

**The impact of festivals and events on city image:  
A Case Analysis of Ningbo International Fashion  
Festival**



A thesis submitted for the M. A. degree in cultural economics and cultural entrepreneurship, Erasmus University, Rotterdam

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## **Abstract**

In the contemporary era, more and more cities are increasingly using festivals and events to attract visitors, investment and improve the image of the city itself. The main objective of the paper is to offer a rich and practical study of the impacts of festivals and events influence upon a city image. To achieve this objective, a case study of Ningbo international fashion festival was selected in particular, together with a questionnaire to evaluate the effects of the festivals and events have produced on the city image of Ningbo. For the research, this is especially significant given the emphasis on what extent and how.

By performing a comprehensive analysis of case study and interview, the main finding is that the city of Ningbo is enhanced by hosting Ningbo international fashion festival. The methods of induction and deduction are applied to the research process, drawing the conclusion that a successful city festival has a function of promoting the city image. Several recommendations and implications will be outlined for future research and the cultural sector, with a hope of this research providing an enlightenment of the importance of using festivals and events as a means of culture-led strategies in urban planning and city development.

## **Acknowledgement**

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# Chapter one: Introduction

## 1.1 Research background and motivation

In the recent decades, the waves of globalization have swept every corner of the world, which gives rise to the increasing competition between different cities in order to survive or stand out in such big climate. Thus, the ideas of city marketing and urban regeneration have emerged as a major concern for the policy makers.

Festivals and events are an essential part of city life. They have a function of providing a good vehicle to strengthen a city in competition. Given this function, more and more cities hold festivals and events with the aim of improving the cities' images, attracting visitors and investment as well as stimulating urban development and boosting local economy as a whole.

I would never forget the first time I saw the carnival festival in Maastricht<sup>1</sup>, which left me a deep impression of the city itself. It was inconceivable to believe that a successful festival was so magic and powerful to create or refresh a city image. Now I am studying and living in Rotterdam, a city that shares some similarities with my hometown-Ningbo, China. For instance, both of them serve as major ports of trade and business center in their countries. It reminded me of Rotterdam, used to be the Cultural Capital of Europe 2001, made use of this kind of festival to improve its city image. As a result, a sort of enlightenment came to my mind: could Ningbo learn something from Rotterdam in terms of the Cultural Capital of Europe 2001? How could Ningbo take advantage of the festivals and cultural events at hand to boost its city image in the long run?

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<sup>1</sup> Maastricht holds the biggest of the Dutch carnivals, a three-day party that's extended to a full week by some seasoned revellers.  
(<http://www.worldeventsguide.com/event/1543/Maastricht-Netherlands/Maastricht-Carnival.html>)

I consider it will be an interesting topic because I could look back over the experience of the Cultural Capital of Europe 2001, examine how the city of Rotterdam make use of this to highlight its city image. Then turn to the city of Ningbo, compares with Rotterdam, festivals and cultural events in Ningbo are still on its budding stage, and there is not enough research on its influence on the city image. Here, gives me the motivation to look into this field.

## **1.2 Aims of the research and research questions**

The research aims at providing a platform for innovative theoretical and practical studies on the relationship of festivals, events and the city image. The main objective of the research is to see in which ways do the festivals and events boost the city image of Ningbo.

The central research questions of the thesis are: “whether and to what extent was the city image of Ningbo enhanced through Ningbo International Fashion Festival?” Based on the former one, followed by another question: How can Ningbo improve the city image by hosting this kind of festivals and events?

## **1.3 Terms and definitions**

**Festivals and events:** They refer to two kinds of definitions in broad and narrow sense respectively. From the western point of view, festivals and events usually go hand in hand. And in this paper, I would like to put the festivals and events together as a whole to research.

Goldblatt (2002, p.1) introduces festivals, events as a:

“Kaleidoscope of planned culture, sport, political, and business occasions: from mega-events like Olympics and World fairs to community festivals; from programs of events at parks and attractions to visits by dignitaries and intergovernmental assembles; from small meetings and parties to huge conventions and competitions.”

Functionally, a festival is ‘a public themed celebration which is concentrated in time and delivered with a clear purpose’ (Getz,1991;Evans,2001,237).

‘Themed’ is a significant characteristic for festivals, as generally we consider festivals are those events at which something special is being organized and celebrated. The most common themes are celebrations of the arts(for example, music, dance, cinema, and theatre), also including feasts, carnivals(stressing fun, games and role playing),heritage celebrations and milestone events, such as centenaries and anniversaries(Hall,1992; Getz,2001,4).

In dictionary, festivals are defined as follows:

- “1. An occasion for feasting or celebration, especially a day or time of religious significance that recurs at regular intervals.
2. An often regularly recurring program of cultural performances, exhibitions, or competitions.
3. Revelry; conviviality.”<sup>2</sup>

In general, they could range from local community based events (e.g. The Berlin beer festival), to major events (e.g. The international port festival), to hallmark events (e.g. The jazz music festival) to what have been classified mega-events (e.g. The Olympic games) according to different size and content as well as their potential attendance, media coverage, potential costs and benefits and so on. They vary in scale and can

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Festivals>

either be part of the official round of civic events or supported by groups that lie outside the establishment. The sponsorship and purpose of events can change over time (Evans,2001,237)

When turns to the term of 'event', in recent years, one could reasonably argue that the 'event' has been used to define that which is extraordinary in popular culture (Goldblatt, 2000). As the definition of 'festival' is more suitable for my illustration of the target topic, therefore, in this research, I will use the term of 'festival' instead of 'festival and event' to study.

**City image:** "The image of a place is usually very important in attracting visitors and place image research has been particularly prevalent in the tourism studies field. Research has tended to underline the complexity of the image concept (for example, Jansson, 2003), a point that is made clear when reviewing the image literature, although in broad terms, images could be described as the 'currency of cultures'(Morgan and Pritchard, 1998), reflecting and reinforcing particular shared meanings and beliefs and particular value systems."<sup>3</sup>

**Destination image for tourist:** Festivals are an important element in the marketing of tourism because they offer tourists attractive reasons to visit a place. They are now established methods for promoting destinations. Festivals in this place offer a unique experience that different from elsewhere, so that they can be the key factor in the tourist's decision to choose one destination other than another. As a result festivals are effective instruments in attracting not only the first time visitors but also more important the repeat visitors to gain joys as well as to discover new cultural experiences.

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<sup>3</sup> Greg Richards and Julie Wilson had concluded in "The Impact of Cultural Events on City Image: Rotterdam, Cultural Capital of Europe 2001"

Although cities can pursue “immediate” festivals and events to maximize spending, utilize local supply chains and build new markets, they also need to adopt a long-term perspective. According to Chalip (2004), long-term event leveraging is all about development images to assist place branding and a city’s market position. This is because ‘ the destination’s image will be affected by the image of events that it hosts, and the particular effect will depend upon which dimensions of destination image are compatible with the event (Chalip et al., 2003,p 228).

## **1.4 Methodology**

For the methods, I use both statistical and qualitative material and so it is a mixed methods research. In order to achieve the aims and objectives, a case study of taking insight to what role of festivals and culture events plays in enhancing the city Image of Ningbo was undertaken. Furthermore, a questionnaire of 30 questionnaire responses by resident and non-resident visitors to the Ningbo International Fashion Festival was used to evaluate the image effects of the festival.

In the design of the questionnaire, I used the likert scales to make image assessment and attitude measurement for this research. “In marketing research, Likert scales are commonly used to distinguish strength of opinion as they are quick and easy to construct and easy to administer by self-completion, phone or face-to-face. In developing a Likert scale, it is necessary to state the opinion, attitude and belief in clear terms but the items do not have to span the range of weak to strong, as they would in a Thurstone or Guttman scale. This range is achieved through the Likert response options, for example, ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’”(Emma H. Wood,2006). This part will be illustrated more in details in Research Methodology Chapter.

## **1.5 The Structures of the Research**

This research mainly comprises six chapters, including the “Introduction” chapter, the “Theories Review” chapter, the “Case Study” chapter, the “Research Methodology” chapter, the “Research Findings” chapter, and finally a “Conclusion and Implication” chapter which delivers some recommendations for future research.

## Chapter two: Theories Review

### 2.1 Festivals and events- important public goods

From economic point of view, a public good is generally defined as a good that is both non-rival and non-excludable. “This means, respectively, that consumption of the good by one individual does not reduce availability of the good for consumption by others; and that no one can be effectively excluded from using the good.” It is difficult to draw the line of which good is considered to be an absolutely non-rival as well as non-excludable good; “but economists think that some goods approximate the concept closely enough for the analysis to be economically useful.”<sup>4</sup>

Chwe argues that much of what we call “culture” which gives birth to the common knowledge we have shared together (Chwe, 2001). Victor Turner (1982) defines festivals as “generally connected with expectable culturally shared events.” He suggests that “manifesting in symbolic form what it conceives to be its essential life” is one of the approaches when a community celebrates the festival just as it “celebrates itself”. (Granovetter, 1973) put forward the argument that the public rituals, sites and events, such as festivals, celebrations, churches and temples help people to form a sense of community. As a result, festivals are such kind of important public goods that function to establish collective cohesion by reinforcing ties within a society.

An important function of symbolic public goods is coordination, which aims to generate common knowledge for the public. There are all manner of public goods serve this purpose: not only symbolic function but also material function.

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<sup>4</sup> For current definitions of public goods see any mainstream microeconomics textbook, eg.: Hal R. Varian, *Microeconomic Analysis* ISBN 0-393-95735-7; Mas-Colell, Whinston & Green, *Microeconomic Theory* ISBN 0-19-507340-1; or Gravelle & Rees, *Microeconomics* ISBN 0-582-40487-8.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public\\_good](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_good)

## 2.2 Festival characteristics

Following the table lists the main characteristics of festival. (Figure 1:<sup>5</sup>)

<b>Domain</b>	<b>characteristics</b>
Festival spirit	Reflection of values and belonging through ritual, revelry, scale, fantasy, magic
Satisfaction of basic needs	Physical, interpersonal, social and psychological needs.
Uniqueness	Distinctive features of programme, image making, promotions, site, scale, food and beverage, outside normal experience.
Authenticity	Elements associated with local cultural attributes. The participation of community as hosts, staff, performers, suppliers.
Tradition	Events rooted in community, closely associated with reinforcing traditions and practices, can even be fabricated.
Flexibility	Events developed with minimal infrastructure, adapted to changing markets, provide umbrella for a variety of activities.
Hospitality	Willingness of community to host visitors and residents alike.
Tangibility	Experience of place through festival content and host community
Theming	Theming can be physical manifestation of elements like tradition, authenticity and festive spirit.
Symbolism	Elements of production can relate to cultural values, political or economic objects.
Affordability	Can provide affordable leisure, social or cultural experiences for hosts and guests.
Convenience	Access to spontaneous leisure and social opportunities.

<sup>5</sup> Source: Getz(1991,P.326)

## 2.3 Community festivals and the stakeholders

Ros Derrett concludes that Festivals have played a significant part in the cultural life of communities. It seems groups of people have understood the capacity of such gatherings to lift spirits, transfer knowledge and enhance neighborliness. Festivals emerge from the local lived culture and allow residents and visitors to be involved with their creation. "The publicity festivals and events can generate for a community not only have a cumulative impact on the location as a tourist destination but also feed into the image and identity of the community and assist with creating an appealing and consolidated sense of community." (Ros Derrett,2007) and Williams(1965, p.57) suggests that by participating in festivals we find a particular sense of life, a particular community of experience that hardly needs explanation. Festivals, as a social phenomenon, permit encounters with authentic expressions of culture.

Festivals and events are seen to build social capital and in community development terms showcase the strengths of a community at play and to demonstrate its capacity to cope with external stresses and disturbance as a result of social, political and environmental change (Adger, 2000). The festival is a festive event that people having a good time gathering together, which offers both the residents and visitors joyful experience that can meet diverse community needs in order to help host communities foster local development, leadership and networking. This is also the community-based tourism development demand.

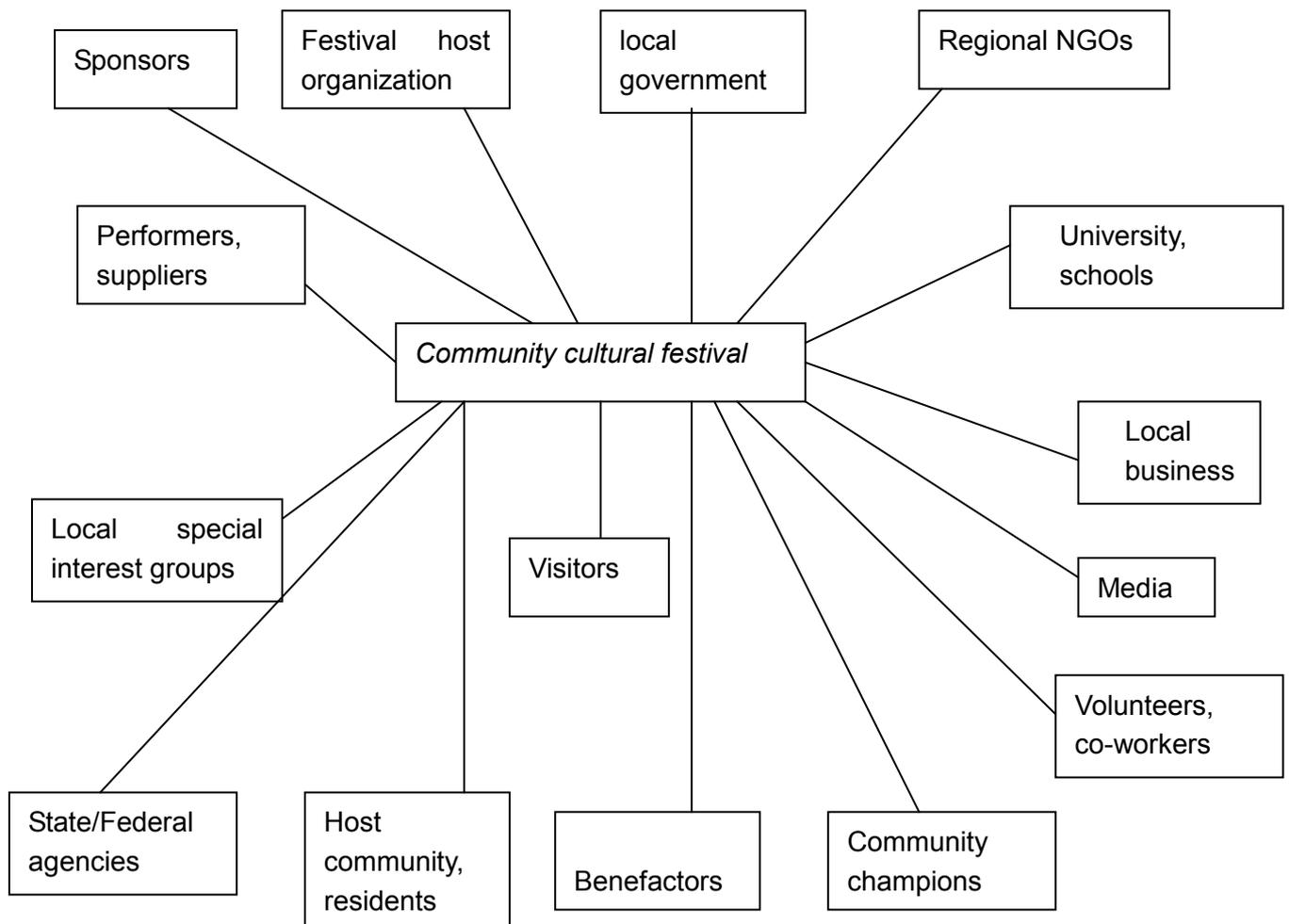
Dunstan(1994) discusses that organizing a major festival takes a lot of individual and collective effort. To get the job done the organizers have to be able to give a lot of time personally and be able to call in a lot of favors and / or inspire volunteerism. Kanter(1995) suggests it is important in organizational terms that communities need to have both magnets and glue. Magnets broaden community horizons, attract and expand skills and attract external resources. Leaders, festival spirit and experience

can be the glue that bring people together through social cohesion, with joint plans and agreed strategic goals. (RosDerrett,2005) considers that “Celebration can bind a community and it can also be the instrument that keeps community a fresh and constantly renewing experience; an elixir that keeps community relevant and responsive to the needs of the times. Annual festivals create a community of witness that marks the passage of time, notes the changing of the guard as new power relations arise and old ones change”.

Community festivals are collaborative productions. When comes to the key stakeholders in community festivals, it is often argued that they have different responsibilities and expectations for staging a festival. Partnerships are often regarded as essential elements for sustainability. local government, festival host organization, sponsors and regional NGOs are the key players who are responsible of making affiliations with local special interest groups, the local business community, local media, individual community champions, festival organizers, residents and visitors. Individuals drive them. Agencies looking to exploit new opportunities like festivals wish to satisfy their own constituency, while appealing to shared wider community aspirations. (RosDerrett,2007) In each community, individuals, organizations and enterprise interact with each other, building up trusting relationships between each other, independently but mutually. Yet a socio-cultural exchange is established within the community festivals. See (Figure 2)

Figure 2: Key stakeholders in community festivals.

Source: adapted from Allen et al.(2002)



Healy et al.(2003) suggests the role of social networks between local communities and other communities is one of the effective ways to promote community resilience but is often overlooked by in policy.

Getz et al.(2007) highlights the importance of networking between festival partners in community festivals and acknowledges their roles to play in festival management. The stakeholder roles are categorized as regulator, co-producer, supplier, collaborator and audience. Individual partners play a variety of roles to make sure the festival put in effective practice.

## 2.4 Impacts of festivals and events

Festivals and events have a number of impacts producing on the host city, ranging from economic, cultural, social, environmental and so on. They have both positive and negative effects produced on the host cities. When determining the success of a festival or an event, both sides of impact should be taken into consideration. However, often more emphasis is paid to the positive effects.

First of all, eye-catching festivals usually are one of the signboards for cultural tourism. Here, we called them cultural tourism festivals. There is plenty of evidence in literature on the benefits of cultural tourism festivals to destinations. "It is reported that festivals contribute to the local regeneration and prosperity of the destination. This is because it generates new employment opportunities"(Prentice and Andersen, 2003; Smith, 2004). It encourages the development of the basic infrastructure construction which is visitor-friendly, environment-friendly and continuable. Bachleitner and Zins (1992) affirm that festival tourism contributes to local residents learning, being conscious of appreciation of community pride, identity, also gives rise to the opening of small and medium sized family enterprises. Further, cultural festivals and events cultivate multi-cultural and intercultural communication that can promote understanding between the host and the guest (Sdrali and Chazapi, 2007). It is also believed that a city or a region can make a name for itself by establishing its competitive position among countries through tourism (Smith,2004). Falassi (1987, p. 2) defines cultural festival as:

"a periodically recurrent, social occasion in which, through a multiplicity of forms and series of coordinated events, participate directly or indirectly and to various degree, all members of a whole community, united by ethnic, linguistic, religious, historical bonds, and sharing a world view."

Festivals and events are now established methods for promoting destinations, supplementing their traditional role as forms of exhibition and performance (Roche,2000). They are considered to be a strong contributor to the society, which also support and build on the city image, contribute to sustainable economic, social and regional development, create employment for artists and encourage the celebration of cultural diversity.

Among all these impacts, attention is often paid to the analysis of economic impact. Hall (1992) suggests that hosting major events provides a good vehicle for attracting economic benefits of events.

### **Economic impact**

*“Economic analysis of events provides one aspect of why events are held and the effects that they have on a region. However, while many of the economics impacts of events are quite tangible many of the social are not.”*

*(Hall, 1992 p.10)*

Economic impact is one of the most important factors that could be directly measured in terms of investment or expenditure. According to Getz (2000), the majority of event stakeholders still select economic performance as the leading indicator of event success.

From the positive point of view, festivals and events have main economic functions such as attracting investment, creating employment, and improving standard of living. One of the major goals of hosting festivals and events is money-making. Despite the direct income generated during the festival for instance the admission fee, festivals and events can also provide a kind of economic stimulus for the local economy. The destination tourism is a good case in point. Festivals and events are considered to contribute significantly to the development wealth of tourism for the host communities. Which, produce ripple effect spreading to other industries as well. As a result, a

considerably amount of investment would be introduced in to perk up the economy. At the same time, quite a few new job opportunities would be created, in order to meet the increasing demand in the labor market. Taking all the positive impacts into consideration, there is no denying the fact that by hosting successful festivals and cultural events, the quality of life of the local residents can greatly be improved to a certain degree.

Historically, the measurement of event economic impact commonly focuses on visitor spending data as well as extend this expenditure to other sectors of the economy.

Felsenstein and Fleischer(2003,p.391) used a new framework to evaluate the economic impacts of two local festivals in rural Israel. Rather than a significant economic benefit, they found that local festivals have an 'important "signaling" Effects with which they are commonly associated'. They suggest that 'the continued high levels of public support for festivals and the relatively modest. Levels of local economic growth that they yield seem to indicate some form of non-market benefit (such as local image creation) associated with the festival'. However, this continued public investment could just as easily be due to policy makers' lack of understanding of the likely economic benefits due to a lack of strategic planning and investment in post-event evaluation and realistic impact studies (Thomas and Wood, 2003). Felsenstein and Fleischer conclude that economic development practitioners and policy makers need to incorporate non-market measures of value when analyzing festivals as instruments of tourism promotion.

One such measure of value is the festival's propensity the change the image of the area both within and outside the local community. Jago et al. (2003) used a number of workshops to investigate current issues and practice around events and destination marketing. One of the findings suggests that a barrier to using events to promote and

build destination image successfully is a lack of cooperation between tourism policy makers and event managers but that such organizational cooperation was seen to be higher in small rural towns. It should be noted, however, that even highly successful large scale festivals may have little impact in changing long-standing perceptions of a region (Prentice and Anderson, 2003)

Festivals and events also have other impacts besides what could be measured in economic terms. They contribute to the quality of life by strengthening communications between different cities even different countries, enhancing awareness of diverse cultures and identities, as well as acting as a source of community pride, etc. These impacts, though important but often lack of attention, are explored in following discussion.

The economic implications are mainly taken into consideration by festival organizers and neglect the resident perceptions, which provide important non-economic dimension for measuring how events benefit or impact on the host community (Jeong and Faulkner, 1996; Hall, 1992).

## **Social impact**

### Positive

- *Shared experience*
- *Building community pride*
- *Increased community participation*
- *Expanding cultural perspectives*

### *Negative*

- *Community alienation*
- *Negative community image*
- *Substance abuse*
- *Loss of amenities*

*(McDonnell, Allen & O'Toole, 1999)*

McDonnell, Allen & O'Toole have listed both sides of social impacts above, which could be argued that the goodwill of festivals and events giving rise to the social values involved in the public participation. As Klamer (1998) pointed out that social values are the values that work in the context of interpersonal relationships, groups, communities and societies. People appeal to them in negotiating relationships with other people and with associations of people. Social values cover a wide range and comprise the values of belonging, being member of a group (cf Walzer, 1983, chapter 2), identity, freedom, solidarity, trust, tolerance, responsibility, love, friendship and so on. The density of civic participation indicates that social capital is not only a product of a city or region's economy by exchanging goods and service, but also connected closely to communities through strong, shared identity (Rolfe,2006,P.8).

During the participation in festivals and event, audiences could share their own experience including tastes and opinions towards which they are interested in with each others. In turn, they will become one of the repeated audiences if they consider this festival or event is worth participating. Thus the community participation will be increased adding to the social capital. As to the local resident themselves, a good reputation of a festival or event will definitely promote their pride of the community. They are public expression of social relations, status, prestige and honor.

### **Cultural impact**

One important aim of promotional festivals and events is to educate and enlighten their audience so as to create a climate for meaningful cultural impact. Cultural values, so Klamer (1998) proposed here, "are the values that evoke a quality over and beyond the economic and the social". Throsby (2001, p. 28) includes in this category are those of aesthetic, spiritual, social, historical, symbolic and authenticity values.

There are a few cultural aspects could be influenced by festivals and events. First of

all, one significant impact is to enhance the local and national identity. By organizing and participating festivals and events, nationals develop sense of belonging to it, they are considered to share certain traits and norms of behaviours, certain duties toward other members together with certain responsibilities for the actions of the members of the same nation. Secondly, the local cultural image could be enhanced through a series of festivals and events. The variety of activities adds to rich and colourful cultural life of the destination. Thirdly, the creativity of the performances in the local place would be inspired if a festival or event receives a huge success. So the performers with positive impressions and with a desire would like to play more for the audience. And it is also a good way to interact with other arts forms and creative industries. Fourthly, some festivals and event have the function of public education. They attract young people's interest in cultural and arts activities, which become gradually a renowned manifestation of the common value. In this way, increasing their potential participation when they grow up. Last but not least, some international festivals and events provide a platform for multicultural communication. People from different cultural backgrounds involved in the cultural happenings have the possibility to spend all the days together, to talk and exchange opinions and to come up with ideas of a future collaboration. The international profile of the festivals and events, which may give rise to international cooperation and exchange of the ideas of the people with different cultural traditions. Here, we see where the cultural diversity lies in.

When speaking of the outcomes produced by this cultural consumption- taking part in festivals, namely festival experience, the following quote by Taylor (2007) encapsulates the significance of the festival experience as follows:

- *A creative life.*
- *An expressive life.*
- *A connected life.*
- *A remembered life.*

“It seems to me that a diverse, rich, and vital cultural ecology in any city, state, or country fosters opportunity for every citizen to inform these elements of their existence.

*A creative life- The opportunity to make something from nothing, or transform fragments of objects or thoughts into a cohesive whole, is an ennobling and empowering thing. Everyone should have the option to do so, no matter what their stage of life, circumstance, technical ability or training.*

*An expressive life- Finding your voice and having an opportunity to be heard is an essential quality of being alive and aware in the world.*

*A connected life- The interpersonal and social sharing of meaning is the connective tissue between loved ones, community members, and civilizations. While the arts are not the only means to this sharing, they are among the most powerful and enduring.*

*A remembered life- The accumulated actions and artifacts of our expressive lives are our most vital threads to who we were, who we are, and who we might become. Beyond our children, they are the most compelling evidence that we ever existed at all” (Andrew Taylor, 2007).*

## **2.5 The previous studies of the impact of festivals and events on the city image**

As most of the research on festivals and events impact tended to concentrate on economic impacts, there were few studies on the impact of festivals and events on the city image beforetime. Hall’s research seems as a mark that attention began to shift to the image impacts of festivals and events “hallmark events may be regarded as the

image makers of modern tourism” (Hall, 1992, p. 155). Burns, Hall, Ritchie and Smith(1991) were the first ones who laid emphasis on the image effects of major festivals and events. For instance, strong city images “are starting to dominate the natural or physical features in the identification of cities” (Burns et al.,1986, p. 5), now they are so important for building up images. In addition, Ritchie and Smith’s study of the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympic games indicated that the image of Calgary had changed especially in terms of non-resident respondents’ perception.

Since the early 1990s, there has been a growing research regarding the importance of image impacts of major events began to emerge (Foley, 1991; Roche, 1994, 2000). For example, Myerscough’s (1991) study of the 1990 Glasgow ECC event presented a more favorable cultural image of the city during the event but the image effects decreased afterwards. However, Until recently, more image-related impact of research on festivals and events has come forth. Dos Santos and da Costa (1999) considered the image effects of the Lisbon 1998 Expo event, one major finding of this research is that over three-quarters of visitors considered that the international profile of Lisbon and of Portugal had been enhanced due to this event. Puczko´and Ra´tz (2001) examined the image effects of Budapest with respect to the Budapest Spring Festival, indicating that the visitors who attended this festival had a more positive image of the city Budapest than those non-visitors.

Greg Richards and Julie Wilson did a similar research on “The Impact of Cultural Events on City Image: Rotterdam, Cultural Capital of Europe 2001.” Their study provides me a more complete evaluation of the impacts of the Rotterdam cultural event on the image of the city, and serves as a basis for my research project. In their studies, they went deep into the cultural event ‘Cultural Capital of Europe 2001’, investigated its impacts on the city of Rotterdam. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods were used in their research including over 2000 questionnaires’ responses and interviews with policy-makers and cultural managers to evaluate the

image effects of this event. Finally, they drew the conclusion that “the image of the city as a cultural destination did improve in 2001, but the physical and tangible elements of the city’s image (modern architecture, water) and its character as the working city of the Netherlands continued to dominate”. (Greg Richards & Julie Wilson, 2004)

Summary of potential tangible benefits and costs of hosting events and festivals.

#### Tangible benefits

- *Increased revenue to local economy, mainly via local business*
- *Job creation*
- *Positive media coverage and images*
- *Sponsorship opportunities*
- *Revenue generation from charges*

#### Tangible costs

- *Cost of essential services such as police, cleaning, etc.*
- *Costs of promotion*
- *Direct costs of staging the event such as entertainers*

Summary of potential intangible benefits and costs of hosting events and festivals.

#### Intangible benefits

- *Enhanced or maintained community pride*
- *Cultural renewal*
- *Increased interest and investment in the host destination*
- *Enhanced commercial and residential property valued in the long term*
- *Development of social capital (networks, interpersonal trust)*
- *Development of human capital (various organisational and other transferable skills)*
- *Inter-cultural contact*

#### Intangible costs

- *Crowding and inconvenience to residents*
- *Noise and visual pollution*
- *Crime*
- *Poor reputation and image if the event is badly organized*
- *Potential for inter-cultural misunderstanding*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Source: Carlsen(2004), Daniels et al.(2004), De Bres and Davis(2001), Derrett(2003), Dwyer et al.(2001a,b), Fredline et al(2003), Gursoy et al.(2004), Hall(1992), Lee and Crompton(2003), Ryan and Lockyer(2001), Wood(2005), Wood and Thomas(2005).

## **2.6 Economics of attention**

Herbert Simon maybe was the first person who defined the concept of attention economics:

*“...in an information-rich world, the wealth of information means a dearth of something else: a scarcity of whatever it is that information consumes. What information consumes is rather obvious: it consumes the attention of its recipients. Hence a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention and a need to allocate that attention efficiently among the overabundance of information sources that might consume it” (Simon 1971, p. 40-41).*

Attention is a new scarce resource. And “Attention economics” today is primarily concerned with the problem of getting the target consumers to consume advertising. In a marketing sense: if you succeed in keeping the attention of your audience, which means you can attract them to buy your product in the long term.

The “Attention economics” theory is a useful tool in analyzing festival participation and festival marketing. The central theme is how to keep the attention of the audience to get them to stay loyal to the festival in the long term. To attract massive audience participation, one approach is to provide a platform that offer more service and make the core product better in the market. As a result, understanding the audience very well help you keeping the attention of your market and surviving in the competition. Festival needs this attention, and it encourages this stimulus effect as well.

## **2.7 The role of three spheres in festivals**

Festival is impossible to survive without the support from its multiple stakeholders, such as governments (central and local), sponsors, the press, and other communities.

In a general way, there are three spheres giving their support to the organization and funding of the festivals, namely the government, the market and the third sphere (we called the third sector in China)<sup>7</sup>. Generally speaking, the government and the market are instruments for the generation of funds for the festivals while the third sphere, which is considered to be a source of indispensable voluntary contributions for the prosperity of the festivals. (See Figure 3)

### **The role of government**

Government plays a role of supporting a wide range of festivals that reflect the various community interests and activities to enrich the experience of living in the community. It should be noted however, in China, that national government merely act as a role of supervisor to make sure that all the festivals and events operating in a healthy way, who provides very little especially in the way of monetary support for festivals. It is the local government that take the responsibility of supervision for the day-to-day running of the festivals. The main functions of the local government are as follows:

- The local government funding the festivals in the form of subsidies.
- The local government makes use of the investment for the festivals sufficiently and efficiently.
- The local government monitors the festivals through the use of economic levers of regulation administrative measures such as pricing, taxation, etc, in order to prevent the investors, sponsors and participators from the action of blindness.
- The local government promotes diversiform incentives for all the participators involved in the festivals.
- The local government provides some unique local resources including industrial, cultural and tourism resources for the backup of festival with the aim of attracting more visitors to the festivals.

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<sup>7</sup> Arjo Klamer “The Role of the Third Sphere in the world of the arts” It is the sphere of informal associations, relationships of reciprocity, gifts and donations. It is sometimes called the third sector or dimension, or the informal sphere. Recently, it is considered as part of the so-called civil society.

“When local government promotes festivals, making good use of marketing strategies, designing itemized media plans, encouraging public and private cooperation involving, and establish first brand image are important” (YJ Lin,2003).

### **The role of market**

Besides the subsidies provided by the government, there is another financial source that could support the festivals, where is, from the market sphere. Market and government has a relationship of replenishment with each other. That is to say, where market fall short or when market failure coming out in financing of festivals, it may justify government intervention in the form of subsidies or other measures; On the other hand, government could not satisfy all the needs that festivals require, after all, compared with the government, it is proved that the market is a more flexible as well as compatible channel with respect to festival funding.

Nowadays, market discipline plays a more and more vital role in organizing and managing city’s festivals and events in China. More and more cities have found that it is a good way to success under the principal of “The government guides, the market operates”. That means, a market-oriented mechanism could put the festivals into full play with the government’s proper guide and supervision according to the real situation. When comes to the festivals, pricing and sponsoring are, commonly listed as two main market solutions.

### **The role of third sphere**

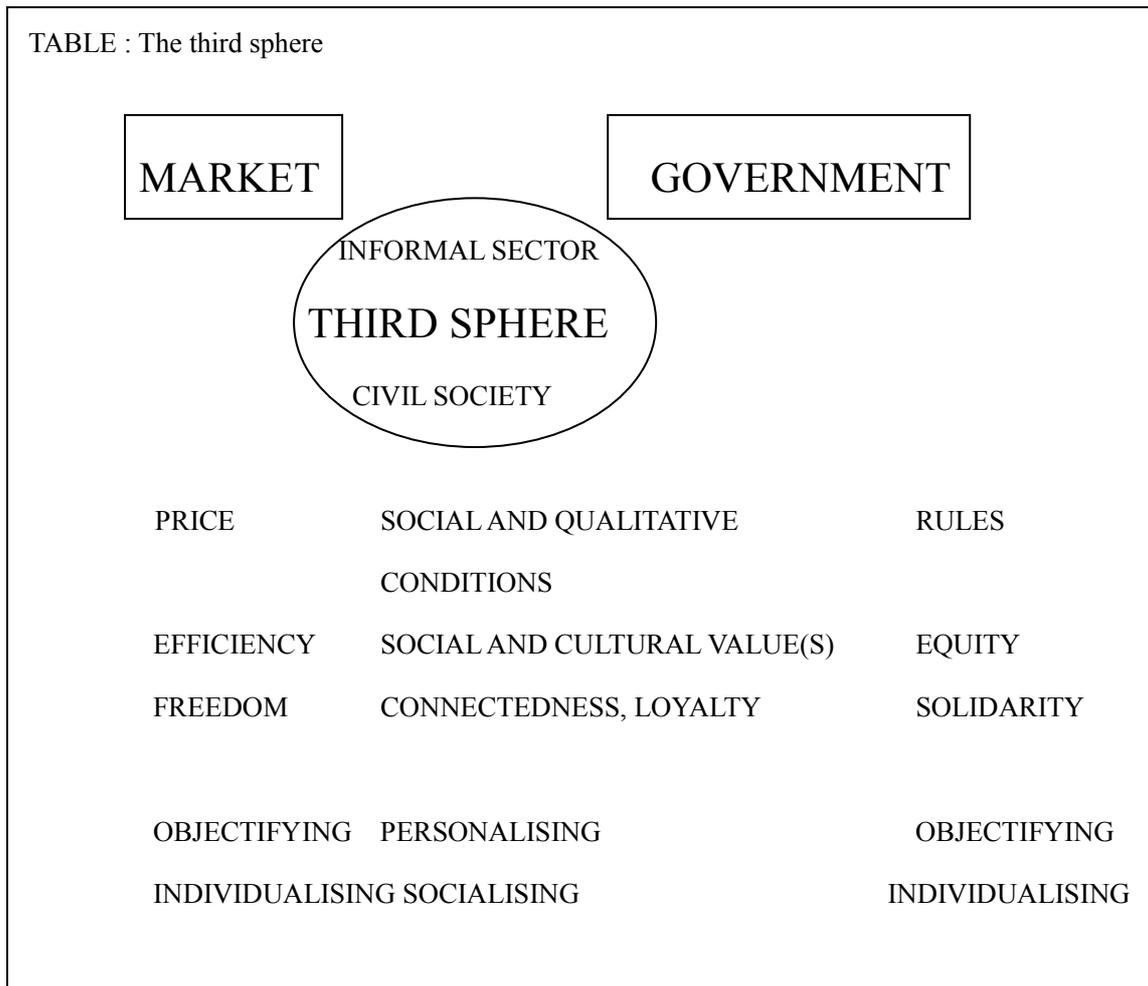
Distinguish from the government sphere and the market sphere, the third sphere is regarded as “A major source consists of voluntary contributions by individuals and corporations” (Klamer,1998). The third sphere, including non-profit, non government community, Volunteers Association, co-operative, friendly society, church, and charity, which creates a sphere of effective citizenship. Gifts and donations are two common

forms of this kind of contribution. In terms of festival, volunteers are deemed to be a source of power to support the festival. They are an essential component to what makes a festival such a success year after year. There is no denying the fact that without the efforts of the volunteers, festivals could not survive for long. The role of the volunteer is one of the most valuable assets to the festivals, whose functions including:

- helping the festival achieve prospective goals
- supporting sustainability activities
- serving as a mouthpiece for the publication
- promoting public education
- dealing with trivialities in day-to-day tasks of the festival
- proving valuable feedback
- bridging the communication between outsiders and insiders

Festival volunteers, who are actively involved with numerous social networks in their communities, feel that it is their obligation to contribute their limited time and energy to celebratory projects like festivals.

Figure 3: Klammer(1998)



## Chapter three: Case Study

### 3.1 The city of Ningbo

Ningbo was one of China's oldest cities, with a history dating back to 4800 B.C, where the famous Hemudu culture rooted in. It is one of the 99 current historic and cultural cities of the country. Besides the rich cultural background, Ningbo is a very important economic hub and port city as well. A port city for foreign trade since the 7th century, Ningbo has since become a major exporter of consumer products, electrical products, textiles, food, and industrial tools. Ningbo's economy grew 10.1 percent in 2008 to 396.4 billion yuan (US\$57 billion). The city's per capita output was \$10,079, more than three times the national average.<sup>8</sup>

### 3.2 The city image of Ningbo

Every city has its expression for the city image. Paris is known as Fashionable Capital, Hong Kong is famous for lively Capital. When comes to the city of Ningbo, what's the distinct feature of image pop up? Recently, in order to promote the image of the city, Ningbo is collecting image slogans both at home and abroad. The program is jointly organized by the News Office of Ningbo Municipal Government, Ningbo Municipal Tourist Administration, Ningbo Municipal Press and Publication Administration, Ningbo Daily Newspaper Group and Ningbo Broadcast and TV Group, through means of public collecting, public voting and expert approval.<sup>9</sup> The program itself, on the one hand, is a wise promotion tool, emphasized the importance of a city image for a city; on the other hand, from another angle, reflected that the city image of Ningbo was not impressive enough.

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<sup>8</sup> Chiang, Langi (2007-07-09). "Bridge to Shanghai should give Ningbo's economy a lift". *International Herald Tribune* (Paris: The New York Times Company). <http://www.iht.com/articles/2007/07/09/business/bridge.php>. Retrieved on 2008-05-02.

<sup>9</sup> <http://english.cnnb.com.cn/system/2009/04/17/006071396.shtml>

### **3.3 Overview of the festivals and events in Ningbo**

As a traditional cultural city, the cultural undertakings flourish in the city of Ningbo. According to the statistics, Ningbo hosts 63 kinds of festivals and events last year, 31.3% more than the previous year and was honored as one of the top ten most influential festival affairs cities in 2008. Those famous festivals such as the International Fashion Festival, Xu Xiake Tourism Festival, Ningbo Liang Zhu Marriage Customs Festival, China Fishing Festival, the international cultural port festival, etc.

The International Fashion Festival has been successively held in Ningbo for twelve years. In the year of 2002, besides Ningbo International Fashion Festival, Ningbo sponsored or co-sponsored many other major cultural activities such as the 10th Golden Rooster & Hundred Flowers Film Festival, and The Plum Award of China. By holding such festivals, cultural facilities in Ningbo as theatres, libraries and museums were extended and improved. <sup>10</sup>

### **3.4 Characteristics of the festivals and events in Ningbo**

#### **1. localization**

Festivals are typical elements and carriers which represent a nation or a region's collective cultural memories. The demands of communication, entertainment, consumption and trade could be met by hosting festivals. Ningbo has a unique folk-custom festival culture, paying attention to the localization is the core of putting Ningbo' festivals on a competitive edge. Each year, there are countless festivals and events held in Ningbo, some of which stand alone in other cities such as China Fishing Festival, China Liangzhu Love Festival, etc. For instance, in the beginning of

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<sup>10</sup> [http://english.ningbo.gov.cn/art/2009/2/28/art\\_68\\_19663.html](http://english.ningbo.gov.cn/art/2009/2/28/art_68_19663.html)

the China Fishing Festival, a memorial ceremony is held by the local fisherfolk to show the local citizens' best wishes of safety and foison for the upcoming year. It is a rather full-bodied festival as the city of Ningbo being a coastal city which relies highly on the fishery export.

## **2. Internationalization**

The International Fashion Festival is a good case in point to specify the character of internationalization, which provides a superexcellent platform for promoting and updating the internationalization of Ningbo costume industry. One highlight of this festival is to exchange characteristic gifts between Ningbo and the other friendly foreign cities, through which to enhance the cultural communication between each others. Yet another example is a festival called Ningbo International Port Cultural Festival, by hosting harbor cultural forum, as a driven force, reinforce the cooperation between different international harbors, therefore impulse the development of Ningbo internationalization.

## **3. Industrialization**

Industrialization refers to a process that festivals and events integrating with service industry, then form a industry itself. "Culture sets up the stage, act in an opera in economy" is the tenet that many festivals in Ningbo keep to. All industries should be closely tied in the industry chain, produce a positive ripple effect to maximize the welfare of the society as a whole.

## **4. Market-orientation**

Market-orientation points to the festivals based on the design and operation of the

festivals and events, stick to excavate resource, make use of the resource and market elements, a progress that put the market operation into practice. In the course of the festivals market-orientation, the idea of persisting in hosting the festivals by market-orientation, could ensure the goals of those activities be achieved as planned in a orderly way. Among those festivals, China Fishing Festival and China Tourism Festival have gained precious experience due to the market-orientation. Nowadays, China Fishing Festival has already become a great celebration not wasting any man power and money as well as attracting foreign investment, at the same time improving the brand's popularity. By providing registered trade mark, selling Naming Right, promoting media publication, this festival, in form of intellectual property rights, recommend the main activities to enterprises. So that the most of the expense which the festival needs could be solved by fundraising and sponsoring, therefore save the cost of hosting the festival, expand the influence of the festival as well.

### **3.5 Ningbo International Fashion Festival**

Ningbo plays an important role in China's costume history. Due to the reform and opening-up policy in 1979, from then on, a lot of famous brand costumes are emerging continuously in the city, and costume industry has become one of the Ningbo's mainstay industries.

Ningbo International Fashion Festival plays a crucial part in pushing forward the industries of Ningbo and it is the festival that makes Ningbo well known home and abroad as a "capital of clothes".

Ningbo International Fashion Festival (NIFF for short) is a large-scaled commercial and cultural event sponsored by Ningbo Municipal People's Government. The

People's Government of Ningbo city is the main entrepreneur of this festival, together with China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, National Tourism Administration, China National Garment Association, etc as the organizers, with Garment Trade Association of France, Italy, Germany, Korea as Co-Sponsors, and Municipal Bureau of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, Municipal Bureau of Culture, Broadcasting, Press & Publication, Ningbo Garment Association, Municipal Bureau of Education, Municipal Bureau of Sports as the Co-Organizers. "NIFF roots itself in Ningbo, which is the largest garment manufacturing base in China. A Series of events and activities in NIFF concerning fashion, culture, art and business have enlarged the city's fame internationally, enriched the cultural life of the people, and promoted the cooperation and communication between Ningbo and the outside world in terms of economy and culture". NIFF has been successful for 12 years continuously and was honored by the IFEA (International Festivals & Events Association) "as the most internationally influential festival and event in China, from which it outstands as the only one to win this honor out of other competitive fashion festivals being held across the country".<sup>11</sup>

One important component of this festival is a fair called Ningbo International Fashion Trade Fair which is one of the world's most promising trade fair that covers a wide range of lifestyle fashion products. Market-orientation is one of the breakthroughs to the traditional idea of the fair. In order to meet market demands, the fair pays more attention to invite foreign-oriented enterprises import or export or both. The fair is well known as a festival both for domestic and international trade in the fashion industry and provides a platform for seeking for agent, franchiser, wholesale, retail with the aim of order-making, collaborating, fashion-releasing, information- exchanging, etc.<sup>12</sup>

During the festival, a great number of merchants from home and abroad gather in the

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<sup>11</sup> [http://www.fashionningbo.com/festival\\_en.html](http://www.fashionningbo.com/festival_en.html)

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.fibre2fashion.com/fashionningbo/>

city, are attracted by all kinds of magnificent customs in both ancient and modern styles. The festival displays the brilliances of China's custom culture and Ningbo's contribution to it; On the one hand, as well as provides a platform for attendees' business negotiation, cultural exchange, fashion announcement, brand marketing and promotion; on the other hand also showcases Ningbo's new and vivid city image.

### **Aims and Objectives**

The principal aim of Ningbo International Fashion Festival is to enrich the citizens' cultural life, to promote Ningbo's economic cooperation and cultural communication with the outside world, and to enhance the city image as a city of both cultural and economic prosperity.

Objectives are specified as increasing the participation of the attendees, popularizing and branding local festivals and events, promoting the awareness of the people outside the city as well as the friendship between different cities and different countries.

The main aims and objectives of this festival are listed as follows:

- to advocate the city image of Ningbo;
- to play a leading role in developing the city's reputation;
- to maximize the opportunity to cater for increased visitor numbers to the city;
- to encourage collaboration, networking, information and knowledge sharing;
- to promote friendships and mutual communication;
- to celebrate cultural diversity;
- to improve the quality of life;
- to assist in the development of a network of community and local events;
- to provide the opportunity to encourage local artists to showcase their work at festivals and events.

- to attract foreign investment;
- to contribute to social, environmental and economic regeneration

### **Implementation and Outcomes**

In October 1997, the 1st Ningbo International Fashion Festival was held based on the consideration that the city had a solid foundation in the garment industry as well as a long tradition in garment making. Since then, the garment industry has developed quickly which makes the city well-known as a city of fashion. Statistics show that it is in the past 10 years since the festival being held that the garment industry has witnessed the fast development. “In 1996, Ningbo had only about 800 garment companies and only about 10 companies have the annual output exceeding 10 million yuan each.” Today, Ningbo has about 3600 garment companies and over 80 have their annual sales value exceed 10 million yuan. Now, garment output covers around 12% in China.<sup>13</sup>

Looking back to the previous twelve versions of Ningbo International Fashion Festival, all of which received great success at least at the local level. Now taking the newly 11th and 12th for examples to display what were on this stage.

The 11<sup>th</sup> Ningbo International Fashion Festival opened in 2007 and was marked by various activities, large scale, new form and high standard. This year’s festival took “blending into the globalization and upgrading the chain of fashion industry” as its goal. “The 45,000 square meters exhibition section attracted over 20,000 purchasers from home and abroad 6,150 of who came from overseas”.<sup>14</sup>

The 12th Ningbo International Fashion Fair comprised five exhibition zones, namely zones of brand garments, export-oriented garments, fabric and equipment,

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.nbfet.gov.cn/ck-yj/detail.phtml?newId=3713>

<sup>14</sup> [http://www.fashionningbo.com/festival\\_en.html#r1](http://www.fashionningbo.com/festival_en.html#r1)

international brand franchising, and fashion clothing. A great many Chinese famous brands had set up display booths at the Fair. In the international franchising zone, there were 10 international brands, which were from Japan, Australia, India, the US and Korea. During the fashion festival, a total number of 70,000 audiences, 9200 buyers and suppliers, 100 trade delegations and 900 trading companies came to the fair to seek opportunities.<sup>15</sup>

### **Organizational structure**

Organizational structure is the 'formal system of working relationships among people and the tasks they must do to meet the defined objectives' (Schermerhorn, 1986). Festival companies usually are organic organizations with a less centralized structure, fewer detailed rules and regulations, more informal and personal forms of coordination.

"Festival companies are 'open systems' because they are highly integrated with their environment and must achieve an appropriate relation with that environment if they are to survive "(Morgan, 2006).

Following is the organizational structure of Ningbo International Fashion Festival. On the top of the organizational structure tree is the Presidium, consist of counselor, chairman, vice-chairman and secretary-general, who are responsible for setting down general guidelines of the festival. The next level called Organizing committee, made up of Office and Professional Department, who are in charge of the day-to-day running of the festival. Under the management of the Office and Professional Department, we can see there are six sections and five sections respectively taking charge one area of work. In general, main purpose of the role is to support the effective promotion and marketing of the festival's activities.

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<sup>15</sup> <http://english.cnnb.com.cn/system/2008/10/25/005841524.shtml>

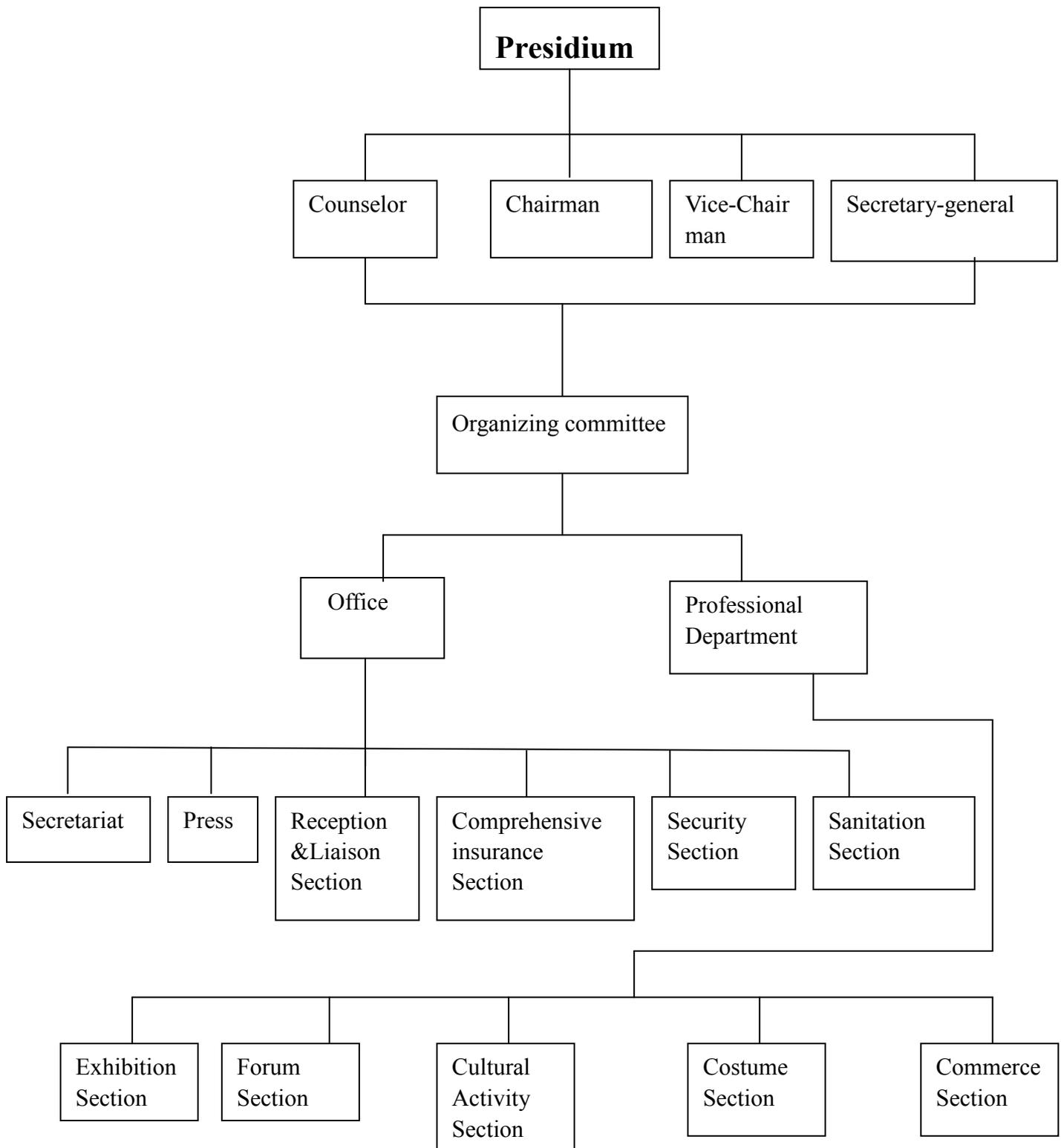
For example, the duties of Press Section include:

- In the run up to the festival
  - Develop the festival's online presence through social networking sites
  - Update the festival website
  - Assist with general administration
  - Deal with distribution of print
- During the festival
  - Collect all press coverage
  - Maintain social networking sites
  - Facilitate competitions

Because Ningbo International Fashion Festival is an annual festival, most of the festival workers are their fixed staff, who tend to be highly motivated individuals committed to the successful launch of the festival.

Organizational structure chart

Figure 4 <sup>16</sup>



16 Based on the description in <http://www.fashionningbo.com/>

## **Chapter four: Research Methodology**

Methodology refers to fundamental or regulative principles that underlie any disciplines (Lazar, 2004: 8), and it is a general approach to study research topics (Silverman, 2004: 52). In this paper, a combination of qualitative method and quantitative method is used to address the research questions.

### **Case Study Method**

Case study methods involve an in-depth examination of a single case. As have introduced in the beginning part of the paper, the research is primarily based on a case study, Ningbo International Fashion Festival is chosen, which is employed to investigate the inner characteristics of this festival to see it is localization-oriented or globalization-oriented or combination.

### **Questionnaire Method**

“A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents”.<sup>17</sup> After the case has been analyzed, a questionnaire is conducted to gain a comprehensive picture of the city image of Ningbo and its relationship with the Ningbo International Fashion Festival.

## **4.1 Festivals and events evaluation studies**

Before designing the content of the questionnaire, festivals and events evaluation study will first come out to give the purpose of the questionnaire.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Questionnaire>

Despite the national significance of events such as the Olympic Games it is at the local level that support for festivals, and special events is thought to make a fundamental difference in small countries and regions (Whitford, 2004). The purpose of this research project is to provide evidence with which to evaluate the whether or to what extent the festivals have produced impact on the city image of Ningbo and ultimately, to contribute to the development of approaches to evaluation which aspects need to be improved when designing the city image of Ningbo as well as to other cities. This paper reports on an exploratory research project designed to investigate the with festivals and cultural events, and to understand how the value of such activity is currently assessed. Specifically, its aims were to:

- *estimate festivals and special events by number and type as they occur in*
- *investigate festivals and special events by purpose; reason for engagement and nature of any evaluation undertaken;*
- *examine links between the purpose of the event, why evaluation is undertaken and what is actually evaluated and examine perceptions of approaches to evaluation*

*(O'Sullivan, Diane, Pickernell, David and Senyard, Julianne, 2009)*

## **4.2 Design of Questionnaire**

A questionnaire design is a formalized set of questions for eliciting information. They may vary in the amount of freedom which they allow the respondents in answering questions (Webb, 1995). Highly structured questionnaires with rigid answer formats are usually easier to administer, answer, and analyze, while unstructured questionnaires are more difficult to administer, and require more thoughts on the respondents' part and require considerable interpretative skills in their analysis (Webb, *ibid*).

On a basis of the case study, the function of designing the questionnaire is to extract the opinions and experience from the public to see how well does Ningbo

International Fashion Festival organized, behaved and its extent to boost or change the city image of Ningbo.

In order to present the questionnaire in a more comprehensive way for the research, both the residents and non-resident visitors were interviewed with the aim of giving an all-around city image including internal and external image from the insiders' point of view together with the outsiders.

The questionnaire contains four closed questions and one open question. By comparing the results of the closed questions, it is possible to assess the short-term image effects of Ningbo International Fashion Festival. In order to assess the long-term effects, the open question is indispensable for the research survey.

### **4.3 Main Question Contents**

The questionnaire covers the following content:

It falls into two categories: resident and non-resident visitors to the International Fashion Festival; Background information of the respondents: Demographic Characteristics including Gender, age, occupation, the educational level.

For each of the following statements about Festivals and events in Ningbo please state whether you strongly agree, agree, have no opinion, disagree or strongly disagree. Questions listed as follows: (Please tick one box only that most closely reflects your opinion for each of the following statements.)

***Which description best fits your impression of the city of Ningbo***

- A modern city with beautiful environment
- A famous cultural city with a long history
- A predominant commercial city
- A typical port city

***Could you give me your general evaluation of Ningbo International Fashion Festival:***

- Excellent
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Poor
- Very poor

***Whether and to what extent do you agree this festival boost the city image of Ningbo?***

No

Yes

- Strongly agree      -Strongly disagree
- Moderately agree   -Moderately disagree
- Slightly agree      -Slightly disagree

***Compare with other events and festivals, do you think this festival could best represent the image of Ningbo?***

- No (name another one)
- Yes

***Could you give me some suggestions for the improvement of this kind of festival as means to boost the city image of Ningbo?***

## **4.4 Data collection**

### **Choose the samples**

The target population was the people who attended Ningbo International Fashion Festival. Thus the study was undertaken during and after the festival.

“A sample is a limited number taken from a large group for testing and analysis, on the assumption that the sample can be taken as representative of the whole group”(Crouch & Housden, 1996). In order to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the data, samples were chosen from the population carefully, instead of random

selection, some factors were taken into consideration such as gender, age, occupation and the educational level. The general types of the interviewee falls into two categories: resident and non-resident visitors to Ningbo International Fashion Festival

### **Target data**

The data in this research intended to collect are illustrated as followed.

- 1.The public impression of the city image of Ningbo.
- 2.The public evaluation of Ningbo International Fashion Festival.
- 3.The public attitude towards the relationship between the city image of Ningbo Ningbo International Fashion Festival.
- 4.The public suggestion of in which ways that the festival could boost the city image of Ningbo

Data were gathered from both of the case study finding and questionnaire findings with the former one basing on my own observation and the latter one dealing with answers from those who attended Ningbo International Fashion Festival.

## Chapter five: Research findings

### 5.1 Case study finding

Driven from the case study, it is worthwhile to study whether Ningbo International Fashion Festival has more local color or international scent, which has a close relationship with the perception of the city image of Ningbo. Therefore, the research findings section first begins with the discussion of the orientation of Ningbo International Fashion Festival-

#### *A celebration of cultural identity or an international event?*

First of all, I would like to put forward the terms of cultural identity and cultural diversity which will be applied to the discussion for my research findings.

#### **Cultural identity**

The identity of a place is 'that which provides its individuality or distinction from other places and serves as the basis for its recognition as a separate entity'(Lynch,1960)

Cultural identity is a term refers to one's sense of belonging to a particular culture or ethnic group such as forming a membership, involving learning and accepting tradition, heritage, language, religion, aesthetics, thinking pattern, and social structures of a culture.<sup>18</sup>

The initial discussion starts with "could Ningbo International Fashion Festival be regarded as a local traditional festival, constructed to showcase Ningbo fashion production and promote Ningbo as a tourism destination, or an international festival in the form of cultural integration which aims at spreading an idea of establishing a multicultural society?"

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<sup>18</sup> [http://english.dbw.cn/system/2007/11/13/000027138\\_01.shtml](http://english.dbw.cn/system/2007/11/13/000027138_01.shtml)

It has been suggested that one of the challenges for festivals and events is how to function in an increasingly global environment while expressing the uniqueness of local communities( McDonnell et al., 1999).

As the major theme and the aim of the festival is to preserve and promote the cultural identity of the citizens of Ningbo, thus enriching their cultural life as well as contributing to socio-economic development of the local area and the entire nation as a whole remains as a major target of this research. As a result, the festival highlighted animation's potential for reinforcement of social communication and cultural identity.

Evidences show as follows:

Each year, the festival embraces different themes, which covers most aspects of local cultural life, ranging from folk art performances to costume fashion show through sharing the values, interests and traditions central to the host community.

Highlight from Ningbo International Fashion Festival 2008:

- Opening ceremony “the road to the beauty”
- The public costume cultural activities
- A series of fashion cathedra
- A competition of soliciting articles on the topic of costume culture
- Costume expositions
- The fifth China Youth Fashion week opening ceremony & 2008 China Youth Fashion Collections
- 2008 China Youth LOHAS Fashion Cultural Forum
- “Pioneer cup” China Youth Fashion Design Contest
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> China Juvenile Costume Fashion Week
- The compilation and publication of book “Overview of Ningbo Fashion Industry”
- The release of Brand Exposition& Performance and Trend

- Press conference & seminar of “Overview of Ningbo Fashion Industry”
- 2008 2<sup>nd</sup> National Textile Vocational and Specialized Colleges Students Craftsmanship Competition

From above, we can see this festival involves a lot of local cultural activities.

The year of 2006 marked the 20th anniversary of the city’s being designated as one of the second group of cultural and historical cities of China by the State Council. The designation of being a cultural and historical city signified as a milestone in the cultural heritage protection of Ningbo. “It is learned that Ningbo has got 22 cultural relic sites under state-level protection, ranking the 10 place among all 103 counterpart cities, the second place in Zhejiang Province and the first place among all separately listed cities of China”.<sup>19</sup>

The festival is continuously one of the most conspicuous, massive and representative activities of cultural nationalism in Ningbo. One noteworthy characteristic is that the traditional heritage has had reciprocal effect on the festival. Ningbo is a city which has a long history and profound cultural heritage. When comes to the costume history, 7000 year has seen the city evolving in a fast-pace development. On the one hand, looking back the history, the Maritime Silk Road provided predominant conditions both in transportation and in material contributing to the birth and prosperity of Ningbo costume industry.

On the other hand, Red bond is considered to be a trailblazer who inaugurated Ningbo costume history. Recorded in the chorography, it was a group of local dressmaker who went to Japan to learn workmanship in the nineteen century then brought back to start a business in some major cities. They created five No.1: the first

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<sup>19</sup> Source: [www.ningbo.gov.cn](http://www.ningbo.gov.cn)

suit of Western-style clothes; the first suit of sun yat sen's uniform; the first Western-style clothes shop; the first Western-style clothes theoretic work and the first Western-style clothes craftwork vocational school. Admittedly, the red bond created the original resplendent Ningbo costume culture.

All of these cultural elements were included in the context of themes of Ningbo International Fashion Festival. Thus helps the citizens feel the real history, catch up on lost time and culture. Festival has a function to push to rebuild, promote an area's cultural identity. The festival, observed here, celebrates unique local cultural identity, shows to the outside world the richness of the city. Its cultural context encourages people willing to get to know others' cultures and customs and at the meantime serves as an opportunity to embrace cultural diversity and strengthen our common heritage as well. Young people are able to gain a sense of cultural identity based on the activities that take place during the festival. It is the high time that has come to conserve our tradition to hand over these cultural values to the coming generations. As a result, the festival serves as a reminder to the community of their cultural identity through various activities in relation to cultural heritage and relic.

Cities compete with one another to stage events in order to attract festival-goers. George Lewis (1997, p.77) suggests that 'rationally constructed' festivals have the potential to promote destinations successfully. In time, the 'rationally constructed' festival may become a tradition from which the destination gains an identity.

The creators of this festival used the natural, historic and cultural characteristics of the city in the construction of the events. Such festival is thus an expression of local identity and reflects the internal life of the community. The festival is filled with cultural richness, celebrations and feasts to awaken all the senses especially for the cultural identity.

## **Cultural diversity**

Cultural identity, which provide a solid basis for the promotion of cultural diversity and the process of globalization. Cultural diversity is emerging as a strong theme at policy level.

“Cultural diversity refers to the plurality and interaction of cultural expressions that coexist in the world and thus enrich the common heritage of humanity. It is a driving force of development, not only in respect of economic growth, but also as a means of leading a more fulfilling intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual life”.(Article 1.1,INCP Draft Convention)

Here, another terms cultural integration and acculturation go hand in hand with cultural diversity. The term cultural integration means the process of one culture gaining ideas, technologies and products of another and so this means that this culture will seem to be integrating into the other.<sup>20</sup>

“Acculturation is the exchange of cultural features that results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first hand contact; the original cultural patterns of either or both groups may be altered, but the groups remain distinct”. (Kottak, 2007)

Following after illustrating the feature of globalization in this festival, a summary case study finding will be concluded with respect to the discussion ahead.

## **Sino-Italian Culture year**

2006 marked the celebration of Sino-Italian Culture year. Cerebrated in China, it was a cultural gala and exhibition highlighting Italian art, music and design. Through the

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<sup>20</sup> [http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What\\_is\\_Cultural\\_Integration](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_Cultural_Integration)

whole year, dozens of events were staged in Chinese cities including “Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Tianjin, Hong Kong, Shenyang, Harbin, Ningbo, and Suzhou, with abundant programs covering wide range of subjects, like film, drama, dance, music, exhibition and forum etc”.,<sup>21</sup> which drew high attention from the general public and relevant experts in the field of culture, art and other sectors in China.

The two countries, which both have long-standing cultural traditions strengthened their cultural exchanges via a series of close dialogues.

Taking full advantage of this chance, Ningbo hosted many friendly activities to boost the cultural exchanges with the very country. Ningbo Fashion Festival was just the right stage to show. Regarded as an important part of the Sino-Italian Culture year, an Italy Fashion Cultural Week was held during the festival including such events as Italian Fashion Exhibition, Italian Designers’ Collection, Florence Tourist Promotion Conference, Concert of Italian Baroque Music, Photo Exhibition of Venice Scenery, Italy’s representative comedy “Arlecchino Servitore di Due Padroni” (A Servant for Two Masters), Italian Movie Week, and Ningbo-Florence educational and cultural exchanges.<sup>22</sup> What’s more, the city of Florence donated a replica of the Statute of David to Ningbo as a witness of the two cities’ friendship. In return, Ningbo reciprocated two reproductions of Tang dynasty figures called a smiling warrior and a bureaucrat to Florence as an exchange of cultural gifts a year later. These donations were considered to be cultural emissaries who shoulder the responsibility of fostering a greater sense of goodwill and mutual appreciation between the two cities.

### **Germany Culture Week**

The Germany Culture Week was one of the eye catchers in the festival for the year 2007. Germany consul general of Shanghai, together with the mayors, vice mayors or envoys of mayors of several Germany cities including Aachen and Laer were invited to Ningbo to share their ideas on both cities’ development, which enhanced the

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.sinoitaenvironment.org/ReadNewsex1.asp?NewsID=2420>

<sup>22</sup> [http://english.ningbo.gov.cn/art/2006/5/9/art\\_30\\_20883.html](http://english.ningbo.gov.cn/art/2006/5/9/art_30_20883.html)

influence of the festival.<sup>23</sup>

“Among which the German Culture Week constitutes the most various activities such as the Sino-German Mayors Forum, the Sino-German Forum on Cooperation and Development, Exhibition on German branded clothing, German Fashion Show, a tea party on entrepreneurial cooperation between Chinese and German entrepreneurs, the Contest for the selection of the Sino-German friendship envoy, German Beer Festival, Sino-German Education Exchange activities, German Art Performance, and German Film Play etc”.<sup>24</sup>

As the highlight of the Germany Culture Week, the Germany Beer Festival & Ningbo International Beer Carnival witnessed numerous residents and foreigners sharing happiness together. In addition, a football sculpture was built in Ningbo Theater Square which now is considered to be the symbol of friendship between Germany and China. The Germany Culture Week established a bridge for promoting better understanding of both countries' cultures, as well as an opportunity to further boost Sino-German trade relations.

Here different cultures blending together, at least, the eastern one and the western one, which have extremely distinct features. Hence, the festival could be regarded as a process of cultural absorption.

No matter the theme of the festival for each year is the Sino-Italian Culture year or the Germany Culture Week, the festival is certainly international in its goal when the original intention of hosting such a festival is to put the city of Ningbo in a more competitive position with an international image. For instance, the 11<sup>th</sup> Ningbo International Fashion Festival took “blending into the globalization and upgrading the

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<sup>23</sup> [http://en.bl.gov.cn/doc/jrbl/2007\\_10\\_28/374183.shtml](http://en.bl.gov.cn/doc/jrbl/2007_10_28/374183.shtml)

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.fashionningbo.com/festival\\_en.html](http://www.fashionningbo.com/festival_en.html)

chain of fashion industry” as its goal.

### **Summary of case study finding**

Based on the previous text, we can see that Ningbo International Fashion Festival is a festival that rooted in the local culture, aims to become an event of international significance.

Obviously, the festival is a product of a local culture that has been shaped by globalization. The festival was marked by of sorts local activities, in large scale, new form and the most important high standard. At the same time, by cooperating with other countries, endowed the festival with international elements. Which injected the festival with vigor and vitality, so that welcomed by the local residents and attracted wide attention of other cities even other countries.

Thereby reaffirming this aspect of cultural identity for local residents and the participation of overseas professionals and media representatives helps create an international atmosphere that succeeded in capturing the attention of international tourists.

As a result, having such a strong national and local theme and is supported mainly by local authority, the festival, could also be considered to be an international event.

However, for such a festival which has a distinct feature that mix with local and international characteristics, what are the key elements to achieve a successful balance between cultural identity and cultural diversity?

In short, on the one hand, the festival should persist in adopting its own community lifestyles. On the other hand, it should also diffuse the cultural differences that exist between different communities, by taking the initiative in collaborating with other countries to promote typical local activities.

## 5.2 Questionnaires findings

### Reporting overall questionnaire data

<i>Q1. Which description best fits your impression of the city of Ningbo</i>	<i>Residents</i>	<i>Visitors</i>	<i>Total</i>
A modern city with beautiful environment	6.7% (2)	16.7% (5)	23.3%
A famous cultural city with a long history	30% (9)	3.3% (1)	33.3%
A predominant commercial city	6.7% (2)	16.7% (5)	23.3%
A typical port city	6.7% (2)	13.3% (4)	20%
<i>Q2. Could you give me your general evaluation of Ningbo International Fashion Festival:</i>			
Excellent	16.7% (5)	10% (3)	26.7%
Good	26.7% (8)	20% (6)	46.7%
Satisfactory	6.7% (2)	20% (6)	26.7%
Poor	-	-	-
Very poor	-	-	-
<i>Q3. Whether and to what extent do you agree this festival boost the city image of Ningbo</i>			
Strongly agree	13.3% (4)	10% (3)	23.3%
Moderately agree	30% (9)	33.3% (10)	63.3%
Slightly agree	6.7% (2)	6.7% (2)	13.3%
Slightly disagree	-	-	-
Moderately disagree	-	-	-

Strongly disagree	-	-	-
<i>Q4. Compare with other festivals, do you think this festival could best represent the image of Ningbo</i>			
No (name another one)	-	-	-
Yes	50% (15)	50% (15)	100%

Questionnaires were returned from entirely 30 responders, there were “no reply” and invalid data, all of which are valid for this research.

### **Basic perception of Ningbo International Fashion Festival**

Overall, the survey saw the responders rate Ningbo International Fashion Festival with a favorable reputation both for itself and for the city image of Ningbo.

The questionnaire first asked the interviewees to give their impressions of the city image of Ningbo. According to the information obtained from the questionnaire, the answers were varied.

No matter the visitors from other cities and abroad or the local residents both gave their high evaluations when being asked to provide their general evaluations of the International Fashion Festival, they all satisfied with their visits to this festival.

Based on the third question “*Whether or to what extent do you agree this festival boost the city image of Ningbo*”, all of the informants hold the positive attitudes towards this.

During the interview, referred to the fourth question, that is “*Compare with other festivals, do you think this festival could best represent the image of Ningbo?*” It was interesting to find that totally all of the interviewees agreed with this statement.

The last question is an open question, which asked the responders to give some suggestions for the improvement of this kind of festival as means to boost the city image of Ningbo. Finally the author received valuable suggestions for the research project, which will be illustrated with the quotation from the interviewees and explanation from the author at the end of the questionnaire findings.

After obtaining the precious information from the interviewees, several main findings were generated. In the following discussion, the main findings will be outlined first and then explained further by analyzing and quoting the context from the interviewees in the survey. Finally, the interpretation and conclusions drawn from the survey will be illustrated.

**Main finding 1: Up to now, the city image of Ningbo is not well-defined enough.**

<i>Q1. Which description best fits your impression of the city of Ningbo</i>	<i>Residents</i>	<i>Visitors</i>	<i>Total</i>
A modern city with beautiful environment	6.7% (2) <sup>25</sup>	16.7% (5)	23.3%
A famous cultural city with a long history	30% (9)	3.3% (1)	33.3%
A predominant commercial city	6.7% (2)	16.7% (5)	23.3%
A typical port city	6.7% (2)	13.3% (4)	20%

As the topic of the research is to investigate the effects of holding festivals and events on the city image of Ningbo, therefore the first thing to be clarified is the overall city image of Ningbo.

<sup>25</sup> Each percentage represents the proportion of the interviewees who selected this answer accounting for the total thirty interviews with the number of people behind.

In city planning and city marketing, a fundamental starting point is to evaluate the image of the city. Here, knowing a city's image is also a key element when assessing the impacts that festivals and events have produced. The concept of city image is multidimensional as well as complicated. It contains some dimensions including many factors like people and buildings, infrastructure, city life, etc. However, in my research, I would like to define the city image from my point of view, that the cities can be viewed as products of naturally, historically, culturally and commercially situated practices and flows. When I view the city image in this context, it is more closed to my master program studies and perceptible by the public. Thus this research identifies those dimensions that may have implications for the forming of city image.

According to the city's own characteristics, the city image could be classified as four categories:

A modern city with beautiful environment

A famous cultural city with a long history

A predominant commercial city

A typical port city

The first one emphasizes its natural characteristic, and the second one emphasizes its cultural& historical characteristic, the third one emphasizes its commercial characteristic while the last one emphasizes its geographical characteristic. All of the mentioned four characteristics cover the all-round aspects of the city image of Ningbo. For the first questionnaire question, I would like to find out which description is more close to the recent city image of Ningbo from the representative residents' and visitors' angles of view.

Based on the answers from the first question of the questionnaire, I may draw a conclusion that up to now, the city image of Ningbo is not well-defined enough. Evidences listed as follows:

Among the thirty interviewees, seven people chose the first option, ten selected the second one as their first choice, there were seven people thought the city has more commercial characteristic and the rest six people considered Ningbo is a typical port city. From the data we can see, these four characteristics are equiponderant, that is to say, the city image of Ningbo is not vivid enough and could not be distinct itself from other nearby cities. For example, Shanghai, is considered to be an international commercial city; Hangzhou, is famous for a leisure tourist city.

As I have mentioned in the beginning part, Ningbo was taking part in an activity that collecting image slogans both at home and abroad in May. Up to the end of June, there were as many as 42715 pieces of works sent to the organizer. On the one hand, the publicity of the city image of Ningbo is a hot issue that attract wide public concern. On the other hand, it also reflects a fact that the city image of Ningbo is not deeply rooted in people's mind up to now. During the interview, some responders spoke of this activity as well. They all thought it was a good way to give publicity to the city image of Ningbo and let more and more people especially from abroad know the city of Ningbo.

**Main finding 2: There is a significant difference in visitors' and the residents' profiles of the city image of Ningbo.**

Every interviewee has their own definition of city image in their minds. The final sample of the questionnaire consists of 30 interviewees, half by local residents, another half by visitors (of which ten are the domestic visitors from other cities, five from abroad). A comparison with the representative participants survey held at the same event indicated that there was a striking difference in visitors' and the residents' profiles of the city image of Ningbo.

**The difference between visitors' image and residents' image**

Reflected in the data, on the one hand, there were fourteen people out of the city (five,

five, four respectively) listing the three descriptions “A modern city with beautiful environment”, “A predominant commercial city” and “A typical port city” as their impressions of the city image of Ningbo, comparing with only one visitor preferred the rest one. On the other hand, among the fifteen residents, more than half of the population (nine out of fifteen) rated that Ningbo as “A famous cultural city with a long history”.

### **Visitors' image of Ningbo**

From the visitor's perspective, the city image of Ningbo is viewed from the outer characteristics, such as the physical attributes, for instance the modern architecture and the water in the city. Hence, their definitions of the image components including natural environment, location, transportation are the references for their impressions of the city image. These elements of the image all stem from the function of Ningbo as a major port and a major trade centre.

As a result, these components define the character of the city as seen by the visitors are more:

- A modern city with beautiful environment
- A predominant commercial city
- A typical port city

### **Residents' image of Ningbo**

When comes to the residents' image of Ningbo, inner characteristics were paid more attention when they seeing the city image of Ningbo. Culture and history is a relatively highly rated appraisive image component among all. Thus “A famous cultural city with a long history” was more approved by the local people.

Several reasons may contribute to the difference between the visitors' and residents' impressions in the city image of Ningbo. First of all, these image attributes tend to be

associated with the cultural background of the attendees. Apparently, the local residents know more about the city of Ningbo ranging from the history, culture to economy in comparison with non-Ningbo people because they have lived in Ningbo for long, instead of temporary visiting. Another can be partly explained by personal experience of the responders. The residents, they are more aware of the changes in the past and present city image of Ningbo. However, the visitors, care more about the present image rather than the past one.

**Main finding 3: To a large extent, Ningbo International Fashion Festival succeed in building up the city image of Ningbo.**

Question 2 and Question 3 are the key questions in the questionnaire, with the aims of finding out the public assessment of Ningbo International Fashion Festival and how this festival related to the city image of Ningbo.

Q2: On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 = 'excellent' and 5 = 'very poor' that rate as

following:

- Excellent      1
- Good            2
- Satisfactory   3
- Poor             4
- Very poor      5

<i>Q2. Could you give me your general evaluation of Ningbo International Fashion Festival:</i>	<i>Residents</i>	<i>Visitors</i>	<i>Total</i>
Excellent	16.7% (5)	10% ( 3)	26.7%
Good	26.7% (8)	20% (6)	46.7%
Satisfactory	6.7% (2)	20% (6)	26.7%
Poor	-	-	-
Very poor	-	-	-

Q3: On a scale of 1 to 6 where 1 = 'Strongly agree' and 6 = 'Strongly disagree' that rate as following:

- Strongly agree            1
- Moderately agree        2
- Slightly agree            3
- Slightly disagree        4
- Moderately disagree    5
- Strongly disagree        6

<i>Q3. Whether and to what extent do you agree this festival boost the city image of Ningbo</i>	<i>Residents</i>	<i>Visitors</i>	<i>Total</i>
Strongly agree	13.3% (4)	10% (3)	23.3%
Moderately agree	30% (9)	33.3%(10)	63.3%
Slightly agree	6.7% (2)	6.7% (2)	13.3%
Slightly disagree	-	-	-
Moderately disagree	-	-	-
Strongly disagree	-	-	-

When looking at the general evaluation of Ningbo International Fashion Festival, the result is inspiring: all of the interviewees ranked Ningbo International Fashion Festival as at least satisfactory. As can be seen from the Q2 table provided, interviewees gave 26.7%, 46.7% and 26.7% excellent, good and satisfactory evaluation accordingly. It could be argued that there were high degree of positive attitudes towards this festival. This suggests that the festival was successfully held in the interviewees' eyes.

Then turning to the Q3 table, it shows the affirmative evaluation from the responders again. All of the responders held the consistent opinion that this festival could boost the city image of Ningbo. Presented in the data, from strongly agree, moderately to slightly agree, there was 23.3%, 63.3% and 13.3% respectively falling into these

categories and nobody chose any extent of disagree attitudes. From which, could be conclude that Ningbo International Fashion Festival did have some positive impacts in building the city image of Ningbo.

Compare two types of interviewees, residents of Ningbo tended to be more positive than the tourists about their assessment with regard to this festival. As shown in Q2 table, among the interviewees, there were thirteen residents rated this festival as excellent and good, only two rated satisfactory, compared with nine visitors appraised excellent and good, six as satisfactory. This may attribute to local pride and sense of belonging. The local people are more likely to give their high rankings to support the local activities. In addition, in Q3 table, towards the festival’s favorable effects on the image of Ningbo, there were slight differences between residents and visitors.

**Main finding 4: Ningbo International Fashion Festival best stand for the city image of Ningbo, and it can be a brand.**

<i>Q4. Compare with other festivals, do you think this festival could best represent the image of Ningbo</i>	<i>Residents</i>	<i>Visitors</i>	<i>Total</i>
No (name another one)	-	-	-
Yes	50% (15)	50% (15)	100%

Based on the former three questions covered in the questionnaire, the fourth question asked the interviewees to compare Ningbo International Fashion Festival with other festivals and events in Ningbo. The intention of this question is to see whether Ningbo International Fashion Festival is the best image representative for analyzing its effects on the city image among all the festivals held in Ningbo. As the data shown we can see totally 100% of the residents and visitors ticked the answers of “Yes”, and no one ticked the box of “No”, which indicated that all of the responders delivered their affirmative answers towards this argument, they all considered this festival was the

most influential and successful one in Ningbo, which was the best representative for the city image, rather than others.

As such a high profile standing out all the festivals and events, Ningbo International Fashion Festival can be a brand for promoting itself as well as the city image of Ningbo.

Image is significant. And branding is one of the most effective way to create a image. Building a cultural brand in a region is an important aspect of urban or local development. Suggestions provided in the next open question indicated the responders believed that marketing or branding festivals also need marketing mechanism or branding strategy to survive in the competing world. It is of great importance to develop the festival's brand, bring a sense of energy, public appeal by introducing the hot spots: where areas of city that feature as destinations of the festivals and events.

**Main finding 5: For the festivals and events in Ningbo, there is still room for improvement in promoting the city image of Ningbo.**

In the end, the questionnaire used an open question to obtain extra information from the respondents. The advantages of using open question, is allow respondents to add more detailed information, including feelings, attitudes and understanding of the subject, which helps researchers to better access the respondents' true feelings on this issue.

On this question "Could you give some suggestions for the improvement of this kind of festival as means to boost the city image of Ningbo?" Respondents tended to feel that they had been able to speak their minds in a more flexible way.

As discussed in Main finding 4, admittedly, festivals like Ningbo International Fashion Festival can be a brand, however to be a brand even a famous brand, there is still a long way to go. Though Ningbo International Fashion Festival has become widely recognized according to the questionnaire, it does not really have strong brand awareness in attendees' minds so far.

Interviewee 1: "I think Ningbo International Fashion Festival should strive for becoming a famous brand so as to improve the positive city image of Ningbo. Indubitably, now it has already served as the role of a brand for the city of Ningbo. So the key work is how to improve this brand's popularity. Less government control, more market competition, maybe better for this kind of festival's flourish."

Interviewee 2 also believed that this festival is of some note in China but not well-known worldwide. She suggested it needed marketing mechanism or branding strategy to survive in the competing world. "For the publication and communication purpose, it is better to put more focus on planning festival contents." Interviewee 3 stressed. "The content of a festival is usually considered to be the first-line "face" to serve the audiences as well as catch their eyeballs because it is published in the press in advance." He added.

A colleague student who was a volunteer of the festival also thought the festival needed more media coverage. "I do not think this one is influential enough to the rest of china even outside. Plus, the festival should benefit its customers or practitioners, otherwise this kind of festival is just vague without concrete benefits to people, to governments, or to the industry which is supposed to be boosted."

Interviewee 5, who is a college teacher from the USA, put forward a suggestion that city branding also can help to brand festivals. "City can supply a wide range of banners and flags about festivals on the street, which makes the city itself a festive place."

From the perspective of customers, a famed brand is indeed an impressive image for both festivals and cities. Branding festivals and events a unique opportunity as well as a fast and effective way to promote a city image. To be a brand, to strengthen brand awareness being a famous brand, festivals and events in Ningbo should be characterized by colorful, innovative products and programs, and keep refreshing exhibitions, provide best service quality for customers.

Quite a few responders mentioned using marketing tools to expand festivals' force in improving the city image of Ningbo. Create a media kit including launching advertising on newspapers, posting banners and arranging press conference. Making use of maximum influence of media and public relation to deliver and deepen the image to the audiences' minds so as to create the best brand effect for the city of Ningbo.

### **Summary of questionnaire findings**

Based on the analysis of the data collected by administering the questionnaire among the selected thirty interviewees who took part in Ningbo International Fashion Festival, valuable findings were specified as above. These main findings are useful applied to the Conclusion and Implications part which will be discussed in the next chapter.

The main findings can be outlined as:

**Main finding 1: Up to now, the city image of Ningbo is not well-defined enough.**

**Main finding 2: There is a significant difference in visitors' and the residents' profiles of the city image of Ningbo.**

**Main finding 3: To a large extent, Ningbo International Fashion Festival succeed in building up the city image of Ningbo.**

**Main finding 4: Ningbo International Fashion Festival best stand for the city image of Ningbo, and it can be a brand.**

**Main finding 5: For the festivals and events in Ningbo, there is still room for improvement in promoting the city image of Ningbo.**

## **Chapter six: Conclusion and Implications**

### **6.1 Research conclusion**

The objective of this chapter is to conclude the main findings of this research. The first section demonstrates the key themes that emerged from the analysis of the data. These results are categorized based on the analysis of the researcher, instead of the literatures. Afterwards, some practical applications that extended from the research are illustrated. Finally, the section that follows outlines the limitations of this study.

In general, Ningbo International Fashion Festival is a festival which combines local and international characteristics well in one. The respondents were content with Ningbo International Fashion Festival and recognized its contribution to the city image of Ningbo. The data indicate a marked positive evaluation in the image of Ningbo, among residents and external audiences. This general satisfaction indicates this festival succeed in enhancing the city image of Ningbo to a large extent.

The case study and questionnaire findings stress the importance of including image assessment when evaluating major festivals and events in cities, however, there are some wider implications for the study of festivals and events which will be highlighted in the next section.

### **6.2 Research implications**

Following the conclusion of the research project, first I will analyze how can festivals survive in economic depression. Afterwards, I would like to make some implications regarding festival and its different roles in four stages of city image.

#### **The role of festivals during economic downturns**

Nowadays, the global financial crisis has been a challenging climate which gives rise to the effects of the recession on festival attendance levels. "Retreat is not an option, but rather innovation and regeneration of concepts, exploring new ideas. This involves the careful evaluation of all projects and proposals to determine which will be the most cost-effective in building festival brand awareness and driving sales."(Burke,2008) What consumers would want to see is value from a festival or an event, thus the result points to greater expectations from public.

The success of a festival requires the development of packages that are designed to meet the different needs of clearly defined groups. If the festival could succeed in attracting inhabitants and tourists, it may stimulate domestic demand, and economic growth would be spurred as well. These festivals can be put to good use by generating income as well as ameliorating economy of the people. This is of course a welcome development and there is hope that this will help boost the economic potential of the area and also refresh the economy again.

#### **Four stages of festival on the city image**

##### **1. Festival and the design of the city image**

The main principals of designing a city image contain of regional principal, cultural principal, marketable principal, dominant principal and stable principal, all of which are the same principals when designing festivals require.

**Regional principal-** Different cities locate in different geographic places. Differences exist in natural conditions, social customs, cultures and histories, giving rise to unique characteristics of each city. Thus the design of the city image should display a city's charming personality, so as to leave a profound as well as permanent impression to the public. As such, the regional principal should be taken into full consideration when designing festivals

**Cultural principal-** City image is an organic integration of internal embodiment for a

city's cultural veneration together with exterior expression for the city's development of its economy and society. In order to design a prominent city image, the research into the cultural field should be emphasized. This could fall to doing two aspects: On one hand, explore high quality cultural substantial products; and on the other hand, explore high quality psychic products that can satisfy all needs of festival attendees.

**Marketable principal-** This principal mainly analyze the orientation of target market and its composing, demand, on the basis of result, analyze the city image which could fulfill the needs of the target market.

**Dominant principal-** There are a large number of factors that influence the formation of a city image, the design of a city image could not reach every aspect of a matter. A logical modus operandi is to stand out a primary theme to prevent the vivid personality of the city indistinct.

**Stable principal-** This principal refers to a sort of stability, when a favorable city image comes into being and is accepted by the public, the city should pay attention to keep the stability of the city image for some time. From the psychology angle, the cognition of the public to the city image is hard to alter.

## **2. Festival and the construction of the city image**

Construction of the city image is a key stage that usually paid more attention to. A lot of jobs have to be done during this stage, which were reflected throughout the research project. One thing should be put forward here, is the consciousness of the construction of the city image. On the one hand, for the audience, we should change from state of nature to state of consciousness during the course of constructing the city image. On the other hand, for the festival staff, they should build up all staff image consciousness, provide the best service for the festival.

## **3. Festival and the maintenance of the city image**

Once a favorable city image is established, it takes a long time and a series of efforts to maintain. These efforts including: upgrade the orientation of city function, improve city service level, create new highlights and draw support from the medium.

***-Festival lend itself to upgrade the orientation of city function.***

The festival of the host city should be geared to its city function.

***-Festival makes the city service level constantly enhanced.***

Festival covers many activities such as conferences, exhibitions and tours, all of which require the service department constantly improve service quality and efficiency.

***-Festival continually endow the city image with new content.***

The content of a festival should be enriched and innovative, with the aim of deepening public impression of the city image.

***-Festival should keep a favorable relationship with the medium.***

With the help of the medium, festival could expand its influence to a larger extent. A successful festival is a piece of media news as well, which may cause the media wide attention. Generally speaking, in order to strive for more promotion chances for the festival, this needs the staff of the festival diligent devoted their efforts to seek for the chances, make full use of the publicity during the festival, create the value of the news, therefore arose the interest of the press, then the festival and the city image will be spread broadly.

#### **4. Festival and the update of the city image**

Because the political, economic and cultural environment is developing and changing all the time, the competition between different cities is changing as well, hence the city should update its image to adapt to different situations. At the meantime, the theme, slogan and style of the festival also should be changed or renewed to cater to different tastes of target group. Under the condition of keeping the dominant city image unchangeable, use different marketing mix of the city image, aim at different locations, types of the target markets, lay out different city images.

## **6.3 Some practical recommendations**

In this section, a timely recommendations including an outlook to a future phase of development in the festivals as well as the initiative of the local government and the cultural sector will be outlined in following discussion.

### **1. Support from the government and cultural sector**

One thing should be noted here, support from the government not mean the government should provide more monetary support, instead, it should give less investment but more policy & strategy concern. For instance, to link the future Festival & Cultural Events Initiative to the Cultural Tourism Strategy.

Take this as a marketing tool, on the one hand, tourism could attract larger potential audiences to the festival, on the other hand, festivals and events also can act as a motivator to attract target participators to the local tourism destinations on a year round basis. Obviously, it could create mutual benefits for both sides.

### **2. Publicity in public place**

As many responders have suggested, the department who is responsible for this festival should give more publicity to the public in public place. There are many channels for publicity. It is a fast way to make full use of the potential role of local newspapers that can improve the reputation of the festival. In addition, the internet has been employed as one of the most useful tools for publication, hence the department concerned could cause the audience attention by improving festival websites, setting up local festival fora and sending e-newsletters through the media to attract more audience.

### **3. More favourable offering for the audiences**

In light of the findings in the survey, various offering should be included in the designing the festivals and events. Whatever the content, the style, the form, the taste of the target group should be taken into consideration. Moreover, some kind of

promotion methods could be applied to stimulate the participation of the public such as offering group discounts or being combined with any other coupons. It enables the festival to market itself better to visitors and help them to gain tangible profits from it as well as fulfill their aspiration of taking part in the cultural activity.

#### **4. Making festivals part of local cultural clusters**

Ningbo International Fashion Festival is just a good example of making itself integrate with the local cultural cluster- the costume cluster. By holding a series of successful themes annually, this festival has succeeded in seizing this opportunity to create a new cluster of clothing creative and cultural industries. Thus, based on the own characteristics of the festival, making festivals part of local cultural clusters may make the cultural destination more attractive to the wider market, so that the city image will be more well-known through the aggregation effect created by the clusters.

For Ningbo to maintain its prominent position in the festivals and events industry, to stand out the increasing competition from other cities, we must draw upon knowledge in this field and keep updating and changing marketing approaches. Triumphant festivals and events play such an important part in providing comparative advantages on city image and city marketing.

## **6.4 Research Limitations**

The following section lists some limitations of this research.

### **1. language problem**

For this interview, most of the responders are non-native English speakers, which caused some difficulties in interpreting questions prepared for the survey. And those responders wrote in Chinese and needed translation by the researcher afterwards, this was more time-consuming compared to the responders who are native English

speakers.

## **2. Lack of data**

In order to see more festival-image effects, this research probably needs more than fifty questionnaires and interviews with the policy-makers or festival-organizers should be conducted. Because of time conflict and restriction, these anticipative aims could not be achieved.

## **3. limited in research methods**

Due to time and technical restriction, this research did not illustrate different aspects of the complex process of stimulating image change through year by year festivals. For example, comparing last year festival with this year's to see if there are some changes in effects.

## **4. Bias problem**

For those interviewees who were selected in the questionnaire, Ningbo International Fashion Festival is likely to be their preference, hence the answers maybe effected by more subjective favorable feelings. As a result, the data maybe could not represent for the general public's point of views towards those questions included in the questionnaire.

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