and missing Chinese food. It is going to be a long journey; we will be more comfortable with familiar food at some point. As long as we can find hot water and a pot in Norway. Then I think we are good to go.”

-- No.258 Norway, Friends trip.

4.3.2 During the trip

This is the middle part of the time frame of the trip. It includes two sections. In the first section, and by using narrative analysis technique, 14 destinations in Norway are described in details about their experience and point of views in the order of popularity. Second section is to find out if contributors have any special interests.

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4.3.2.1 What do contributors think about the locations or attraction?

12 destinations' popularity listed in Table xx from the information in the table XX in top destination. Only the places have been mentioned 5 or more times will be considered as the select destination. Higher rank destinations have more variances from the quotes. Lower ranking destination tend to have less variances of the experience, because of there are less contributors visited there.

Table 6

Destination ranking in Norway

 Ranking in the 12 destination:

1. Oslo
 2. Bergen
 3. Stavanger
 4. Tromsø
 5. Flåm
 6. Geiranger
 7. Prikstolen
 8. Lofoten
 9. Voss
 10. Lysefjord.
 11. Trolltunga
 12. Kjerag
-

4.3.2.1.1 Oslo

This location, selected quotes mentioned the things to do in Oslo, Shopping areas, atmosphere, and facility, how the resident treated them.

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No.35 Norway, family trip

“Touring in city center is quite boring, especially Oslo don't have much sightseeing, have to travel to other area but helpful and nice staff in Oslo tourist information. If you are not so interested in the city, one day in Oslo is enough, because not really interesting sights and not so attractive.”

No.54

“Oslo as a capital is so small. Went to an island with lots of museums, all of them cost money. Norway is lacking of historical background information about country. It was just to have a boat then make a museums out of it and hype the museum, truly not worth to visit.

Vigelandsparken, park is quite big, but sculpture is not as impressing as I thought, too much picture online about augury boy. That is so small and not obvious at all. City hall is close in Sunday, didn't get it, Nobel prize hall need to pay to get in, didn't go it. Try to see a show in the theater, sold out, but then thought we would not understand the story any way. Royal palace looks miserable and tiny.”

No.194 1 day in Oslo for national day, solo

“Personally, Oslo has limited number of luxury shops, so the fashion hunters might not be totally satisfied here. As well, due to the high tax, the luxury goods are more expensive compared the ones in UK, France, and Italy.”

“Generally, Oslo city center area is quite small, a maximum 20 minutes' walk from station down to the royal palace pedestrian. It is important to mention, during all national holidays or Sunday, almost every stores in center closed. Therefore, tourists could only search for the food

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in some 24 hour stores or the ones in station. Toilet is so hard to find during the holiday since all the stores closed. Tourists have to return to train station to use charged bathroom.”

No.227: half day in Oslo, family trip, cruise

As parts of cruise tour, we arrived Oslo for 3 hours. Due to the limited time, we took the city bus tour, 250kr per person, which covers the most sights in Oslo. Personally recommend this bus tour due to its efficiency and competitive price. If you travelling with your family Vigelandsparken is worth it visit.

Atmosphere

“The life in Oslo is definitely different compared the ones in Stavanger and Bergen. Here is much crowded, developed, multicultural, and industrialized. I do enjoy the different feeling Oslo offers. It has its charms with beautiful architecture, creative galleries, and modern facilities.”

- No.271: 9 days in Oslo, Bergen and Stavanger, solo

Facility

No.288:2 days in Oslo and Bergen, group

We only have half-day break in Oslo, then needed to take overnight train from the central station to Bergen. The Oslo station is considerable. It provides passengers lock rooms for luggage. This helps us a lot since we could leave our heavy bags at station and enjoy a short time in the city.

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No. 339: 4 days in Oslo, couple trip

“Oslo trains are featured with its modern design, clearness, high-tech (full Wi-Fi covering), and efficient facilities. However, the experience in city center was not satisfying due to the various construction works everywhere. Museums are nice, most are free and offer multiple language audio-guide. Food is normally quite pricey so ensure to book hostel with kitchen if you want to control the travel budget. It also better to have a good traveling insurance to cover medical help. The primary hospital charged extremely high price for consultation in Oslo.”

4.3.2.1.2 Bergen

The second popular in Norway, Chinese-speaking visitors have mostly mentioned Byrggen, fish market and Fløibanen.

No.35

“It was lunchtime when we arrived in Bergen. We had to try the fresh seafood in fishmarket. It was well located in the heart of the harbor, seating area by the harbor. There are Chinese staffs works there that make the communication much easier. Seafood taste great and fresh, especially the salmon taste 10 times better than the so-called Norwegian salmon in China. After lunch, we visited Byrggen, which is listed on World Heritage. It was not very interesting, just old wooden houses, not much shops inside. After that we were heading back to the hotel to rest a bit. Waiting for the darkness to come so we can go to Fløibanen sunset and the night view on the top. We took the tram to top of Fløibanen, it looks like Victoria Peak’s tram in HongKong. Lucky enough weather it was lovely so that we saw amazing sunset scene and night view of Bergen.”

No.38

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“Lovely landscape and houses are building along with the mountain. If that was in China, the mountain will lay flat to able to build higher building on it. I really respect that Norwegians can respect the nature and balance their life with the nature.”

No.54

“We were lost in Bergen didn't manage to find our accommodation, but met a local he took us with him to accommodation. That just made our day in Bergen.”

“We thought the concept of Bryggen is similar to Tianzi Fang, Shanghai, China that fully of hand craft goods, local designer and lots of cozy café. However, the store just ended near the entrance. We don't think that was interesting.”

No.73

“Reaching top of Fløibanen took longer time than I thought. I thought was only stairs to walking straight up to the Fløibanen, but it was 'Z' sharp to the top. It was refreshing to see the overview of Bergen even though it is not during the night.

No.81

“Thumps up for protection work that local community have been done to the Bryggen. It was really well preserved.”

No. 259: 7 days in Bergen and Oslo, couple

“We arrived in Bergen, a beautiful city surrounded via several mountains. We visited the alleys of Bergen, which is listed on World Heritage. It was not so many shops inside.

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4.3.2.1.3 Stavanger

No. 35

“Landed in Stavanger airport. It’s small airport though it seems quite a busy even it is small airport. Directions sign is simple and easy to understand, easily find our flybus to this city. Our accommodation is right next to the Stavanger hospital. It was quite strange to have newborn baby and mum walking around in the lobby. Shopping option is limited compare to city in Sweden and Denmark.”

No.54

“Met Chinese in Stavanger, she told us quite a lot information that was not available online. Went to the restaurant she recommend nice food but come with high price.”

No.73

“On the way to city, the view was similar to Japan, clean and not-tall house, most of them are wooden house it was the wooden house’s capital.

“City center shop (they thought gamle Stavanger), it is so commercial, but you can find everything you need. Quite lots of massage store, seem there are lot of South East Asian, Price in the cinema is more expensive. We wanted to try sushi since Norwegian salmon is really well known in China.”

No. 104

“We were just having a chill day in Stavanger, ask hotel staff any suggestion where to go in a sunny day. Sola beach was a hit. It was glam, white soft sandy beach. It was popular for kite surfing as well surfing. But not many information available online have mentioned it. I

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think it will get really popular among the Chinese tourist if they know how beautiful it is.”

No. 258: 3 days in Bergen and Stavanger, couple

“Stavanger generally a tiny but beautiful seaside city. Have to go to pulpit rock even though the long journey of hiking could make you completely exhausted. The scenery you see would never be forgotten.”

No. 284: 2 days in Stavanger, solo

“Unexpected plan to visit Stavanger due to the promoted ticket found on Expedia. Generally, Stavanger is tiny and relaxing city. People could immediate feel that when they arrive at airport where there is no long queer anywhere and crowed. Did not have enough time to hiking around, instead, just relaxing around the city center. Booked Rica Park Hotel which is perfect, and that is why it receive 4.8/5.0 high score on Expedia. Hotel facilities and staffs are both the top over the world.”

4.3.2.1.4 Tromsø

It is a popular location to see northern lights. Therefore, contributors did not mention much about the city, but mainly focusing Northern light.

No. 336: 2 days in Tromsø, couple trip

“Limited attraction in Tromsø; however there are various options for short Aurora tour which could be booked directly through the hotel. The staying experience at Viking Apartment was not bad even though it is a bit expensive. The cable car in Tromsø was incredible which drives the tourist to the top of Mount Storsteinen (400m) where there is an amazing view no

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mater it is winter or summer.”

No. 347: 4 days in Oslo, Tromsø, and Trondheim, group trip

“Cheap air fare from Edinburg to Oslo Rygge, then flight to Tromsø. Tourist center in Tromsø was helpful for booking bus tickets and tour trips for Nordic light. Booked accommodation from Tromsø Camping, which is quite far from the center but good price. Depended on the personal luck to see the Nordic light; however, it still worth to take a tour since you could enjoy the nature view with other friends from over the world.

No.359 friends’ trip

“Tromsø is tiny city and most attractions close during the weekend. Below is five most import tips for people want to see Nordic light in Tromsø:

- 1) Dress warm and snow outfit is necessary;*
- 2) Check aurora forecast;*
- 3) Bring tripod if you want to have a nice shooting;*
- 4) Travel with group;*
- 5) Better join a tour instead of driving around alone.”*

No. 377: 3 day in Tromsø, couple trip

“Tromsø is one of most beautiful cities in Norway. Purchased the Mini Bus tour to Nordic light, 1000 for person. Good experienced with Tromsø.”

4.3.2.1.5 Flåm

Flåm is one of the famous for the rain ride among Chinese-speaking tourists. Majority of the comments are related how beautiful and stunning of the Norway’s landscape in a short

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period, tourists can experience the most of the Norway.

No, 54 Business trip

“Really lovely small town. It was overcrowded, way too many tourists. The crowds have destroy the peace and harmony in here. It became commercial area. I’m not sure if I enjoyed.”

No. 223 3 days in Norway, Couple trip

“We then decided to stay one night in Flåm which is a small and relaxing village with lots of beautiful wooden houses built on the hillside, offering a feeling of fairy-tale.”

No.368

“Amazing train ride, it was the most beautiful mountain and fjord views. Recommend to get on the train to get a sit in the front, you have better view over there. Wish we could spend more time in Flåm, If you have time, highly recommend you to stay few day in Flåm to relax your soul.”

4.3.2.1.6 Geiranger

This location is only able to find the similar information about the ferry fjord trip in Geiranger.

No. 200: 12 days across Oslo, Bergen, Alesund, Lofoten, and Stavanger, couple

“In Geiranger, better to rent a car since the public transportation work inefficient and taxi is overpriced. We stayed at Geirange Campinghytter, which is not in the town center. However, the hotel service is good, and the room is equipped with many facilities, such as refrigerator. We had quite relaxing time in Geiranger by sitting under the sunshine and enjoying the beautiful landscape.”

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No. 243, couple

“Arrived in Geiranger at noon, was walking around the town. We found quite lots of cozy local shop in the town. It was interesting to see different shops in there with a stunning view of the fjord in the background. Hanging around in the town until the afternoon, catching ferry to Hellesylt . We passed the world Seven Sisters Waterfall. It was beautiful, I was absolutely stunned by it.”

4.3.2.1.7 Prikestolen

No.19 Norway, couple trip

“We started hiking to Prikestolen around 9pm. We already saw that many people had arrived before us; it was almost full in the one car park. It was crowded on the way up. We had the sneaker on, but when I look around on the way up. Most of the visitors have hiking shoes, tiny jacket on. We thought we can buy water somehow, but we cannot find any shop to sell water. However, we saw that some tourists started filling their water in the lake. We then, approached to ask if the water is drinkable. She replied No problem to drink. The hike is not difficult, but I do wish I have proper gear on and bring food along with us. It was a great trip. Personally, it is the favourite”

No.116 Norway, Family trip

“If you have pick one out of the three famous rock, and you are not really sporty, Preikestolen will be your best option. It's the easiest one among Trolltunga and Kjerag. It was incredible experience. Personally, it is better to visit above attraction during the summer when the daytime is until 23:00 in the night.”

No.244 Iceland, Sweden and Norway, friend trip

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“We weren't lucky with the weather, it started raining in the morning on the way up. We never thought that the track will get slippery since we didn't know it was raw and original. That would not happened in China, it will be all nice and well structure stairs. It was foggy when we reach the top. Weather here is unpredictable, hope we have better luck nice time. If you have change to visit, I would recommend it you for the hike in Prikestolen.”

4.3.2.1.8 Lofoten

No.84

“The locals were very friendly to help us. They recommended where we could see the Northern Light. They recommended Reinebringen. The view was very nice. At the Eliassen Rorbuer hotel had a good price for six people, and they had free rent of kayak. The tour guides there knew everything. In one of the trip, we even managed to catch some mussels. We could bring this home and cook them for ourselves..”

No.99

“Lofoten seems represent quiet and magnificent. We got also a lot information about how local make the dry cod. Few of the museum is about the fishing industry from a long time ago.”

No.288

“Five days road trip in Lofoten was definitively incredible. We were shocked by beautiful snow mountain, fjord, small traditional wooden cabinet in Ramberg, white beach and golden sunset. We had the experience of ice breaking, learned how to skating, and most importantly, we luckily saw the 8 degree Nordic light. Highly recommend have a visit to Lofoten, which is not tourist-famous area for Chinese. However, you would be definitely amazed by the nature

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here.”

No.277

“Lofoten Moskenes. We stayed at the pre-booked cabinet named Maybua, which is wonderful experience, loving the clear and comfortable bedding. Be aware that there is only one supermarket on Moskenes island, which means better to prepare enough food for several days. Also, it would be nicer to rent a car, since there is limited public transportation on the island as well.”

No.254: family trip

“Have been Norway twice before, one for fjord and another for Northern light. This is the third time with family, and the main destination is beautiful Lofoten. Better to plan the trip half year in advance; otherwise you would be shock with all the expensive transportation and accommodation fares. Booked a fishing trip from local agency at Lofoten, which is expensive but worth the money.”

No.231

“Lofoten is paradise on the earth! It is a well known by its stunning natural views, including beautiful clear and blue sea, white sand, classic wooden houses, and the snow-capped mountains. Highly recommend to taste its local famous food, fresh cod with dry date.”

4.3.2.1.9 Voss

Most of contributors have just passing by voss and didn't visit voss. As such, only one quote has been selected.

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“Visited Voss for half day, It’s because of the water brand “VOSS”, just want to know how beautiful is this place is to produce such tasty water and well known as brand as luxury water. It didn’t disappoint us. It was such lovely place. Attracted lots of extreme sport play to here. Hope we can stay here longer.

4.3.2.1.10 Lysefjord

No.106

“We took a ferry to Lysefjorden, but because of the bad weather we could not manage to see Preikestolen. However, even though it was raining and foggy, Lysefjord still really beautiful, and it even looked like heaven.”

No.328

“A ferry trips across Songnefjord and Lysefjord were breath taking as well. Personally, it is better to visit above attraction during the summer when the daytime is until 23:00 in the night.”

No.244

“ Lysefjord arguably is the most famous Norwegian fjords, fun, attractive, and beautiful. Be aware the tourist season of Lysefjord opens on 12th June each year. Ferry provide small snacks as well coffee and tea.

No.271

Booked Fjord Tour package (lysefjord) in local tourist center, 420 kr per person and took 3 hours. I am not good at hiking, so the boat trip for me is perfect for sight viewing.

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4.3.2.1.11 Trolltunga

No.99

“We were lucky with the weather when we went to Trolltunga. In the beginning of the walk, we saw a list with detailed information about the route. This gave us good information on how far and steep this walk was. Another thing that was nice with this trip was that other tourists helped us with directions and shared food with us.”

No.110, road trip with classmate to Trolltunga.

“Outdoor activity is really challenging that is pushing you to your limits. When we were walking up to Trolltunga, people were reminding us that we are still far from the destination. That is challenging. Still on the way to Trolltunga, it is lot of sweet blueberries. The weather was very windy and it rain a lot. Our cloths got wet, and unfortunately, we did not bring any dry clothes for change. Still, when we arrived Trolltunga, everything was worth it. The bad weather condition made the return trip hard.”

4.3.2.1.12 Kjerag

No.66

“The difficult level to hike to Kjerag is much more difficult than Prikestolen. It took us much longer time than what it suggested on information board. However, we did feel really lucky to have amazing sunny day since the weather unpredictable. When we reach the top. It was the best feeling after all those difficult walking hours. But I was really scared to get on the rock. Only took a picture with my head pointing out from the near side of rock.”

No.73

“It was hard to hike with unfortunate bad weather. I fell down more than 7 or 8 times because it was really slippery. On the half way I almost gave up. But finally, I made it to

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the top. It was quite scary to standing the top of the rock. If this happened in China , relevant departments will probably have already had a fence around it. Only here, they still can keep the nature as it is. What even surprised me is there are barely any accidents that people fell from the rock. Kjerag is a nature's miracle. ”

No.104 Hiking trip couple

“Hiking up to Kjerag in the afternoon, hope can find suitable campsite before the sun go down. We managed to find a flat area to camp. Strong wind during the sleep, have been woke up few times. We got up in the morning having breakfast with a stunning view over the fjords. Kjerag literately just 5 minutes' walk from our camping tents. Spend few more hours to enjoy the unforgettable scenery. There are few people were doing base-jumping from Kjerag. I wish I had the dare to do it. On the way back, we met some Chinese tourists. They were not with proper hiking shoes and gears. They had summer shoes or boots and handbag with them. Hope they managed to reach the top safely.

4.3.2.2 Any special interests?

According to Trauer (2006), Special interested tourism (SIT) have been dedined tourism denotes mass participation while “special interest” suggests non-commercialized individual travel. Trauer (2006) mentioned Hall and Weiler (1992, p. 5) proposed “SIT to occur when the ‘traveler’s motivation and decision-making are primarily determined by a particular special interest with a focus either on activity/ies and/or destinations and settings”.

By far, selected travel-note post only have few of them fit into the SIT. 2 of the photography trips in Tromsø focus about taking the picture of Northern light, One pure Hiking trip with camping. One pure Hiking trip mainly takes place in between Preikestolen and Kjerag

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as well as hitchhike on the way back from Kjerag to Stavanger.

4.3.3. After the trip

4.3.3.1 How do they summarize their trip?

The majority of the contributors enjoyed their time in Norway. Willing to come back soon, and have lots of tips and recommendation to share with others, such as accommodation, route of the trip, and anything you could image. There are also few quotes which reviewed Norwegian life style.

No.56 and 59 couple

“After the trip to Norway, I realized Nowegians have high quality of life style, have a lot of free time to spend with family, maintain their health and super environmental friendly. During the journey, saw a lot of facilities for electronic car and Tesla is everywhere in here. Norwegian are quite shy, but if you ask for help, they will try their best to help you solve the problem, even in the middle of nowhere, he was trying to use all of the English words that he could and explained to us detail. Met too many kind people in my journey. I cannot tell more how appreciated I have a chance to able to meet all those lovely people, who have given us a hand when we needed and traveling in their beautiful land. I will be back soon, Farewell for now, my dreamland, Norway.”

However, the weather plays a main part of it if they are lucky enough to have good weather. When the bad weather happened in the location that they wanted to see, then that most of the contributors tended to be more demanding, and then turn into negative point of view. Like the following quote below,

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No. 84 family trip

“only three word to the trip, NOT worth it at all, Scenery, nice, but not stunning, just for this two-day, super expensive, 8000kr, and only two meal, too expensive to love, even more stunning view, prices are way too high to reach the view. AGAIN, NOT worth it to visit. Shopping, Norwegian doesn't seem they so care about brand, but high quality and good design is the main deal, no cheap clothes, but all of them are really good quality.”

Chapter 5 Discussion, Implication and Recommendations

5.1 Discussion

This paper's main propose is explore the experience of Norway as a tourism destination among Chinese-speaking visitors in online travel community by using Narrative analysis in chronological order. This includes experiences prior to, during and after the trip in Norway.

Results gathered from Chinese-speaking visitors who shared their travelling experience in Norway on online travel community platforms as travel-note posts demonstrated the presence of active online travel community about travelling to Norway. Such data are to not only consider a further evidence of the interest for Norway by Chinese-speaking people, but overview of the activity and experience in three timeframe of their trip.

This paper has found that before the trip in Norway, the main reason that they chose Norway as their destination is related to the unique nature that Norway offers, such as fjords, Northern light in the wintertime, and famous hiking routes. Complementary reasons include; taking a break from reality to rethink about their life, trying new experience as a cruise passenger. For a small proportion of Chinese, the reason to visit Norway is influenced about experiencing Norwegian culture and lifestyle. From the results, Chinese-speaking visitors have more knowledge about tourist attractions and geography compared to limited Norwegian economy. However, Chinese-speaking visitors barely any knowledge about Norway's history, politics and government, demographic, culture and hiking track condition. Large amount of preparation time consumed in visa application, planning, and pre-book accommodation and transportation need to done before they are able to travel to Norway. For example, for Mainland Chinese, preparation for tourist visa application to Norway requires submission of 15 separate official documents before the application can be processed.. Preparation for the emergency familiar food are necessary, given that some people might not be used to the unfamiliar food to

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Norway offers.

During the trip in Norway, this paper has reviewed 12 popular destinations. The results show that Chinese-speaking visitors can distinguish the differences from one destination to another. The results show that within Norway, Oslo and Bergen are the top 2 destinations. Both of these two cities are the final destination of Norway in a nutshell route; and that it fits well for time efficiency Chinese-speaking visitors to gain the most out of the Norway's landscape. Based on their own personal experience, the results of the 12 destinations indicate variances. There are few special interests Chinese-speaking visitors driving them to visit Norway that is Northern light photograph trip, hiking and camping outdoor trip, and cruise.

Contributors summarized after their trip in Norway. The majority of the contributors enjoyed their time in Norway. Willing to come back soon, and have lots of tips and recommendation to share with others, such as accommodation, route of the trip, and anything you could can image. Take an overview on their trip, there are few contributors shows during the trip be able to experience and educated about Norwegian life style. However, most of them can agree on uncertainty if they are able to see the scenery that they saw in the postcard or pictures due to unpredictable weather in Norway, especially in summer and fall seasons. Bad weather had been observed to influence negative attitudes of the travel experience in Norway among Chinese visitors.

Overall, findings from this exploratory study encourage research toward the investigation of the value of UGCs in online travel community platforms as a proper source of information, to be further explored in order to learn about tourism destinations' online representation in a specific geographical, cultural and social context.

5.2 Implications

5.2.1 Implication for the future research

This dissertation presents an example for research on TDI through analyzing Chinese-speaking tourists' stories and perceptions towards before, during and after their visit of Norway. In other words, this present study obtained a collective mental picture of Norway as a destination among Chinese outbound travelers, even trying to offer a representation of the connections among the variety of features and attributes of Norwegian travel brand. Further, through presenting principle image attributes and elements as nodes connected to each other, this dissertation provide a research example on visualizing destination image through narrative analysis which is a quite new area in tourism study. Additionally, as highlighted earlier, this study encourages future researches toward the investigation of the value of UGCs in online travel community platforms as a proper source of information and how it further decides tourism destinations' online representation in a specific geographical, cultural and social context.

5.2.2 Implication for the Tourism industry and related business

The findings of this research firstly offer the Norwegian tourism industry and other tourism providers detailed information on the needs of Chinese tourist with regard to promote country image. It also could inspire future investigation on destination positioning and competitive strategies for offering effective guidance on travel itinerary design.

For those tourism industry related business which start to consider to target potential Chinese visitors, this study implicated that it is very important to investigate travelling activities and experience in Norway perceived by Chinese visitors. It gives you a better understand to know whether your business can benefit from the Chinese visitors. For those business have already gain shares from it could take further investigation to improvement and development for further

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growth to make sure the marketing strategy can take advantage of it.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Further research

This study was conducted from the perspective of consumers at defined target market; therefore, further investigation could focus on the aspect of the marketer point view in link with potential promoting strategies of Norway tourism brand. Moreover, current sample size was fairly small which cannot necessarily representative of all outbound Chinese travelers; thus, a larger sample size derived from different travel sites is needed in the future in order to support a better representativeness and a wider generalized conclusion. Finally, theoretical approaches rather than TDI could be adopted in future studies, especially in respect of paying more attention to group oriented constructs rather than individual perceptions.

5.3.2 Recommendation for the tourism industry

Taking further investigation on Chinese visitors' perception of Norway's image is necessary to present with more details so that it can find out generate information on options that are more concrete from Chinese-speaking visitors. For example, individual travel motivation is usually cultural defined, which means there is a strong demand for more qualitative studies, interview-based ones for example, which to document Chinese's travel motivation. Further, Chinese travel preference is multiply determined, which means it is defined and influenced by Chinese individual characteristics as well as other contextual factors, such as culture and history. It is important, therefore, to conduct further investigation on identifying the main indicator of Chinese travels' preference and behavior in order to formulate the better promoting strategies. Finally and practically, a cooperation with government is necessary for Norwegian tourism in regards to simplify the visitor visa application process and waiting time,

which would help to attract more tourists from Mainland China.

Chapter 6 Conclusions and Limitations

6.1 Conclusions

This study has explored the experience of Norway as destination among Chinese-speaking visitors on the online commentary platform. This study has completed an in-depth literature review on role of Image in consumer behavior, tourism destination image and the factors influencing image formation, Internet as an information source TDI and Norway tourism and Chinese outbound tourists. Because there are few studies on Norway's tourism image and limited studies focus on narrative study on Chinese visitors on online platform. Research questions implement in the Narrative structure or model suggested by Escalas (2004) based on the chronology and causality of the event. The results of this research have identified various comments in three chronological event among Chinese visitors travelling in Norway to gain insight about how they perceived Norway as destination. The result is acceptable, because this study is able to capture the variances. In addition, the results show detailed information about the contributor's profile and usable travel-note post profile. The main contribution from an explorative study such as the present is to gain insight into Chinese visitor's conceptualization of how is their trip to Norway. Results drawn from this study that are not previously reported in this specific location will therefore have to be confirmed by more solid analytical design.

6.2 Limitations

There are several limitations inherent in this study. First of all, manual coding and translating all of the posts to key event was extremely challenging. The accuracy and the quality of the coding is limited. For the future development, it would be appropriate to employ coding

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software to maintain the accuracy and quality. Secondly, the study concerns that range of the collected data, which was limited to content of travel-note posts (not considering posted images or videos), as well as the selected posted time used (January 1 to December 31, 2014), it might have happened that there are some contributors that travelled in 2014 but post the travel-note after the range of the time this paper selected. Thirdly is the limitation of the nature of narrative analysis. According to Banyai and Glover (2012) Narrative analysis may not offer time-efficient results or data that can be generalized to a greater population. Because of the qualitative nature and manual process of analysis, narrative analysis can result in high costs. Furthermore, the composition of the research text brings up the issues of voices, where the researcher “struggles” to maintain his/her own voice in the midst of an inquiry designed to tell of the participants storied experiences and to present their voices.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Contributors profile record by Google form



Contributor profile

*Required

Page Number on Qiongyou *

How long is the trip in Norway? *

age group *

below 25

26-35

36-45

46 above

unknown

How many people travel together

CHINESE VISITORS EXPERIENCE NORWAY

From Mainland China or Overseas Chinese? *

- Mainland China
- Overseas Chinese

Is Trip combine with which Other Scandinavia country ? if yes, which ? *

- Denmark
- Sweden
- Iceland
- Finland
- NO, only in Norway

Is Trip combine with which Other Scandinavia country ? if yes, which ? *

- Denmark
- Sweden
- Iceland
- Finland
- NO, only in Norway

Is Trip combine with which Other Scandinavia country ? if yes, which ? *

- Denmark
- Sweden
- Iceland
- Finland
- NO, only in Norway

CHINESE VISITORS EXPERIENCE NORWAY

what group type of the trip *

- Family
- Friend or Couple
- Business
- Single solo traveller
- Long-term study program in Norway
- Short term study Program in Norway

what way to travel *

- Whole group tour trip
- self-plan trip
- Local group tour
- road trip
- Other:

Have visitor(s) experience Norway before? *

- Never
- 1 time before
- 2 or more

Which location in norway *

- Oslo
- Stavanger
- Bergen
- Ålesund
- Tromsø
- Throeheim
- Other: