The Influence of Japanese "Contents tourism" on Chinese Outbound Tourists

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Master Thesis

June 12, 2018

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ABSTRACT

Tourism as an important force to promote local development has attracted the attention of the Japanese government and Japanese organizations. International tourism fueled the growth of the Japanese economy and these inbound tourists are not only interested in traditional Japanese culture but also popular ones. With the growth of a fan foundation and the economic impact of the popular Japanese culture, the concept of "contents tourism" was introduced by the Japanese government as a promotion strategy and became a buzzword. There are many pieces of research about "contents tourism" in Japan, and these researches mostly focused on the government, organizations, economic impact etc., but this study is focused on the influence of Japanese "contents" which is generally defined as the popular culture on the demand side. The Chinese outbound tourism as a rapidly expanding market and the biggest amount of visitors and spenders of Japan's inbound tourism is selected to be the target of this study. The study is concentrated on the main research question " To what extent does Japanese 'contents' as a branding strategy influence Chinese outbound traveling?". The influence on Chinese outbound tourists is examined in terms of motivation, travel activity preference, destination selection and the effectiveness of branding. In order to successfully achieve the aim of the study, a quantitative method and online questionnaires were used by the researcher to gather and analyze the data. According to the analysis of motivation and activity preferences, B-grade gourmet is the most influential and attractive content for general Chinese outbound tourists. Other contents like shooting places and sacred places are more attractive for repeated visitors, higher educated and male visitors. Based on the previous experience, intention, attitudes, and branding, the contents plays an important role in increasing the possibility of destination selection. The effectiveness of branding is studied in brand awareness, brand image and brand loyalty, and confirmed positive. Especially mascots have an obvious advantage in raising brand awareness. The results demonstrated that as a branding strategy the "contents" has limited influences on Chinese tourists' motivation and activities, but they successfully built the brand of these contents related destinations and raised the possibility of destination selection. Moreover, the potential influence of contents on Chinese outbound tourists is positive and using influential information sources like word-of-mouth can enhance the efficiency of branding.

KEYWORDS: *contents tourism, Chinese outbound tourists, branding, motivation, activity*

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1. Introduction

For many years tourism has been seen as an important force to promote local development because of its economic, social and cultural benefits. Many countries are actively promoting the tourism industry and also Japan is no exception. Its tourism grows rapidly these years, especially in the number of inbound tourists. According to the study of Funck (2018), "in 2016, the number of international tourists had more than doubled from 10 million in 2013 to 24 million; inbound visitors outnumbered Japanese travelers going abroad for the first time in 2015" (p. 187). International tourism fueled the growth of Japanese economy. "Consumption by international visitors (inbound consumption) almost doubled from JPY 1.1 trillion in 2012 to JPY 2 trillion in 2014" (OECD, 2016, p. 212). At the same time, the tourism industry creates a huge amount of jobs, involving 4.47 million people, totals about 6.9% of employment in 2013 and accounted for about 2.4% of GDP (OECD, 2016). The economic growth of tourism inevitably raised the interest of scholars, public, and governments.

These increasing tourists are not just attracted by landscapes but also by Japanese traditional and popular cultures. Cultural tourism is one important part of Japanese tourism. Some of the inbound tourists are expecting to visit traditional temples and gardens and some are pursuing the experience of traditional arts. Films, animation, video games and other forms of popular Japanese culture also act as tourism drivers. Many fans visit famous film or tv show locations or have their pictures taken with mascots. To promote national and local economy, the Japanese government has some specific policies to promote tourism. Among these policies, one concept is called "contents tourism", which is similar to media tourism that drew the attention of many scholars.

Japan is one of the most popular travel destinations for Chinese tourists. Liu (2017) points out that " more than 6 million Chinese visited Japan last year, spending an estimated 100 billion yuan ($14.5 million). The consumption ability of Chinese tourists increased because "China has the world's fastest growing economy, with real

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GDP average growth rates of 10 percent for the past 30 years"(Barnett, 2013). As a result, Chinese travelers contribute a lot to the development of Japanese tourism. The Chinese tourists are the biggest spenders of all foreign visitors to Japan. According to the Japan Tourism Agency, the large number of Chinese tourists are young and attracted by Japanese culture. Furthermore, more than 40 percent of Chinese tourists are women in their 20s and 30s (Bloomberg, 2016). The significant effect of cultural attractions on Chinese tourists cannot be ignored.

The Japanese government raised a cultural tourism theoretical concept of "contents tourism" (Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and the Agency for Cultural Affairs, 2005). In the report of Ministry of Land et al. (2005), contents tourism is defined as "tourism with the intention of promoting travel and related industries by utilizing contents related to the local area (movies, television dramas, novels, manga, games and so on)" (p. 49). "Contents tourism" is an important part of Japanese cultural tourism, and the policies and the concept of it have been practiced for more than ten years. Furthermore, there are a lot of studies focused on the supply side or the economic results such as the cultural products, the collaboration between governments and companies, and also case studies of the economic impact of different types of contents. However, there is a gap of studies on the demand side, particularly on its biggest amount of tourists - Chinese outbound tourists. Therefore, this thesis is focused on the research question: "To what extent does Japanese "contents" as a branding strategy influence Chinese outbound traveling?". Seaton, Yamamura, Sugawa, and Jang (2017) summarized contents tourism as "travel behavior motivated fully or partially by narratives, characters, locations, and other creative elements of popular culture forms"(p. 263), so the influence is examined mainly on consumer behavior in terms of motivation, travel activity preferences, and destination selection. At the same time, "contents tourism" as a strategy of promotion, the effectiveness of branding on the perspective of consumers is studied. The different influences of various contents are also included.

2. Theoretical framework

One important way of taking forward the study about how contents tourism influences Chinese outbound tourists to Japan is to include the previous and current ideas in the literature review. Since contents tourism is a part of cultural tourism, the first part of the literature review introduces the basic concepts and facts of the cultural tourism market, outlines the main characteristics of general cultural tourists and presents the situation of the Chinese outbound tourism market. The second part is focused on destination marketing and branding and an introduction of former studies is conducted at the beginning. Then, there is a summary of Japanese destination promoting strategy – "contents tourism".

2.1 Cultural Tourism Market

Cultural tourism is recognized as one of the oldest types of tourism. Bonet (2011) points out that the phenomenon of cultural tourism started centuries before tourism became a specific part of the economy and the ancient Greeks and Romans are considered to be pioneers of cultural tourism. This phenomenon also happened in other countries. For example, ancient Chinese scholars traveled to beautiful landscapes driven by cultural tourism reasons (Yan & Mckercher, 2013).

Even cultural tourism developed for thousands of years, it is still difficult to define what cultural tourism is. The question is mentioned in the American chapter of ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites stating that "cultural tourism as a name means many things to many people and herein lies its strengths and its weaknesses" (ICOMOS,1996, p.17). Moreover, the complexity of cultural tourism is not limited to the broad meaning of "culture" and "tourism", the "changing role of cultural tourism itself" makes it hard to define (Isaac, 2008, p.14). Because of that, there are various definitions of cultural tourism.

Bonink and Richards (1992) identify two basic approaches of cultural tourism, one is "the sites and monuments" and the other one is "conceptual approach". These definitions are concentrated on the supply side and related to a product-based definition of culture. Archaeological sites, museums, architecture, sculpture, crafts,

galleries, festivals, events etc. are on the list of things provided by ECTARC (1989) that are considered to be attractive to tourists. However, many scholars and NGOs state cultural tourism as a form of special interest tourism and define it focusing on the consumer side. The UNWTO defines cultural tourism as following:

> "the movement of persons to cultural attractions in cities and countries other than their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs and all movements of persons to specific cultural attractions, such as heritage sites and cultural manifestations, arts and drama to cities outside their normal country of residence" (Whyte, Hood & White, 2012, p.8)

The Canadian Tourism Commission (1999) also focuses on the demand side, and point out that the participation of cultural or heritage activity is considered to be an important factor of cultural tourism and "includes performing arts (theatre, dance, music), visual arts and crafts, festivals, museums and cultural centers, and historic sites and interpretive centers". Towse (2011) shares the same opinion and states that cultural tourism is linked to "cultural facilities, such as heritage sites, historic cities and arts attractions, such as festivals" (p.529). In addition, Smith (2015) points out the increasing importance of popular cultural tourism attractions. There are also some definitions emphasizing the role of experience. US National Endowment for the Arts et al. (1995) defines cultural tourism as "travel directed toward experiencing the arts, heritage, and special character of a place".

As mentioned in many literatures, there are several definitions, the majority of these definitions are concentrated on the demand side and based on several factors, divided into four categories, namely "tourism derived, motivational, experiential and operational" (Mckercher & Du Cros, 2002, p. 3). Moreover, there are also some definitions focused on the demand side and some crossovers among them. According to these definitions mentioned above, cultural tourism is a broad and complex subject. In this thesis, the definition proposed by UNWTO is adopted. Furthermore, the huge economic influence and market make it worth to continue the study.

2.1.1   The global cultural tourism market

According to the report of WTTC (1990), the proportion of tourism in the world's gross national product was 5.5% (as cited in Boniface, 1995, p.5), and it increased to 9.8% in 2015 (WTTC, 2017). As a result of globalization, "international tourist arrivals reached 1.138 billion in 2014. At the same time, tourism industry employed nearly 277 million people and projected to increase to 356 million by 2025" (Sellier, 2018). Thus, tourism has been seen as an important force to promote local economies because of its good profit and high employment. At the same time, tourism also brings cultural and social benefits. However, just like Towse (2011) argued, tourism can promote the economy but also damage the environment. Even there are many potential risks, many countries are still actively promoting the tourism industry for its huge market and benefit. Among all kinds of tourism, cultural tourism is considered as a mainstream and rapidly developing one.

The development of cultural tourism is not only a result of the evolution of the tourist industry (Towse, 2011), but also closely connected to the growing demand of cultural tourists. In this global and competitive marketplace, cultural attractions become a way to respond to the "ever- increasing, fragmented and changing demand" of tourists (Towse, 2011, p. 167). World Tourism Organization established that 37% growing by 15 percent per annum (as cited in Mckercher & Du cros, 2002, p.135). In other works of literature, this phenomenon can also be proved. A study of the European Commission states that 20 percent of the tourists visits Europe for cultural reasons. Antolovic (1999) reports that 70 percent of American travelers visit Europe for getting a cultural heritage experience and accounted for 67 percent of all visitors to the United Kingdom take a cultural heritage tourism experience as one of their purposes, but not certainly as the main reason. For Asian countries, culture has been the main travel product and for many countries cultural attractions are the primary generator. (Richards, 2007). "The significance of India (e.g. Bollywood), Japan (e.g. contents tourism) and South Korea (e.g. Hallyu or Korea Wave) as leading exporters of popular media content including films, TV dramas and animations" makes them

currently "the most important centers in terms of potential) film tourism in Asia" (Kim & Reijnders, 2017, p.7.8).

2.1.2 Who are the cultural tourists?

The UN World Tourism Organization states that 40% of all international travelers are cultural tourists (Richards, 2011), but who are the cultural tourists? The number provided by the UNWTO is based on the definition that a cultural tourist is someone who visits a cultural attraction during the trip (Du Cros & McKercher, 2015). Furthermore, tourists are not a homogeneous group, they may hold various interests and can be defined by their main purpose and experience (Richards, 2011; Du Cros & McKercher,2015). Mckercher and Du Cros (2002) researched on different kinds of cultural tourists in Hong Kong and identified five types as "the purposeful cultural tourist" who treats the experiencing and learning as the major concern, "the sightseeing cultural tourist" who are more interested in visiting the cultural highlights than experiencing, "the casual cultural tourist" who considers culture as a less important element and only involved in shallow experience of other culture, "the incidental cultural tourist" who does not choose a destination for cultural reasons and only superficially be involved and "the serendipitous cultural tourist" who does not seek for cultural involvement but will get deeply involved while there. In this research, the broad definition proposed by UNWTO is applied which includes former mentioned different types of cultural tourists.

After defining the cultural tourists, there are clearly some differences between average tourists and cultural tourists. Towse (2010) points out that cultural tourists tend to have a better education background, higher income and willingness to pay. Mckercher and Du Cros (2002) share the same point and also indicate the direct correlation between education level and interest in attending cultural activities as part of a trip. Bonet (2011) specified the importance of the new urban middle class who usually has "a high level of education, an interest in experiencing something different from the usual tourist traps, and a desire to learn something rich in cultural, symbolic, spiritual or historical content" (p. 166). The learning desire of other cultures and

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lifestyles is related to an individual's education background. Under the extension of education, more and more people are interested in cultural consumption and travel. Therefore, the development of personal education and financial strength fueled the growth of cultural tourism. Despite education and income, Dickinson (1996) states some other influential factors, such as the baby aging boomers create a large potential market for both tourist industry and cultural tourism. As people grow older they become more interested in cultural and historical things, so seniors and over-fifty market are considered to hold the greatest potential growth in cultural tourism (Dickinson, 1996). At the same time, globalization creates more opportunities to get access to foreign cultures and increases people's interest in foreign cultures and the demand of foreign cultural consumption.

2.1.3 Why do they come?

The purchase of tourism is becoming an important part of our daily life, hence the research about consumer behavior and travel decision making are influential on marketing. Consumer behavior is one of the most researched areas in tourism. Cohen, Prayag, and Moital (2014) summarized Solomon's (1996) description of consumer behavior as "involves certain decisions, activities, ideas or experiences that satisfy consumer needs and wants" (p.872). Pearce (1992) describes consumer behavior in tourism as a complex process which is "discretionary, episodic, future oriented, dynamic, socially influenced and evolving" (p.114). Isaac (2008) also considers it a process and states the following:

> "as a process or "vacation sequence" (van Raaij & Francken, 1984) comprising a number of inter-related stages, from the initial needs identification or motivational stage through to the actual consumption and assessment of tourist experiences (Goodall, 1991). Each of these stages may be influenced by personal and external variables, such as time and money constraints, social stimuli, media influences and so on, whilst each consumption experience feeds into subsequent decision-making processes" (Isaac, 2008, p.65).

Many scholars reviewed tourists consumer in different areas, such as "individual

concepts (e.g. Riley, Niininen, Szivas, & Willis, 2001, on loyalty), specific influences (e.g. Moutinho, 1993, on social influences on CB), and particular research contexts (e.g. Hong, Lee, Lee, & Jang, 2009, on first time versus repeat visitation)" (Cohen et al., 2014, p.873). Furthermore, Cohen et al. (2014) reviewed the research of tourism consumer behavior and addressed several important conceptual dimensions: "decision-making, values, motivations, self-concept and personality, expectations, attitudes, perceptions, satisfaction and trust and loyalty" (p.875).

On the basis of cross-cultural psychology theories, individual thought and behavior are shaped and influenced by national cultural values and characteristics (Berry, Poortinga & Pandey, 1997). Isaac (2008) also indicates that dominant consumer culture of tourists is influencing their consumptions. Thus, tourists from different countries have always shown different preferences such as activities, trip destinations, expenditures, etc. Preference is considered as one important critical element to explain tourist behavior (Manthiou, Tang, Morrison & Shin, 2011). According to Sung, Morrison, and O'Leary (2001), activity preference segmentation is used with motivation, value, behavior, socioeconomic and/or demographic variables to analyze tourists' characteristics. Kara (2016) summarized the factors such as education level, income, occupation, age, gender and marital status that influence tourist travel activity. About trip destinations, Shih (1986) argues that the destination selection is complex and relates to individual perception, motivation, previous experience, attitude, information search, and intention. Moreover, Kim, Kim, and Kim (2009) call that customers' (re)purchasing behaviors are strongly linked with trust and loyalty (Petrick, 2004). Also, Hyde and Lawson (2003) state that tourist decisions not only include planned but also unplanned and impulse purchases. Many researches focus on whether the decision-making takes place independently or not (Cohen et al., 2014).

Motivation has always been an essential topic for the study of tourism and has fundamental importance. Many researchers (e.g. Crompton.1979; Fodness, 1994) state that all actions of tourists are driven by their motivations. Moutinho (1987) defines motivation as "a state of need, a condition that exerts a push on the individual

towards certain types of action that are seen as likely to bring satisfaction" (p.16). Cooper, Fletcher, Gilbert, and Wanhill (1993) state that "demand for tourists at the individual level can be treated as a consumption process which is influenced by a number of factors. These may be a combination of needs and desires, availability of time and money, or images, perceptions, and attitudes" (p. 20). Maslow's needs hierarchy is one of the early theories applied in the tourism field (Pearce, 1982). Dann (1997) developed two factors in the travel decision-making process, as ''push'' which are mainly social-psychological motives, and ''pull'' which are external factors. Crompton (1979) further developed the "push and pull" theory and identified nine motives. Seven were classified as push factors, "namely: escape from a perceived mundane environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationships, and facilitation of social interaction" (p. 408). The other two pull factors are novelty and education. Mayo and Jarvis (1981) divided travel motivations into four categories, "physical motivations such as rest, cultural motivations such as the desire for knowledge, interpersonal motivations such as the desire to meet people, and status and prestige motivations such as the desire for recognition" (You, O'leary, Morrison & Hong, 2000, p. 8). Different from seeking adventure or a unique scenery, perusing for special cultural experiences can be an essential motivator for cultural tourists to voluntarily start their cultural tourism. Pena, Jamilena, and Molina (2013) reviewed that first-time visitors are more possible to follow novelty-seeking motivations and are interested in major destination attractions than repeated visitors who are more likely to take part in niche social and cultural activities.

With the rapid development of information and communication technology, tourism has been retransformed. Instead of depending on travel agencies, consumers use the Internet to get inspiration for their next travel destination (Buhalis & Wagner, 2013). Medias like TV or social media platforms and online information websites are providing useful information and influence people on choosing and planning their next trip. Stepchenkova, Kirilenko, and Kim (2013) state that "In tourism and

hospitality context, SNS communications can be considered as electronic word-of-mouth about people's travel experiences" (p. 144). Thus, for experiences goods, the tourists can get more information and feedback on social networking services. Researchers such as Balogu and Mc Cleary, (1999), Tasci and Gartner (2007) proved that different kinds of information sources influence the destination image. Similarly, the tourism research made by Beerli and Martin (2004) "has provided evidence that word-of-mouth can be influential in the formation of some components of image perceptions of a destination" (Sparks & Pan, 2009, p. 485).

After a general review of the global cultural tourism market and customer behavior, Chinese outbound tourism market as a rapidly growing and huge potential market is drawing worldwide attention. Also as the object of the study, a specific review of Chinese outbound market and the characteristics of Chinese tourists is necessary.

2.1.4   Chinese outbound tourism market

China is attracting the interest and attention of marketers from all over the world due to its large population size and the fastest growing economy (King & McVey, 2003). The UNWTO's secretary-general Taleb Rifai (2017) calls that in terms of generated arrivals and total travel expenditure, China is the world's largest outbound travel market and also the world's largest source of outbound tourists (UNWTO, 2017). "Massive population, rising disposable incomes, rapid urbanization and relaxation of restrictions on foreign travel" are the reasons that Chinese outbound market develops rapidly (UNWTO, 2017). As a fact, more than 6 million Chinese travelers visited Japan and spent about 100 billion yuan ($14.5 million) in 2016 (Liu, 2017). Based on this huge number, it is no surprise that Chinese are the biggest spenders of Japan's inbound tourists (Liu, 2017).

Doctoroff (2005) states that "The mindset of 1.3 billion people is notoriously hard to read, so most of us choose not to bother . . . But the topic can't be ignored, because the Chinese are different" (p. 2). To better serve the Chinese market, the characteristics and preferences of Chinese outbound tourists required deeper study.

In China, there is an old saying "Travelling for ten thousand miles is better than

reading ten thousand books" which influences millions of Chinese. "Chinese people are well known for enjoying travel, particularly travel as a way to broaden one's mind" (Jang, Yu, & Pearson, 2003, p. 89). Consequently, Chinese people usually have a strong intention to travel. The trip destination development of Chinese outbound tourism followed the 'ripple effect', just like "ever-widening ripples, the growth of outbound travel over time becomes more geographically distant" and was divided into three stages by Zhang and Heung (2002, p. 8). The first stage commenced in 1983 when visiting friends and relatives was allowed in Hong Kong and Macau. Then, Southeast Asian countries became the popular destinations in 1990. The third stage started in 1999 and non-Asian countries were recognized as "approved destinations" by governments (Zhang & Heung, 2002). About the destination choices, Kim, Guo, and Agrusa (2005) report that Japan, South Korea, Germany, Australia, Singapore, Thailand, and Egypt are popular destinations for Chinese outbound tourists because they "prefer to go overseas to democratic society countries and culturally differentiated countries with a long history similar to China" (p.215). Furthermore, the research of World Tourism Cities Federation, and Ipsos (2016) shows the similar results, for first-time visitors Japan (8 cities), South Korea (4 cities) and Thailand (3 cities) take the majority of top 20 popular short-line destinations for Chinese. The situation is almost the same for repeated visitors, Japan (4 cities), South Korea (3 cities) and Thailand (2 cities) take most of the positions of top 10 repeat visit short-line destinations for Chinese visitors (WTCF & Ipsos, 2016). So then, Japan is one of the most popular destinations for Chinese outbound tourists. According to the study of IHG (2015), 85% of the Chinese outbound travels are package trips with group tours visiting multiple major city destinations. However, these days Chinese tourists are not limited to major cities or package tours. Liu (2016) argues that there is a sign that Chinese travelers are tired of traveling in central cities but are interested in rural Japan because of subconscious psychological factors linked to Chinese traditions and social environments. And only 42.16% of Chinese outbound tourists chose package tours and younger generations prefer self-guided tours (WTCF & Ipsos, 2016). Even the

number of package tours tends to decrease, under the influence of factors like language barriers, visa issues, fear of adventure and the cultural background, the package trip still is popular (Miao & Rakotonanahary, 2014).

Chinese travelers aged 25-44 make up 65% of all outbound travelers (Miao & Rakotonanahary, 2014). Bloomberg (2016) points out that according to the Japan Tourism Agency, the large number of Chinese tourists are young and attracted by Japanese culture and more than 40 percent of Chinese tourists are women in their 20s and 30s. In the report of IHG (2015), it indicates that Chinese travelers look for the safe and beautiful environment and also like to sample local cuisine, but they still prefer Chinese food when they are visiting European countries. "Culinary tourism is massive for Japan, as is the power of inbound retail tourists, particularly young Chinese," said Simon Moriarty (as cited in Harding, 2017). "Du and Zhang (2003) studied Chinese outbound tour group tourists regarding their most preferred activities in future overseas travel, and found that a majority preferred sightseeing (47.1%), participatory entertainment (18.3%), adventure activity (13.1%) and others wanted to experience local lifestyle (17.6%)" (as cited in Chow & Murphy, 2008, p. 6). In the study of Cai, Lehto and O'Leary (2001), they state that there are five most popular activities for Chinese tourists in the United States, that were shopping, dining, city sightseeing, visiting historical places, amusement and theme parks. Generally speaking, Chinese tourists like sampling local food, sightseeing, visiting cultural attractions and shopping. However, it is impossible to conclude all preferred activities, since "the habits of Chinese travelers are changing, especially among those who came for a second time" (Miao & Rakotonanahary, 2014, p. 23).

More than individual preferences, Chinese outbound tourists are also shaped by socio-economic and political factors (Tse & Hobson, 2008). With the development of the economy, education and globalization background, Chinese tourists' preferences and characteristics are changing these days; they are not limited to package tours or traditional destinations, and more and more Chinese tourists are driven by cultural motivations or cultural activities. Furthermore, the number of cultural tourists is rising

but there is no specific study of them and requires deeper research. On the supply side, based on the huge number of cultural tourists many countries and stakeholders use different kinds of destination marketing and branding strategies to promote cultural tourism and create cultural attractions.

2.2 Destination Marketing and Branding

With the development of communication and transportation technologies, the distance of the world is shortened, the expense of traveling is also lowered, so travelers have much more choices of destinations than before. How to attract visitors and be more competitive than other destinations is becoming an essential question for these destinations. Policies and strategies have been adopted by governments and organizations to promote local tourism. A general review of destination marketing and branding is needed and then focus on the Japanese "contents tourism" which is a Japan's destination branding strategy.

Destination marketing has attracted many scholars' attention and became the theme of a number of academic conferences in the world since 1990 (Pike, 2004). WTO (2004) defines it as the following:

> "Destination marketing covers all the activities and processes to bring buyers and sellers together; focuses on responding to consumer demands and competitive positioning; is a continuous coordinated set of activities associated with efficient distribution of products to high potential markets; involves making decisions about the product, branding, price, market segmentation, promotion and distribution" (WTO, 2004, p. 10).

Different from the idea that destination marketing needs to satisfy the needs of consumers, Prideaux and Cooper (2002) indicate the need of not only focusing on the demand side but also on the supply side, using investments in accommodation, entertainment, etc. to market the destination to intermediaries and to increase seller numbers. Since the tourism products are complex and many stakeholders are involved in destination marketing, inevitably there are many challenges like "fragmentation of ownership" arise (Baker & Cameron, 2008, p. 82). Thus, there are many studies on

different levels of destination marketing organizations, from national government tourism offices to local tourism organizations (e.g., Pike, 2004; Prideaux & Cooper, 2002; Buhalis, 2000), which is defined as "any organization, at any level, which is responsible for the marketing of an identifiable destination" (Pike, 2004, p. 14). Moreover, according to Pike (2004), they also have responsibilities such as industry coordination, monitoring services, and quality standards and fostering community relations. These responsibilities are close to the destination management organization (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009).

Zenker and Martin (2011) point out that the first studies of place marketing "came from regional economists, geographers and other social scientists (see for an overview: Braun, 2008), but were mostly limited to the promotional aspects of places" (p. 33), and Ashworth and Voogd (1990) widened the scope. With the developing of destination marketing, place marketers more and more focus on establishing the destination as a brand (Braun, 2008). Kavaratzis (2008) also states the shift towards branding, which is "evident in both the practice of place marketing as in the most recent academic literature (Anholt, 2006; Hankinson, 2004; Hauben et al. 2002; Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2005; Rainisto 2003; Trueman et al. 2004)" (p. 699). Since the destination branding theory is developed from brand theory, many researchers indicate concerns about the relevance and uncertainty of transferability but it still becomes popular.

There is plenty of case studies of destination branding of different cities. Some of these cases concentrate on the effect of cultural events and cultural promotions for building city images and place branding. Cultural tourism is often linked to local policies (Towse, 2011). Culture can create positive associations with the destinations and it is used extensively by local organizations (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2015). As a result, the role of culture in place branding is discussed. Some cities and areas invest in architecture, art, design, exhibition space and landscaping to add cultural values (Dicks, 2003), and some cities such as Edinburgh and Salzburg hold festivals and create the image of festival cities. Based on some Irish cases, Quinn (2006) states the

positive effect of festivals on developing tourism, rising local revenues and even to place recognition. According to Ashworth and Kavaratzis (2015), individuals search for associations with places and the link between person and place should be feasible, credible and sustainable. The studies of European cities showed that a network of events has a better marketing influence than isolated attractions and famous traditional or historical attractions have a significant advantage than unknown or new ones (Towse, 2011). Food as one important part of local culture and travel experience (Hall, Sharples, Mitchell, Macionis & Cambourne, 2003) affects the visitors' satisfaction (Remmington & Yuksel, 1998). The desire to try different types of food may be a prime motivator for some people and the secondary motivators for others (McKercher, Okumus & Okumus, 2008). Therefore, more and more destinations are using food as a mean "to differentiate themselves and broaden their market base" (McKercher et al., 2008, p. 137).

As a marketing strategy aiming to attract more visitors, the study of destination branding "has been the more 'productive' in terms of brand management, in the sense that it has suggested concrete and practical measures" (Kavaratzis, 2007, p. 702). To examine the effectiveness of these policies and strategies generally speaking, there are three main factors to measuring the brand: "First, the branded object itself (physical characteristics); secondly, brand value drivers (such as the brand image or brand awareness); and thirdly, so-called brand equity" (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2015, p. 213). Keller (1993) also calls brand awareness and brand image as two dimensions distinguishing brand knowledge. Brand awareness has two parts: brand recognition and brand recall. Brand image is defined as "perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory" and brand associations which include the favorability, strength and uniqueness (Keller, 1993, p. 3). The favorability of consumers shows that they believe the brand can benefit and satisfy their needs, then forms a positive attitude which is a reflection of the success of marketing (Keller, 1993). And those who have a strong, favorable brand attitude should be more willing to pay for higher prices (Starr & Rubinson, 1978). Moreover, how information enters

consumers' memory and how it stains as part of brand image influences the strength of associations (Keller,1993). Furthermore, a brand consists of a "unique selling proposition", attracts consumers and makes it more competitive (Aaker,1982). Customer-based brand equity is used to measure the influence on "outcome variables of the customer brand relationship" (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2015, p. 215). Moreover, measuring the effectiveness of destination brand equity is also popular in the tourism field (Boo, Busser & Baloglu, (2009); Konecnik & Gartner (2007). Yoo, Donthu and Lee (2000) develop and test a Multidimensional Brand Equity (MBE) from brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality and brand associations' four dimensions. About these dimensions, Keller (1993) states: "Fundamentally, high levels of brand awareness and a positive brand image should increase the probability of brand choice, as well as produce greater consumer (and retailer) loyalty and decrease vulnerability to competitive marketing actions" (p. 8). About brand loyalty Im et al. (2012) summarized as following:

> "Destination loyalty has been found to influence tourist's behavior during the destination choice process (Chon, 1992; Um & Crompton, 1990; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989)…. destination loyalty has been measured by indicators such as intention to visit and likelihood to recommend (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Chen & Gursoy, 2001; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989)" (Im et al., 2012, p. 391).

Im (2003) reviews several national and regional brands and points out the elements for success: "brand identity and brand personality; extensive research; and the right target market, positioning, communication of destination branding for channel, and partnerships among various levels of stakeholders" (p. 76). Baker and Cameron (2008) also indicate four success factors in destination marketing: "strategic orientation; destination identity and image; stakeholder involvement; and implementation, monitoring and review" (p. 92).

After getting a general understanding of destination marketing and branding, the following part is focused on the Japanese promotion way – "Contents tourism".

2.2.1 Japanese Contents tourism

Tourist usually have many interests when they travel to Japan, some of them are seeking beautiful natural landscape, some are looking for cultural experience. On the website of Japan National Tourism Organization, there is not only travel information about natural landscapes and hot springs but also about Japanese culture, traditions and art such as gastronomy, gardens, castles, festivals, tea ceremonies, museums, and experience activities that cultural tourists can take part in (Jnto.go.jp, 2017). Berger (2010) indicates that many visitors focus on the distinctiveness and uniqueness of Japanese culture when they are traveling to Japan. Apart from these historical culture factors, Simon Moriarty states that culinary tourism is an important part of Japanese tourism. Tellstro¨m, Gustafasson and Mossberg (2006) also indicate that gastronomy is one of the fundamentals of local culture and part of a region's cultural heritage. "Food not only expresses or represents a country's identity; it also helps to enhance the quality and competitiveness of its tourism industry through marketing strategies and brand-building" (Rand, Heath, & Alberts, 2003). The "B-grade gourmet" which is the Japanese expression of low-cost culinary, is also mentioned in the must do list of national geographic (Nationalgeographic, 2011).

Last twenty years, Japanese popular culture like television dramas, films, Manga and video games has been consumed all over the world and has developed a huge fan base and attracted many tourists (Yamamura, 2015). For example, foreign fans of anime, films and television dramas will visit related sites in Japan like Kamakura. With the growth of demand for Japanese popular cultural products, and "in response to Joseph Nye's concept of 'soft power' and Douglas McGray's article on Japan's 'Gross National Cool' (2002), the Japanese government shifted its focus from a century-long practice of promoting traditional arts to supporting the popular culture industry under the banner 'Cool Japan'" (Choo, 2012, p.85). In 2004, the Japanese government introduced the Content Industry Promotion Law to support the development of Japan's soft power (Choo, 2012).

Based on the growing demand of foreign visitors and the economic ,social,

andcultural benefits of tourism, "the government has gone beyond thinking of contents as an export business, but rather now considers contents to be the first stage of a national strategy that invites tourists to visit Japan as the site where those contents originated" (Seaton &Yamamura, 2015, p.7), and worked on the policies to promote tourism. In 2003, the Japanese government adopted the ''Visit Japan" Campaign with the slogan "Yokoso! Japan" (Welcome to Japan!), which is a strategy to promote the development of national tourism and attract more tourists from abroad (Ministry of Land and Traffic, 2004). Furthermore, in 2005 the Japanese government raised a cultural tourism theoretical concept of "contents tourism" (Ministry of Land et al., 2005). In the report of the Ministry of Land et al. (2005), contents tourism is defined as "tourism with the intention of promoting travel and related industries by utilizing contents related to the local area (movies, television dramas, novels, manga, games and so on)" (p. 49). It also explains that the core is "the addition of a 'narrative quality' [monogatarisei] or 'theme' [temasei] to a region, namely an atmosphere or image particular to the region generated by the contents and the use of that narrative quality as a tourism resource". There are three main reasons mentioned in the report: the government and economic associations are aware of the increasing tourists attracted by these contents, the plan for becoming a tourism destination country and the plan for intellectual property promotion (Ministry of Land et al., 2005). Yamamura (2015) points out that "The phenomena of film-induced tourism, literature-induced tourism and other forms of media-induced tourism have long been recognized within the field of tourism studies. In Japan, the term *kontentsu tsurizumu* (contents tourism) brings together all these different forms of media-induced tourism" (p.59). Seaton et al. (2017) summarized contents tourism as "travel behavior motivated fully or partially by narratives, characters, locations, and other creative elements of popular culture forms, including film, television dramas, manga, anime, novels, and computer games "(p. 263).

"Contents tourism" became a buzzword and attracted the attention of many scholars in the Japanese academy. Many researchers did researches about the phenomenon in

the last decade. The study of contents tourism in Japan is mainly in two parts. The first one is film-induced tourism. Among the researches of film-induced tourism, Taiga drama is one research focus, because it contains a flagship position, has a great impact on the society and usually induces large-scale tourism. Seaton (2015) states two main reasons about the phenomenon as following: "the scale and impact of the drama creates a massive pool of potential tourists, and the nature of the contents makes it meaningful and possible for fans to extend their enjoyment of the drama via tourism" (p.83). Moreover, Seaton and Yamamura (2015) indicate the main patterns of film-induced tourism as following: "

A. Japanese domestic tourism to foreign film sites

B. Japanese domestic tourism to Japanese film sites

C. Japanese outbound tourism to sites of foreign films

D. Foreign inbound tourists visiting sites in Japanese-produced films

E. Foreign inbound tourists visiting Japanese locations of domestically produced films

F. Japanese outbound tourists visiting the foreign locations featured in Japanese-produced films" (Seaton &Yamamura, 2015, p.4).

The second one is anime tourism. Tourists visit the "anime sacred sites" or "anime seichi" in Japanese, which is "a location in an animated work or a place related to the work or author whose value is acknowledged by fans" (Yamamura, 2008, p. 146). The government also produces anime booklets and a map to guide and provide information for anime fans to promote anime tourism. In the study of anime tourism the relationship and collaboration between local government and production companies, case studies of several successful amines like *Lucy star* are included. Besides film, drama, and anime, there are also some studies that define war sites, mascots and B-grade gourmet and other kinds of contents as new developing directions for "contents tourism" in recent years. Furthermore, some studies of consumer behavior show that male are more attracted by anime sacred sites but the expenditure of them are limited and the length of the trip is usually not more than two

days and most of them are one-day tours. However, the main researches and data are about domestic tourists and there is a gap in how contents influence international tourists and how popular culture drives tourism deserve further study. Moreover, "broader research into this phenomenon to date facing a language/interpretation barrier, with key concepts or research findings struggling to make their own way from Japanese to English" (Beeton, Yamamura & Seaton, 2013, p.140), hence, there are not many pieces of literature in English.

2.3   Research Questions

Based on the review of former studies, there is a gap of studying the influence of Japanese contents as a branding strategy from the perspective of its biggest amount of potential visitors - Chinese tourists. Thus, the present study aims to answer the research question: "To what extent does Japanese "contents" as a branding strategy influence Chinese outbound traveling?". There are several sub-questions:

1. What are the influences of "contents" on the motivations and travel activity preferences of Chinese outbound tourists?
2. How is the effectiveness of "contents" as a branding strategy in terms of brand awareness, brand image and brand loyalty?
3. What are the influences of different type of "contents" on brand awareness?
4. How do contents influence Chinese tourists destination selection?

3.   Method:

3.1   Sample design and data collection

To find out the correlation between Japanese "contents" and Chinese tourists and to gauge the relative role of Japanese "contents" in motivation, activity preferences, destination selection and branding in the Chinese population as a whole, the quantitive method is applied to this study. Just like Richards and Munsters (2010) state that "surveys can provide a useful means of studying visitor activities, motivations, behavior and expenditure" (p. 13). As reviewed a number of former researches, not only the studies of activities, motivations, and behavior but also examining the effectiveness of branding uses surveys. Thus, survey research is

adapted for my study.

The target population for this study was defined as potential, once and repeated Chinese cultural outbound tourists to Japan. Tourists who have travel experience with Japan are naturally important for this study, but so are potential ones because as VisitBritain (2012) states that in the study of outbound markets, interest is used as a valid proxy of actual travel. Chinese travelers aged 25-44 make up 65% of all outbound travelers (Miao & Rakotonanahary, 2014), Tse and Hobson (2008) also point out that Chinese travelers aged 30–44 are both the largest group and have the highest propensity to travel, while the younger generation is more autonomous (Sparks & Pan, 2009). Therefore, people aged from 16 to 44 years old make up the majority of the target population. Moreover, according to the Japan Tourism Agency, a large number of Chinese tourists is young and attracted by Japanese culture and more than 40 percent of Chinese tourists are women in their 20s and 30s, so young female Chinese tourists are key samples of this survey (Bloomberg, 2016). According to Towse (2010), cultural tourists tend to have a better education background, so the higher educated group is an important part of the target group. Based on the rule of thumb for survey research, I aimed to collect at least 300 responses, and the "bigger the sample the more representative it is likely to be" (Bryman, 2016, p.198).

Convenience and snowball sampling methods are applied, which ensures a higher response rate, however, there is a bias of the representative of the responses. Online self-completion questionnaires are worded in Mandarin Chinese since the target population is Chinese. An online survey makes it possible for me to get access to participants in China and also to save time and other costs. At the same time, there are also disadvantages such as the sampling issues and access issues (Wright, 2005). To tackle these issues, I tried to get access to different kinds of respondents and gather more responds to make the sample more representative by spreading the survey through the Chinese social media app WeChat, as well as posted on other Chinese online platforms like Weibo, Baidu and Qiongyou, which are the most popular websites in China. Of the distributed online questionnaires, 116 were not fully

completed by the respondents, 369 questionnaires are completed. Most of the results are obtained from social media instead of the online platforms because many people doubt about the security of the open link on online platforms and wondering whether it is a con trick, even this situation also happened during snowballing. Those unfinished surveys or non-responding respondents is impossible to approach again because the survey is anonymous. Hence, there are two filter questions in the questionnaire "Have you ever been to Japan?" "If not, are you planning to visit Japan in the future?", based on the results of these two questions, among 369 completed questionnaires, 110 participants haven't been to Japan and have no intention to visit Japan in the future. As a result, 259 usable questionnaires were obtained for data analysis. The sample obtained is almost the same as the desired population. 74 percent useable respondents are female, 24 percent of them are male and the rest prefer not to indicate their gender. Furthermore, people aged from 16 to 44 make up 95 percent of the usable data. Only 0.8 percent of the respondents' highest level of educational qualification is primary school, another 0.8 percent is secondary school, 2.3 percent are from vocational school, 58.3% from bachelor degree and the rest are postgraduates or obtained doctor degrees. So as expected the samples' majority are higher educated, aged from 16-44 and female.

3.2 Questionnaire design and analysis

The questionnaire was based on former study models such as the ATLAS survey, the Chinese tourist's preference study made by Chow and Murphy (2008), and Keller (1993)'s customer based brand equity model. It was originally developed in English, then worded in Chinese for the survey and at the end, all questions and measurements were translated into English for the data analysis. SPSS software has been used to analyze the data. Factor analysis was used to assess the internal reliability. The survey data was analyzed in a descriptive manner and used frequency analysis, tables and charts to analysis data. Moreover, analysis of Variance and regression analysis are used to identify the relationship between variables.

Table 1. Operationalization of Variables

Concepts	Definition	Indicator	References
Motivation	Moutinho (1987) defines motivation as "a state of need, a condition that exerts a push on the individual towards certain types of action that are seen as likely to bring satisfaction" (p.16).	Visited times; Intention to visit Japan; Main purpose	Iso-Ahola (1982); Fu et al. (2010); Lu's (2001) Fan & Hsu (2014); (Nafi & Ahmed, 2018)
Information sources	There is a variety of information sources such as word-of-mouth from friends and relatives, brochures, personal experiences and continues to expend with the development of media and internet (Sparks & Pan, 2009).	Importance of the source for tourist	Sparks & Pan (2009) Nafi & Ahmed (2018).
Travel Activity preferences	"Preferences have been regarded as one of the most critical elements to explain traveler behavior at a destination and tourism professionals have been endeavored to apprehend more about tourists' activities." (Manthiou, Tang, Morrison, & Shin, 2011, p. 3)	Rank of different types of activities; Importance of activities related to Japanese "contents"	Chow and Murphy (2008); Du and Zhang (2003); Nafi & Ahmed (2018); Manthiou, Tang, Morrison, & Shin(2011)
Brand awareness	"The strength of a brand's presence in the consumer's mind and the ability of the potential buyer to recognize that a brand is a member of a certain product category" (Aaker, 1996, p. 10)	Brand recognition; Brand recall	Keller (1993) Kavaratzis, Warnaby, Ashworth (2014).
Brand image	"Perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory" and brand associations which include the favorability, strength and uniqueness" (Keller, 1993, p. 3).	Favorability; Strength; Uniqueness;	Keller (1993); Im et al. (2012); Kavaratzis, Warnaby, Ashworth (2014).
Brand loyalty	Brand loyalty is defined as "the attachment that a customer has to a brand" (Aaker, 1991, p. 39). "A deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-	Intention to visit; Likelihood to recommend;	Yoo and Donthu, (2001); Atilgan et al. (2005); Im et al.

	patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or similar brand purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior" (Oliver, 1997, p. 392). And Oliver (1997) states it as the tendency to be loyal to a focal brand and showed as the intention to buy the brand as a primary choice.	Willingness to pay	(2012); Baker & Crompton, (2000); Chen & Gursoy (2001); Woodside & Lysonski, (1989)
Demographic Profiles	Personal information		Gender; Age; Education level; Occupational group; Income level

The questionnaire consisted of five parts. The first part includes four questions to identify the most likely motivations of repeated and potential Chinese tourists. In the first place, three questions are used to identify whether the respondents have been to Japan or not, are they repeated travelers and their intention to visit Japan. To find out the most imperative motives to visit Japan, participants are asked to mark their top five top purposes out of 14 options such as shopping, nature and landscapes, visiting relatives and friends, anime pilgrimage and etc. The second part is about the importance of different types of information sources. A seven-point scale (1= very unimportant, 7= Very important and 8=didn't use) is used to measure the importance of "Travel books, brochures, magazines, TV programs", "word-of-mouth", "Internet" and "personal experience". And the third part includes two questions, the first one is ranking six given activities based on their preference, the second one asked the participants to rate the importance of five activities to themselves using a 7- point scale (1= Very unimportant, 7= Very important). The fourth part is about destination branding, which included three sets of questions on brand awareness (3 items), brand image (4 items), and brand loyalty (3 items), respectively, using a 7-point Likert-type agreement scale. Factor analysis is adopted to check the reliability and the factor

loadings of individual items onto the three factors found are presented in Table 2. Factor analysis of three measurements of brand awareness showed that all items have a sufficient factor loading on the overall concept (0.815, 0.783, 0.843) and form a reliable scale with Cronbach's alpha of 0.741, which is not higher if one item is deleted. The mean found in the sample for brand awareness (M=4.7735, SD=1.516) shows that the respondents are aware of this kind of contents tourism destinations. Four measurements of brand image are "I believe these places are interesting." "I think these places offer a unique experience", "I feel cultural intimacy, familiarity", and "My overall attitude toward these places with contents is favorable" and the factor analysis of them showed that all items have a sufficient factor loading on the overall concept (0.839, 0.883, 0.804, 0.877) and form a reliable scale with Cronbach's alpha of 0.869, which is not higher if one item is deleted. The mean found in the sample for brand image (M=5.4392, SD=1.059) shows that the respondents have a positive image of these contents tourism destinations. "I will strongly recommend the places with "contents" to someone who seeks my advice", "I would intend to travel to places with "contents" in the next 5 years", and "I prefer to visit this kind of places even if this costs more" are used to measure the brand loyalty. Factor analysis of brand loyalty presents that all items have a sufficient factor loading on the overall concept (0.876, 0.869, 0.816) and form a reliable scale with Cronbach's alpha of 0.806, which is not higher if one item is deleted. The mean found in the sample for brand loyalty (M=5.2909, SD=1.230) shows that the respondents have pretty high loyalty to these contents tourism destinations.

Table 2. Factor and reliability analyses for scales for branding

	Brand awareness	Brand image	Brand loyalty
I recognize some shooting places of tv shows/films or anime sacred sites.	0.815		
I can identify some places' mascots (like Kuma moto, kumamon).	0.783		
I know some places' local b-grade Gourmet.	0.843		
I believe these places are interesting.		0.839	
I think these places offer a unique		0.883	

experience.			
I feel cultural intimacy or familiarity.		0.804	
My overall attitude towards these places with contents is favourable.		0.877	
I will strongly recommend the places with "contents" to someone who seeks my advice.			0.876
I would intend to travel to places with "contents" in the next 5 years.			0.869
I prefer to visit this kind of places, even if they cost more.			0.816
Cronbach's α	0.741	0.869	0.806

4. Results

This chapter consists of four parts. The first part is about the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. In the second part, the influence of contents on travel motivations and travel activity preferences were analyzed. Then, the effectiveness of destination branding has been elucidated in terms of brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty. Finally, the fourth part concentrates on discovering the influence factors of destination selection.

4.1 Demographic Profile

Before investigating the research constructs, in this section, the demographic profile of the respondents is presented. Among 369 completed questionnaires, 110 participants haven't been to Japan and have no intention to visit Japan in the future. About the reasons that they are not planning to visit Japan, 32 of them chose historical issues, 22 of them chose political issues, 31 chose financial issues and the rest are not interested because of personal reasons. Thus, just as Tse and Hobson (2008) argued, Chinese outbound tourists are also shaped by socio-economic and political factors, even now Chinese tourists are the biggest amount of inbound tourists for Japan, but still, they are easily influenced by the political and historical issues.

Among the 259 usable questionnaires, the majority of respondents have no previous travel experience with Japan (71.8%), and there are 73 respondents who have been to Japan. Table 3 shows the background information of these 259

participants. It represents that among 259 respondents of usable questionnaires 62 are male, and that is 24 percent of them. Furthermore, 191 are female and that is accounting for 74 percent. Among the participants, 66.4% are aged from 16 to 24 years old and 28.6% from 25 to 44 years old. Moreover, 54.4% of the respondents were students and made the biggest group of them, while 39 professionals made the second biggest group of these respondents. About 76% of the participants' job has no relation to culture or creative industries. As for the monthly income, the study found that respondents provided the highest percentages on Chinese yuan (RMB), namely 3,000 or below (54.8%) since almost the same percent of participants are students. Furthermore, 13.5 percent came from the income range of RMB 3000-5000, and only 6.9 percent came from an income rage of above RMB 10000.

Table 3: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	62	24.0
	Female	191	74.0
	Prefer not to say	5	1.9
Age	15 or younger	2	0.8
	16-24	172	66.4
	25-34	45	17.4
	35-44	29	11.2
	45-54	9	3.5
	55-64	2	0.8
Education level	Primary school	2	0.8
	Secondary school	2	0.8
	Vocational	6	2.3
	Bachelor degree	151	58.3
	Postgraduate	98	37.8
Occupational group	Director or manager	22	8.5
	Professional (doctor, lawyer, etc.)	39	15.1

	Paraprofessional (technicians, nursing, etc.)	2	0.8
	Clerical/administration	31	12.0
	Service and sales personnel	15	5.8
	Student	141	54.4
	Blue collar	1	0.4
	Public employee/soldier	8	3.1
work in the cultural or creative industries	Yes	62	24.0
	No	196	76.0
Monthly income	<3000 RMB	142	54.8
	3000~5000 RMB	35	13.5
	5000~7000 RMB	33	12.7
	7000~10000 RMB	31	12.0
	>10000 RMB	18	6.9

4.2 Motivation and travel activity preference

Descriptive statistics are used to analyze the data of motivation and travel activities preferences. The motivation part consists of three questions. Respondents were asked about they ever have been to Japan; if the answer is "yes" then they will indicate "how many times", if the answer is "no" they will need to answer whether they are planning to visit Japan in the future. The results of these questions show that there are 186 (71.8%) respondents who don't have previous travel experience to Japan but intend to, and 49 (18.9%) respondents have been to Japan once, 11 (4.2%) respondents have been to Japan two or three times, and 12 (4.6%) respondents visited Japan for more than three times. To find out the most imperative motives to visit Japan, participants were asked to mark their 3-5 top purposes out of 14 options. From Figure 4 we can identify that, "tasting local food" is the most vital motivator with 194 (74.9%) preferences, "nature and landscapes" has secured the second position with 182 (70.3%) preferences, "holiday" is the third (172, 66.4%) confirmed the idea of Cooper et al. (1993) that the demand of tourists is not just decided by their needs but

also availability of time; "visit cultural attractions" is in the fourth position with 155 (59.8%) and "shopping" is the fifth preferred activity with a number of 139 (53.7%). Especially, tasting local food is the most influential motivator which represents the fact that the desire to try different foods can be a prime motivator or secondary motivator for many people (McKercher, Okumus & Okumus 2008). Chinese's preference for sampling local cuisine is mentioned in the study of Chinese visiting European countries by IHG (2015) and also in the study of Japan (Moriarty, 2017). Furthermore, the numbers of study, popular cultural events, and anime pilgrimage are nearly the same, namely all around 50 to 60. Mascots got the lowest rate compared with other contents. Overall, the results revealed that only "B-Grade Gourmet" as an example of local food can be considered as one of the most influential motivations. Other contents are in the middle place or the last of the ranking, so they are not consumed to be important motivations, and not very influential for Chinese tourists in general. At the same time, the influence of popular events and anime pilgrimage cannot be ignored.
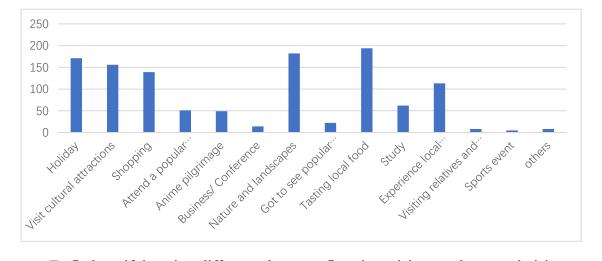
Figure 4. Purposes of visiting to Japan

To find out if there is a difference between first-time visitors and repeated visitors on motivations, a bivariate analysis is made using the contingency table. According to the results, there is a growing tendency with the increasing of the times for the importance of the motivation such as "Visiting relatives and friends", "Business/ Conference" and "study". Visitors who have visited Japan more than once are more

interested in "Anime pilgrimage". And the visitors who have visited Japan for 2 or 3 times have the higher possibility to be motivated by "Visit cultural attractions", "Attend a popular cultural event", "Anime pilgrimage" and "Shopping", while they have the lowest rate of choosing "Nature and landscapes" and "Tasting local food B-Grade Gourmet". The respondents who have no experience of traveling to Japan and visited Japan once are more interested in "Sports event", "Got to see popular mascots (like kumamon)" and "Experience local custom/lifestyle". The results demonstrate the same phenomenon Pena, Jamilena and Molina (2013) reviewed: first time visitors are more interested in attractions like "Nature and landscapes" and "Experience local custom/lifestyle" following novelty-seeking motivations, while repeated visitors are more attracted by niche social and cultural activities like visiting friends and relatives and attending cultural events. Furthermore, among different contents, repeated visitors are more likely to be motivated by "Anime pilgrimage" and "popular events", popular mascots are not as attractive for repeated visitors as they are for people who don't have experience visiting Japan.

Figure 5. Motivation * Times Crosstabulation

	times				Total
	0	**1**	**2-3**	**More than 3**	
Holiday	132	26	7	6	171
	15.57%	11.76%	14.89%	11.54%	
Visit cultural attractions	109	32	7	5	153
	12.85%	14.48%	14.89%	9.62%	
Attend a popular cultural event (concerts, comic cons, festival, game competition)	36	9	4	2	51
	4.25%	4.07%	8.51%	3.85%	
Anime pilgrimage (Visit the place of anime)	39	4	3	3	49
	4.60%	1.81%	6.38%	5.77%	
Visiting relatives and friends	5		1	2	8
	0.59%		2.13%	3.85%	
Business/ Conference	3	5	4	1	13
	0.35%	2.26%	8.51%	1.92%	
Study	29	21	4	9	63
	3.42%	9.5%	8.51%	17.31%	
Nature and landscapes	131	37	4	8	180
	15.45%	16.7%	8.51%	15.38%	

Shopping	94 11.98%	30 13.57%	7 14.89%	7 13.46%	138
Tasting local food B-Grade Gourmet	146 17.22%	33 14.93%	5 10.64%	9 17.31%	193
Sports event	5 0.59%				5
Got to see popular mascots (like kumamon)	20 2.36%	2 0.9%			22
Experience local custom/lifestyle	92 10.86%	21 9.5%	1 2.13%		114
other	7 0.83%	1 0.45%			8
Total	848	221	47	52	1168

Participants were asked to rank six activities from 1 (most important) to 6 based on their preference. Moreover, the mean value of each item is obtained to rank these activities in general. From Figure 6 we can understand that "Sightseeing" is leading the preference table with the mean of 2.29, "Dining/Tasting local food" (M = 2.80) ranks the second position, the third one is "Culture and heritage" (M = 3.22), "Participatory activity" like visiting theme parks is the fourth preference, followed by "Shopping" (M = 4.45) and Entertainment (M = 4.60). These results are quite similar to the results of the motivation, but the "Tasting local food" is the second preferred and not the first as it is for motivation.

Figure 6. Ranks of six activities

Activities	Mean
Dining/Tasting local food	2.80
Sightseeing	2.29
Culture and Heritage	3.22
Participatory Activity (Visiting theme parks, Participating in the local activities organized for local festivals	3.98
Entertainment (Casino, nightlife, watching shows, performances)	4.60
Shopping	4.45

With regard to the importance of specific activities related to "contents" tourism, "Tasting B-Grade Gourmet" received the highest rating (M = 5.92), and "Buying comic/game/film/star/mascot related product" had the lowest rating (M = 3.87). "Visiting shooting places of films/dramas or places mentioned in a novel" has secured

the second position in this section (M = 4.34), followed by "Visit the Sacred sites" (M = 4.20), and "Attending popular cultural events/exhibitions" (M = 4.11). According to different mean values, generally speaking, "Buying comic/game/film/star/mascot related product" is unimportant for most of the respondents and "Tasting B-Grade Gourmet" received the highest rating"; it is the only one that can be identified important to the majority. Only 12% of the respondents think "Tasting B-Grade Gourmet" is unimportant, and the majority (36.7%) of them chose "very important'. 17.8% of the participants think "Visiting shooting places of films/dramas or places mentioned in a novel" is unimportant and the mode for this activity is 66 (25.5%) focused on the option "neither unimportant nor important". Moreover, 46.7% of the participants think it is important at different levels. The situation is similar for "Visiting the sacred sites": the majority 61 (23.6%) chose "neither unimportant nor important", and overall 43.2% of them chose the options which describe different levels of importance. So are the results of "Attending popular cultural events/exhibitions", 75 (29%) chose "neither unimportant nor important". About 43.6% participants chose different levels of unimportant options for "Buying comic/game/film/star/mascot related product". Even shopping is one of the most popular activities for Chinese tourists, but the willingness to pay for popular culture related products is not very high. So generally speaking, different kinds of contents except "buying popular culture related products" are somewhat important to the majority of Chinese outbound tourists.

Figure 7. Importance of 5 activities

Figure content: Line chart with x-axis categories "Very unimportant", "unimportant", "Somewhat unimportant", "Neither unimportant nor important", "Somewhat important", "Important", "Very important" and y-axis from 0 to 100. Legend: Tasting B-Grade Gourmet, Visiting shooting places, Visit the Sacred sites, Attending popular cultural events, Buying related product.

Kara (2016) indicates that factors such as education level, income, gender and age influence tourists' travel activity. Therefore, bivariate analyses are used to uncover whether or not the variables are related. ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of gender, age, education level and income on preferences of these 5 kinds of contents related activities.

In the condition of gender, there are 62 male, 191 female and 5 respondents who prefer not to tell. There was not a significant effect on any travel activities preferences, at the $p<.05$, for "Tasting B-Grade Gourmet" level for the three conditions [$F(1, 251) = 0.031$, $p = 0.860$], for "Visiting shooting places of films/dramas or places mentioned in novel etc." level for the three conditions [$F(1, 251) = 3.136$, $p = 0.078$], for "Visiting the Sacred sites" level for the three conditions [$F(1, 251) = 1.913$, $p = 0.168$], "Attending popular cultural events/exhibitions" level for the three conditions [$F(1, 251) = 0.052$, $p = 0.819$] and "Buying comic/game/film/star/mascot related product" level for the three conditions [$F(1, 251) = 0.019$, $p = 0.891$]. Then, the results of comparing the means of various activities on the difference of gender show that, the male's means of "Visiting shooting places of films/dramas or places mentioned in novel etc."($M = 4.65$), "Visiting the Sacred sites" ($M = 4.48$) and "Attending popular cultural events/exhibitions" ($M = 4.18$) are slightly higher than female's ($M = 4.28$; 4.13; 4.13), others are slightly lower. From figure 8, we can see that more male think

"visiting shooting places" is important (21%) than female (17.8%), and the percent is especially higher on the option of "very important"(12.9%) while the female is 3.1%. Furthermore, this situation is more obvious in Figure 9, about " Visiting sacred sites", the percentage of male choosing "very unimportant" and "important" are slightly lower than female. At the same time, there are 19.4% male and 9.4% female chose "very important", to this extent, the male is more interested in visiting sacred sites. Therefore, "visiting shooting places" and "anime sacred sites" are more important for Chinese male tourists than female.

Figure 8. Visiting shooting places * Gender Crosstabulation

			Gender			Total
			Male	Female	Prefer not to say	
Importance of Visiting shooting places	**Very unimportant**	Count	2	5	2	9
		% within Visiting shooting places	22.2%	55.6%	22.2%	100.0%
		% within gender	3.2%	2.6%	40.0%	3.5%
	Unimportant	Count	4	13	0	17
		% within Visiting shooting places	23.5%	76.5%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within gender	6.5%	6.8%	0.0%	6.6%
	Somewhat unimportant	Count	7	38	1	46
		% within Visiting shooting places	15.2%	82.6%	2.2%	100.0%
		% within gender	11.3%	19.9%	20.0%	17.8%
	Neither unimportant nor important	Count	17	49	0	66
		% within Visiting shooting places	25.8%	74.2%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within gender	27.4%	25.7%	0.0%	25.6%
	Somewhat important	Count	11	46	2	59
		% within Visiting shooting places	18.6%	78.0%	3.4%	100.0%
		% within gender	17.7%	24.1%	40.0%	22.9%
	Important	Count	13	34	0	47
		% within Visiting shooting places	27.7%	72.3%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within gender	21.0%	17.8%	0.0%	18.2%
	Very	Count	8	6	0	14

			Male	Female	Prefer not to say	Total
	important	% within Visiting shooting places	57.1%	42.9%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within gender	12.9%	3.1%	0.0%	5.4%
Total		Count	62	191	5	258
		% within Visiting shooting places	24.0%	74.0%	1.9%	100.0%
		% within gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Figure 9. Visiting the Sacred sites * Gender Crosstabulation

			Gender			Total
			Male	**Female**	**Prefer not to say**	
Importance of Visiting the Sacred sites	**Very unimportant**	Count	4	14	2	20
		% within visiting the scared sites	20.0%	70.0%	10.0%	100.0%
		% within gender	6.5%	7.3%	40.0%	7.8%
	Unimportant	Count	6	26	0	32
		% within visiting the scared sites	18.8%	81.3%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within gender	9.7%	13.6%	0.0%	12.4%
	Somewhat unimportant	Count	8	25	1	34
		% within visiting the scared sites	23.5%	73.5%	2.9%	100.0%
		% within gender	12.9%	13.1%	20.0%	13.2%
	Neither unimportant nor important	Count	14	47	0	61
		% within visiting the scared sites	23.0%	77.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within gender	22.6%	24.6%	0.0%	23.6%
	Somewhat important	Count	10	32	1	43
		% within visiting the scared sites	23.3%	74.4%	2.3%	100.0%
		% within gender	16.1%	16.8%	20.0%	16.7%
	Important	Count	8	29	0	37
		% within visiting the scared sites	21.6%	78.4%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within gender	12.9%	15.2%	0.0%	14.3%
	Very important	Count	12	18	1	31
		% within visiting the scared sites	38.7%	58.1%	3.2%	100.0%
		% within gender	19.4%	9.4%	20.0%	12.0%
Total		Count	62	191	5	258
		% within visiting the scared sites	24.0%	74.0%	1.9%	100.0%

The results of ANOVA revealed age has a significant effect on "Buying comic/game/film/star/mascot related product", $F(5, 253) = 2.912$, $p = 0.014$, partial $\eta2 = .05$. According to the results of multiple comparisons, there is a significant difference between age group 16-24 and 35-44. Age group 16-24 is more willing to buy comic/game/film/star/mascot related products.

An analysis of variance shows that the effect of education level on "Tasting B-Grade Gourmet" was significant, $F(4, 254) = 3.117$, $p = 0.014$. There are significant differences between "primary school graduates" and "bachelor degree" or "postgraduate graduates". The effect of education level on "Visiting the Sacred sites" was also significant, $F(4, 254) = 2.591$, $p = 0.037$. So is it for "Attending popular cultural events/exhibitions" with the three conditions [$F(1, 251) = 2.912$, $p = 0.022$] and for "Buying comic/game/film/star/mascot related product", [$F(1, 251) = 2.574$, $p = 0.038$]. Especially, bachelor graduates are more willing to attend popular cultural events and to buy comic/game/film/star/mascot related product than postgraduates. There is a significant effect of income on "Buying comic/ game/ film/ star/ mascot related product" at the $p<.05$ level for the three conditions [$F(4, 254) = 2.872$, $p = 0.024$]. In addition, the difference is significant between the income ranges of RMB 5000-7000 and above RMB 10000, the former showed a stronger preference than the latter on buying these related products. Furthermore, ANOVA was also conducted to compare the effect of visiting times among repeated visitors on activity demonstrate, but there is no significant effect.

4.3 Branding

The fourth part of the questionnaire is about examining the effectiveness of destinations branding. There are three sections of this part. The first one is brand awareness and contains three questions as following: "I recognize some shooting places of tv shows/films or anime sacred sites", "I can identify some places' mascots (like Kuma moto, kumamon)" and "I know some places' local b-grade Gourmet". The mean value of "I recognize some shooting places of tv shows/films or anime sacred sites" is 4.46, the mean of "I can identify some places' mascots (like Kuma moto,

kumamon)" is 5.23 and the third one is 4.63, and overall mean of brand awareness is 4.78. Based on the mean of different questions, we can see that mascots are more recognizable for the participants. Furthermore, all these "contents" have a slightly positive influence on enhancing brand awareness and the brand awareness overall is positive. Therefore, the third sub question about influences of different types of "contents" on brand awareness is clear that the mascot is the most influential one and has a stronger positive effect than other contents.

The brand image construct consists of 4 items and the general mean value is 5.44. Separately, the mean of "I think these places offers unique experience" is the highest (M = 5.62), the mean score for "My overall attitude toward these places with contents is favorable" is 5.50, followed by "I believe these places are interesting" (M = 5.42) and "I feel cultural intimacy and familiarity" (M = 5.21). The results of this section illustrate that the participants hold positive image especially on the uniqueness and favorability of the destinations. The overall mean of three measurements of brand loyalty is 5.29. The mean of "I will strongly recommend the places with contents to someone who seeks my advice" (M =5.33) and "I would intend to travel to places with "contents" in the next 5 years" (M = 5.54) are higher than the overall one. And the mean of "I prefer to visit this kind of places even cost more" (M = 5.00) represents that the brand loyalty can be slightly influenced when the cost is higher, however, most of them are willing to pay for it. According to the results of brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty, the effectiveness of "contents" as a branding strategy is confirmed positively.

Moreover, various information sources influence the brand image (Keller, 1993), so a multiple liner regression was calculated to predict brand image based on different kinds of information sources. 12.2 percent of brand image can be explained by the influence of different kinds of information sources and the model was found to be significant, $F_{(4, 240)} = 8.33$, p= .000, R^2 =.122. Only "Word-of-mouth" was found to be a significant predictor (β=.217, p= .009). None of "Travel books/ magazines/ etc." (β=.095, p= .151), "Internet" (β= .079, p=.304) and "personal experience" (β= .056,

p= .304) have significant effect on brand image. "Word-of-mouth" has a weak, positive and significant effect on shaping brand image.

Table 10. Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	R^2=.122	p= 0.000
Predictor	Standardized Coefficients Beta	Sig.
Travel books/ magazines/ etc	.095	.151
Word-of-mouth	.217	.009
Interne	.079	.304
Personal experience	.056	.304

Dependent Variable: brand image
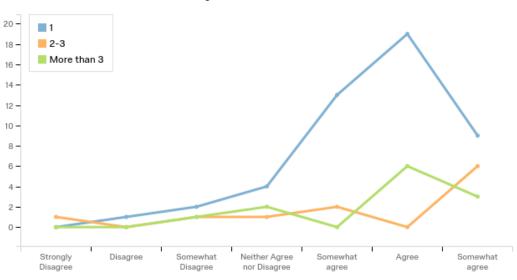
4.4 Destination selection

According to Shih (1986), the destination selection is complex and relates to an individual's perception, motivation, previous experience, attitude, information search, and intention. In order to answer the fourth sub-question about destination selection, despite the motivation part which is already analyzed, this section used descriptive analysis and bivariate analysis to gather and study the data of previous experience, attitude, information search, and intention.

About previous experience, the participants were filtered by the question "Have you ever been to Japan?" And the question "I would intend to travel to places with 'contents' in the next 5 years" is used to measure the intention to visit these "contents" related destinations. The cross-tabulation below illustrates that the majority of both visitors who has no experience visiting Japan and who has previous experience intend to visit this kind of destinations in the future. About 82.2% of the respondents who have previous experience to Japan clearly intend to visit this kind of destinations in 5 years and the rate of those who haven't been in Japan is a bit lower (77.40%). To find out more information about the relationship between visiting times and intention, the answers to "How many times have you ever been to Japan" are also used for analysis. From Figure 12, we can see that there is no significant difference in

the level of the intention to visit destinations with "contents" for visitors who have been to Japan more than once. Further, about 85.7% of the visitors who have been to Japan once intend to visit these destinations, which shows that they have higher intention than other groups.

Figure 11 "Have you ever been to Japan"*"I would intend to travel to places with 'contents' in the next 5 years" crosstabulation

			"I would intend to travel to places with 'contents' in the next 5 years"							
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Have you ever been to Japan?	Yes	Count	1	1	4	7	15	27	18	73
		% within visit experience	1.4%	1.4%	5.5%	9.6%	20.5%	37.0%	24.7%	100.0%
	NO	Count	0	3	3	36	37	65	42	186
		% within visit experience	0.0%	1.6%	1.6%	19.4%	19.9%	34.9%	22.6%	100.0%
Total		Count	1	4	7	43	52	92	60	259
		% within visit experience	0.4%	1.5%	2.7%	16.6%	20.1%	35.5%	23.2%	100.0%

Figure 12 Times* intention

The respondents were asked to state to what extent they agree with "My overall attitude toward these places with contents is favorable". The mean score for "My overall attitude toward these places with contents is favorable" is 5.50. And from Figure 13, it is clear that 17.76% of the respondents strongly agree that their attitudes toward these destinations are favorable, 25.87% agree and 37.45% somewhat agree. Thus, in general, the attitudes are favorable. The means of "I think these places offer a unique experience" (M = 5.62) and "I believe these places are interesting" (M = 5.42)

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also represent the positive attitude towards contents related destinations.
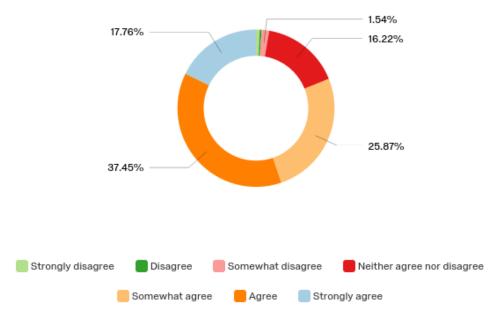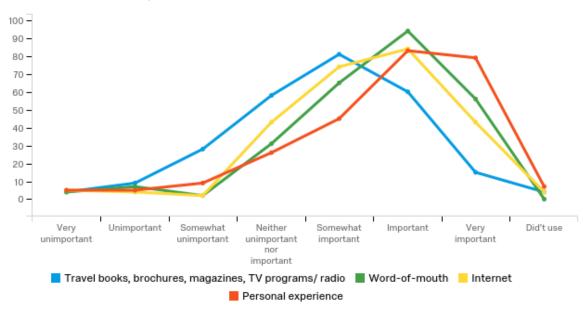
Figure 13. Agree level of "My overall attitude toward these places with contents is favourable"

In terms of information search, respondents were asked to state the importance of four types of information sources which are "Travel books, brochures, magazines, TV programs/ radio" "Word-of-mouth (friends/family/online review)" "Internet" and "Personal experiences". Among these respondents, 1.5% of them haven't used "Travel books, brochures, magazines, TV programs/ radio" or "Internet" before, 2.7% of them didn't use "personal experience". The respondents who think "Travel books, brochures, magazines, TV programs/ Radio" from somewhat important to very important hold 60.7%, and the majority (31.3%) think it is "somewhat important". Every respondent has the experience of using "Word-of-mouth" as an information source, and only 5% of them think it is unimportant, most of them (36.4%) chose the option "important". Only 4.2% respondents think "internet" is unimportant, and the rate is a little bit higher for the "personal experience" which is 7.2%, and the majority of both items chose the "important" option. Personal experience ranked the most important information source with the mean of 5.72, word-of mouth held the second position with M=5.53, followed by Internet (M = 5.4) and Travel books, brochures and etc. (M = 4.8). Moreover, there are no significant differences among groups in

different age range on the importance of these four information sources.

Figure 14. Importance of different kinds of information sources

5. Conclusion

There are many former studies and literatures about "contents tourism" in Japanese academic circles, but no study was conducted on the perspective of Japan's biggest group of inbound tourists – Chinese tourists. So, the purpose of this study is to identify the influence of Japanese "contents" to Chinese tourists. And this study is focused on answering the main research question "To what extent does Japanese 'contents' as a branding strategy influence Chinese outbound traveling?". In order to answer the main question, four sub questions were answered by combining former theoretical works and the research findings.

First of all, the influence of "contents" is measured in terms of motivation and travel activity preferences of Chinese outbound tourists. In general, the research findings are similar to former studies on Chinese outbound tourists. According to the findings, "Tasting local food", "Nature and landscapes", "Holiday", "Visit cultural attractions", and "Shopping" are the top five motivations. And 6 different kinds of travel activities are ranked as the following order: "Sightseeing", "Dining/Tasting local food", "Culture and heritage", "Participatory activity", "Shopping" and "Entertainment". The desire to try different types of foods may be a prime motivator

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for some people and the secondary motivators for others (McKercher, Okumus & Okumus, 2008). Furthermore, the high ranking of "tasting local food" in both motivation and activity confirmed the fact that Chinese like to sample local cuisine in Japan (Moriarty, 2017). In addition, it reveals that "B-grade gourmet" as an example of local food can be considered the most influential content to Chinese tourists on motivation and activities. Other "contents like shooting places of film or anime, popular events and mascots" have limited impact. It is interesting that the rankings of some travel activities don't seem to be in relation to the motivations which reflects the complexity of purchasing. Just like Pena, Jamilena and Molina (2013) reviewed that comparing to first-time visitors who are more likely to be driven by novelty-seeking motivations, repeated visitors are more attracted by niche social and cultural activities. According to the results, there is a growing tendency with the increasing of the times for the importance of the motivation such as "Visiting relatives and friends", "Business/ Conference" and "study". The respondents who have no experience of traveling to Japan and visited Japan once are more interested in "Sports event", "Got to see popular mascots (like kumamon)" and "Experience local custom/lifestyle". The results indicate that the contents are more influential to repeated visitors. Moreover, even shopping is one of the most important motivations and popular activities to Chinese tourists, but the willingness to pay for popular culture related products is not very high, only age group 16-24 and medium income group showed higher willingness to buy comic/game/film/star/mascot related products. Just like some studies of Japan domestic tourists show that male is more attracted by anime sacred sites, Chinese male tourists are also more attracted to shooting places and sacred places of films/dramas and amines. Higher education graduates are more possible to be influenced by these "contents" like shooting place, popular events, and B-grade gourmet. As a result, even the contents have limited influences on Chinese tourists now, but they have potential growing influences on repeat visitors, well-educated ones, and young male visitors.

The effectiveness of "contents" as a branding strategy is measured in terms of

brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty. According to the results of brand awareness (M=4.7735), brand image (M= 5.4393), and brand loyalty (M=5.2909), there is a positive effect of "contents" as a branding strategy. Especially, the measurements of brand image "I think these places offer a unique experience" (M = 5.62) and "My overall attitude toward these places with contents is favorable" (M = 5.50) represent the uniqueness of these destinations recognized by the respondents and also their favorability to these destinations. As Keller (1993) states that the favorability of consumers shows a positive attitude which is a reflection of the success of marketing. Moreover, the uniqueness of the brand also attracts consumers and makes the brand more competitive (Aaker,1982). The brand loyalty part is also positive and "I would intend to travel to places with "contents" in the next 5 years" (M = 5.54) shows the intention to visit these contents related destinations is high. Then, combining the medium willingness to recommend (the mean value of "I will strongly recommend the places with contents to someone who seeks my advice" is 5.33) and the weak, positive and significant effect of Word-of-mouth on building brand image, the brand image has a tendency to become better. So, generally, the contents work as a successful branding strategy and make these destinations more competitive.

There are subtle differences among the influences of various contents on brand awareness. All kinds of the "contents" have mean values around 5, they demonstrate the positive effect of raising brand awareness and some typical contents are already widely adopted by many destinations to promote local tourism. For example, more and more destinations are using food as a mean "to differentiate themselves and broaden their market base" (McKercher, Okumus & Okumus, 2008, p.137). "The significance of India (e.g. Bollywood), Japan (e.g. contents tourism) and South Korea (e.g. Hallyu or Korea Wave) as leading exporters of popular media content including films, TV dramas, and animations" makes them currently "the most important centers in terms of potential) film tourism in Asia" (Kim & Reijnders, 2017, p.7.8). However, the mascot, a new developing content with remarkable Japanese characteristic, got the

highest mean value of 5.23 and turns out to be the most influential content for raising brand awareness. Even the mascots are one of the lowest rated motivations and the related activities cannot be considered preferred but unexpectedly it has greater influence as a branding strategy. As a result, developing local and special mascots can be the new direction of promoting destinations and enhancing brand awareness.

The fourth sub-question is about how contents influence Chinese outbound tourists destination selection. According to Shih (1986), the process of destination selection is complex and relates to individual's perception, motivation, previous experience, attitude, information search, and intention. The results of the questionnaire illustrate that even the "contents" have limited influences as motivation, the majority of Chinese tourists have a positive attitude about contents related destinations in Japan and intend to visit these destinations in five years. The rate of repeated visitors who intend to visit these destinations (82.2%), notably the ones who have been to Japan once (85.7%), is slightly higher than those who haven't been in Japan (77.40%). Therefore, the repeated visitors have a stronger interest in visiting this kind of destinations. Besides, during the destination choice process, trust and destination loyalty are strongly linked to tourists' behavior (Im et al., 2012; Kim et al., 2009, Petrick, 2004). In addition, Keller (1993) states that "Fundamentally, high levels of brand awareness and a positive brand image should increase the probability of brand choice, as well as produce greater consumer (and retailer) loyalty and decrease vulnerability to competitive marketing actions" (p. 8). Thus, based on the positive results of brand awareness, brand image, and brand loyalty, there is a positive influence on the destination choice. About information search, personal experience is the most influential information source and word-of-mouth turns out to has a weak, positive and significant effect on brand image. Overall, combining the influential factors of destination selection, the contents influences the destination choice of Chinese outbound tourists positively and the level of influence is high, especially to repeated visitors. To further increase the possibility of choosing these destinations, ensuring the quality of personal experience in Japan and marketing on word-of-mouth

are essential.

In conclusion, as a branding strategy the "contents" has limited influences on Chinese tourists' motivation and activities, but they successfully build the brand of these contents related destinations. Based on the previous experience, intention, attitudes, and branding, the contents play an important role in increasing the possibility of destination selection. And B-grade gourmet is the most influential one for general visitors; other types of contents like shooting places are more attractive for repeated visitors, higher educated and male visitors. The mascots have an obvious advantage and effectiveness in raising brand awareness. Ensuring the quality of personal experience in Japan, using local mascots and marketing on word-of-mouth can enhance the efficiency of branding and makes these destinations more competitive. Chinese outbound tourists are influenced by socio-economic and political factors (Tse & Hobson, 2008); some visitors have no intention to visit Japan because of political and historical issues. However, the majority of Chinese outbound tourists have no experience of visiting Japan but intend to do so in the future and the contents are more influential on the repeated visitors, so the potential influence of contents on Chinese outbound tourists is positive.

The main contribution of this study is that it has examined the influence of Japanese popular culture on the demand side. The Chinese outbound tourism market as the biggest and fast growing one in the world inevitably became one of the most important market targets for many destinations, not only in Japan but also in other countries. The findings of this study revealed the current top motivations and preferred activities in general, and examined the effectiveness of the Japanese developed strategy of "contents tourism". Based on the characteristic of Chinese outbound tourists, using influential information sources for marketing can make the marketing more effective especially more specific when aiming at different groups of visitors. The successful experience of destination branding can also be adopted in other places to promote tourism. However the huge population of Chinese makes the market more complex; just like Miao and Rakotonanahary (2014) mentioned that "the

habits of Chinese travelers are changing" (p. 23), especially of repeated visitors. The limitation of this study is also clear, namely that the samples are not representative enough since the sample size should be bigger to be more representative based on the huge population of China. On one hand a quantitative method has the advantage of collecting general data and discovering the relationship between variables; on the other hand, it is difficult to get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and interviews are necessary for that. Since the demand and habits of tourists are always changing and complex, a long run and bigger range of data collection will be more thorough and representative for further studies. Furthermore, the study topics related to the influence of "contents" on Japan inbound tourism should also be studied on tourists from other countries. Besides, the comparison of different reactions toward these "contents" of tourists from Asian countries and other countries can be interesting. Moreover, in order to measure the promoting effect of different types of contents, case studies of popular destinations in Japan are indispensable. In addition, the consumer behavior of different types of cultural tourists is also an important direction for further studies.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire (English version)

Dear participant,

Thank you very much for participating in this survey. I am a master student majoring in Cultural economics and entrepreneurship from Erasmus University of Rotterdam. This survey is conducted for my graduation project and the findings will be used only for research purposes. Your anonymity is guaranteed and personal information will be kept strictly confidential.

This research will only take 5-10 minutes to complete. If you have any questions during or after your participation, please feel free to contact the researcher: Ziwei Song (469772zs@eur.nl).

Module A: Motivation

A1) Have you been to Japan?

☐   Yes   ☐ No

A2) Route question:

no, - Are you planning to visit Japan?

☐   Yes → A3   ☐ No

A2-1 NO- Why not

☐Political issues   ☐Historical issues   ☐ Personal reasons   ☐Financial issues   ☐ others

A2)yes   -

How many times?

   a)   1   b) 2-3   c) More than 3

A3) What are the purposes of visiting to Japan (please select 5 of them)

☐ Holiday   ☐ Visit cultural attractions

☐ Attend a popular cultural event (concerts, comic cons, festival, game competition)

☐ Anime pilgrimage (Visit the place of anime)

☐ Visiting relatives and friends   ☐ Business/ Conference

☐ Sports event   ☐ Study

☐ Nature and landscapes   ☐ Tasting local food B-Grade Gourmet

☐ Got to see popular mascots (like kumamon)

☐ Experience local custom/lifestyle

☐ Shopping   ☐ Other

Module B Information sources

Please indicate how much you used the following sources for information:

	very unimportant (1)	Unimportant (2)	Somewhat unimportant (3)	Neither unimportant nor important(4)	Somewhat important(5)	important(6)	Very important (7)	Didn't use (8)
Travel books, brochures, magazines, TV programs/ Radio.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Word-of-mouth (friends/family/ online review)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Internet	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Personal experiences	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Module C Travel Activity Preferences
C1 Please rank these kinds of activities
☐ Tasting local food   ☐ Sightseeing   ☐ Culture and Heritage
☐ Participatory Activity (Visiting theme parks, Participating in the local activities organized for local festivals
☐ Entertainment (Casino, nightlife, watching shows, performances)   ☐Shopping

C2 Please rate the importance of these activities
1.   Tasting B-Grade Gourmet

     very unimportant 1   2   3   4   5   6   7 very important

2.   Visiting shooting places of films/dramas or places mentioned in novel etc

     very unimportant 1   2   3   4   5   6   7very important

3.   **Visiting the Sacred sites**

   very unimportant 1   2   3   4   5   6   7very important

4.   Attending popular cultural events/exhibitions(festivals, concerts, comic cons, live theatre/musical performances etc)

     very unimportant 1   2   3   4   5   6   7very important

5.   Buying comic/game/film/star/mascot related product

     very unimportant 1   2   3   4   5very important

Module D Destination branding

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
1) I recognize some shooting places of tv shows/films or anime sacred sites.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2) I can identify some places' mascots (like Kuma moto, kumamon)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
3) I know some places' local b-grade Gourmet	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4) I believe these places are interesting.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
5) I think these places offer a unique experience	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
6) I feel cultural intimacy, familiarity	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
7) My overall attitude toward these places with contents is favourable.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
8) I will strongly recommend the places with "contents" to someone who seeks my advice.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
9) I would intend to travel to places with "contents" in the next 5 years	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
10) I prefer to visit this kind of places even if they cost more	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Module E: Profile
E1) Please indicate your gender
Male (1)   Female (2)   Prefer not to say(3)

E2) Please indicate your age group

☐15 or younger   ☐ 16 - 25   ☐ 26-35   ☐36 - 45   ☐46 - 55   ☐56 - 65   ☐66 or over

E3) What is you highest level of educational qualification? (please select one)

Primary school

Secondary school

Vocational   (3)

Bachelor degree(4)

Postgraduate   (5)

E4) Indicate your current (or former) occupational group (please select one)

Director or manager   (1)

Professional (doctor, lawyer, etc.)   (2)

Paraprofessional (technicians, nursing, etc.)   (3)

Clerical/administration   (4)

Service and sales personnel   (5)

Blue collar   (6)

Student   (7)

Public employee/soldier

E.5)Do you work in the cultural or creative industries

Yes   (1)

No   (2)

E.6) Which category best describes your monthly income?

<3000 RMB(1)

3000~5000RMB(2)

5000~7000RMB(3)

7000~10000RMB(4)

>10000RMB(5)

Thank you very much for your participation, Do you have any comments for this survey?

Appendix B

Questionnaire (Chinese version)

日本流行文化对中国游客影响

亲爱的参与者：

您好。我是伊拉斯姆斯鹿特丹大学文化经济学与创业专业的硕士学生。此调查用于我的毕业论文，旨在研究日本文化旅游中中国游客受日本流行文化的影响。完成此次问卷需要 3-5 分钟时间，您的个人信息和答案将被匿名记录并严格保密，调查结果仅用作学术研究，请您放心填写。有任何问题或者建议请您联系我。　感谢您的支持！

宋紫薇（469772zs@eur.nl）

Q1.1 您是否去过日本

去过　(1)
没有　(2)

Display This Question:

　If motivation = 去过

X→

Q1.2 您去过日本几次?
1　(1)
2-3　(2)
4 次及以上　(3)

Display This Question:

　If motivation = 没有

Q1.3 您是否有打算去日本旅游？

有　(1)

没有　(2)

X→

Q1.4 什么因素使您不想去日本旅游？

历史因素　(1)

政治原因　(2)

经济原因　(3)

个人原因　(4)

＊

Q1.5 您去日本旅游的目的有哪些呢？（请从下列选项中选择五个）

度假　(1)

参观文化旅游胜地　(2)

购物 shopping　(6)

参加娱乐文化活动　(3)

圣地巡礼（探访动漫/电影/电视剧拍摄地）　(4)

商务/会议　(5)

参观自然风光　(7)

近距离接触文化吉祥物（例如熊本熊）　(8)

品尝当地美食　(9)

学习　(10)

体验当地习俗　(11)

走亲访友　(12)

体育活动　(13)

其它　(14)

End of Block: 旅游动机

Start of Block: 信息来源

Q2.1 请您描述这些旅游信息来源的重要性？

	请您选择重要程度							
	极不重要 (1)	不重要 (2)	不太重要 (3)	中 立 (4)	有点重要 (5)	重 要 (6)	非常重要 (7)	没用过 (8)
期刊 / 杂志 / 旅行节目 等 (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
他人评价 (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
网络信息 (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
个人经验 (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: 信息来源

Start of Block: 旅游活动偏好

Q3.1 **请您根据自身偏好对以下活动进行排序 （在方块中填入数字 1-6）**
_____ 品尝美食 (1)
_____ 观光 (2)
_____ 文化和遗址 (3)
_____ 参与性/体验类活动 (4)
_____ 娱乐活动 (5)
_____ 购物 (6)

Q3.2 请选择这些活动对您旅行的重要程度

	一点也不重要 (1)	不重要 (2)	不太重要 (3)	中立 (4)	有点重要 (5)	重要 (6)	非常重要 (7)
品尝当地 B 级美食（便宜又好吃的平价美味）(1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
参观影视拍摄地 (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
动漫圣地巡礼（拜访动漫热门地）(3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
参加娱乐文化活动(演唱会,漫展等)(4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
购买明星/动漫/吉祥物/游戏等周边产品 (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q4.1 请您选择对下列陈述的认同程度　　（"这种地方"指代有娱乐文化背景的地方）

	非常不同意 (1)	不同意 (2)	有些不同意 (3)	无所谓 (4)	有些同意 (5)	同意 (6)	非常同意 (7)
我知道一些影视拍摄热门地 / 动漫原型地 (1)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
我听说过一些 B 级美食 (2)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
我能分辨出一些城市吉祥物 (3)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
我认为这种地方很有趣 (4)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
我认为在这种地方能有独特的体验 (5)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
我在这种地方能感受到文化亲切感和熟悉感 (6)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
总体来说我喜欢这些地方 (7)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
我会像别人强烈推荐这种地方 (8)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

我想在五年内会去这种地方旅游 (9)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
我倾向于去这种地方即使要花费更多 (10)	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

End of Block: 宣传效果

Start of Block: 个人信息

Q5.1 您的性别是？
男 　(1)
女 　(2)
不愿透露 　(3)

Q5.2 您的年龄？
15 岁以下 　(1)
16-24 　(2)
25-34 　(3)
35-44 　(4)
45-54 　(5)
55-64 　(6)
65+ 　(7)

Q5.3 您的最高学历?（即将获得）
小学 　(1)
中学 zh 　(2)
大/中专/职业教育 　(3)
本科 　(4)
硕士/博士 　(5)

Q5.4 您的职业是？
管理人员 　(1)
专业人员 （医生，律师等） 　(2)
辅助专职人（技师，护士等） 　(3)
办事员/行政人员 　(4)
服务/销售人员 　(5)
公务员/军人 　(9)
蓝领 　(6)
家庭主妇 　(8)

学生 (7)

Q5.5 您是否在文化/创意产业工作？
是 (1)
否 (2)

Q5.6 您的月收入？
___ (1)
3000~5000RMB(2) (2)
5000~7000RMB(3) (3)
7000~10000RMB(4) (4)
>10000RMB(5) (5)

End of Block: 个人信息