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Asian tourism seasonality, with an emphasis on China's Golden Week system

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For the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**

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January 2010

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Statement of the contribution of others

In undertaking the research for this PhD thesis I have received financial support from my parents. In addition, a student stipend from James Cook University of up to \$3000 has been made available.

My supervisor Professor Philip Pearce and my co-supervisor Dr. Pierre Benckendorff have provided tremendous academic assistance in the supervision of the thesis. Specifically, editorial and critical feedback has been provided by Professor Philip Pearce.

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Declaration on Ethics

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted within the guidelines for research ethics outlined in the *National Statement on Ethics Conduct in Research involving Humans* (1999), the joint *NHMRC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice* (1997), the *James Cook University Policy on Experimentation Ethics, Standard Practices and Guidelines* (2001), and the *James Cook University Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice* (2001). The proposed research methodology received clearance from the James Cook University Experimentation Ethics Review Committee (approval number H2583).

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Signature (Tingzhen Chen)

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Date

Abstract

Seasonality is a distinguishing characteristic of tourism, and it has economic importance thus attracting attention from the academic area as well as from the business and policy making domains. The aim of this thesis is to explore the seasonality phenomenon in Asian tourism, with a particular emphasis on residents' and managers' views of China's Golden Week system. The discussion on this topic starts with a review of key aspects of seasonality in the tourism context, including its definition, causes and impacts. Previous studies on seasonality conducted in the context of Western countries are initially considered. This work is followed by an introduction to seasonality in Asian studies, with a brief discussion of Japan's Golden Week and a focus on China's Golden Week system which is the centre of this study. Based on the literature review, an opportunity exists to better understand seasonality in Asian tourism, particularly the residents' and managers' views of China's Golden Week system. Three studies are implemented to address these research opportunities.

The first study was based on secondary data analysis and it was designed to characterise the seasonality phenomenon in Asian tourism. Secondary data of monthly tourist arrivals to five key Asian countries and four Chinese areas over a time period were selected to identify the seasonality patterns. By comparing the variances between monthly tourist arrivals and the average monthly tourist arrivals, six seasonality patterns were identified and named after six basic landforms – the rolling hills, the plain, the single-peak mountain, the multi-peak mountain, the basin and the plateau. Applying this coding system to over 270 cases, it was found that extreme

seasonality patterns do not dominant Asian tourism, but multiple seasonality patterns exist and vary across Asian countries, even within one country (China).

The second study was a quantitative study where a questionnaire survey was applied. The questionnaires were conducted in China over five locations to collect Chinese respondents' (N=450) views of seasonality and Golden Week travelling. By assessing 20 seasonality concerns identified from the literature, this study found that the crowding issue was the most powerful factor influencing tourists' decisions on when to travel. The amount of rain and very high temperatures were also important influences. The Chinese respondents were least influenced by religious and cultural factors, special events and the amount of sunshine. According to their appraisal of their Golden Week travelling experiences, the Golden Week system was very popular for the Chinese residents as it provided them with seven days in which to undertake long-distance and more relaxed trips. This length of time also gave them the opportunity to enjoy nice weather, more activities, and chances to go travelling with families and friends. Nevertheless, some problems resulting from Golden Week system were identified, such as the crowding issue, higher prices and lower level of service. Most of the respondents noted these factors as likely issues reducing their satisfaction with Golden Weeks travel.

The final study was approached by in-depth interviews. A form of discourse analysis was applied to present the interview results. This study sought specific views of seasonality and the Golden Week system from the Chinese tourism managers' perspective. The interviewees were presented with the six seasonality patterns identified in the first study and asked about their perceptions. There was not a single

commonly accepted pattern as an ideal model for tourism businesses. The single-peak mountain pattern and the multi-peak mountain pattern were perceived as the most likely to occur in the hotel and catering area. The other patterns were identified as relatively infrequent in all business areas. Managers' reactions to the Golden Week system revealed that this holiday system was very welcome by most of the tourism businesses although some management and environment problems were noted. All the managers were looking forward to a brighter future from Golden Week business.

This thesis has attempted to provide a different format to identify tourism seasonality (the six-pattern coding system in the first study). Besides the findings mentioned above, this thesis has also addressed two literature gaps, one is the combination of 20 seasonality concerns and the exploration of their influence on tourists' travelling time period (discussed in the second study). A second contribution is a multi-regional view from tourist business managers establishing how these industry personnel view the Golden Weeks. A further contribution lies in converting perspectives gathered in Mandarin into the English academic tourism literature (discussed in the second and third study). This thesis also highlighted future areas for tourism seasonality study in other parts of the world where the seasonality phenomenon is not well researched. It has also pointed out the significance of research on the Chinese Golden Week market for tourism worldwide.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction and literature review

Chapter structure

1.1 Introduction: overview and significance of research

1.2 Review of literature

- 1.2.1 Introduction to tourism seasonality

- 1.2.2 Explanation of tourism seasonality

- 1.2.3 Japan's Golden Weeks

- 1.2.4 China's Golden Weeks

1.3 Gaps in the literature and opportunities for research

1.4 Proposed research framework

1.5 Aims of this research

1.6 Methodological approaches and considerations

1.7 Outline of chapters

1.1 Introduction: overview and significance of research

This thesis explores Asian seasonality patterns in tourism. The work includes a particular focus on the impacts of China's Golden Weeks system. Seasonality, or the fluctuations in tourist numbers depending on the season, is one of the characteristics inherent in tourism. The concentration of tourist flows in short periods of a year results in inefficiency in the tourism industry and can be a great burden on the social and physical environment of the destination area (Getz & Nilsson, 2004; Mitchell & Murphy, 1991). Seasonality may also affect conditions of tourism employment and stress resources at peak times (Flognfeldt, 2001; Krakover, 2000). The seasonality phenomenon therefore is a major concern to many tourism managers and policy makers, as well as to researchers.

Seasonality is generally influenced by two major factors – natural and institutional. Natural seasonality is related to weather and climate while institutional factors refer to public holidays, school and industrial holidays. They are not independent but interact with each other and together shape seasonality patterns.

Key aspects of seasonality have been studied, including general concepts, definitions and the measurement of seasonality (Bar-On, 1975; Baum & Lundtorp, 2001; Butler, 1994a; Grainger & Judge, 1996; Hartmann, 1986; Lundtorp, 2001; Sutcliffe & Sinclair, 1980). Other topics such as the school holiday season and the sport tourism seasonality have been also considered (Higham, 2006; Klemm & Rawel, 2001). To date, most case studies on seasonality have been carried out in cold-weather destinations, such as Denmark, England, Ireland, Norway, Canada and New Zealand (Commons & Page, 2001; Douglas & Barden, 1999; Hinch et al., 2001; Kennedy & Deegan, 1999; Lundtorp et al., 1999; Sorensen, 1999; Thor, 2001). Time series data and empirical analyses were used in these studies to look at the demand variations in peak-seasons and off-seasons. Most of the solutions attempted to mitigate the level of seasonality by extending the peak season or by targeting new markets.

Even though the importance of tourism seasonality is known to all, there is still a lack of in-depth studies. Literature on tourism seasonality focuses on the relationship between demand and visitation, on economic effects on employment and on practices to reduce seasonality at specific locations (Butler & Mao, 1997). But limited research exists about the in-depth concepts or a theory of tourism seasonality and the measurement of this problem (Hartmann, 1986). Surprisingly apart from studies of skiing in North America, research studies about the United States and Canadian markets do not feature prominently in the seasonality literature (Goeldner, 1992; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003). Additionally, the seasonality problem has been infrequently studied in Asian tourism.

The first and most comprehensive appraisal of seasonality in tourism was completed by Bar-On (1975), who examined data from 16 countries over a seventeen-year period. His work demonstrated the widespread nature of seasonality in European and North American destinations but, like many subsequent researchers, he seemed to ignore Asia Pacific destinations. Based on its diverse tourist resources, particularly its natural beauty, and because of its rapid economic development, Asia is becoming an important part of international tourism (Pacific Asia Travel Association [PATA], 2006). Due to the nature of tourism seasonality and its economic importance for the tourism industry, the seasonality problem in the Asian area needs research and managerial attention. It is acknowledged that there are major variations within Asian

destinations and source markets when considering seasonality issues. National holiday systems vary, climates vary and the roles of domestic and international visitors are different.

The study of seasonality in the context of tourism in China is the key focus on Asian tourism in this thesis. China has become one of the most popular destinations and is a significant destination in international tourism. Since the implementation of the “Open Door” policy by the government, travelling to and from this oriental country has become a prominent seasonal activity. China’s rich and colourful tourist resources, unique traditions and centuries-old history attract both domestic and international visitors in rising number. According to the report of China National Tourism Administration, there were 125 million inbound tourists to China in 2006, and the number in 2007 was 132 million.

In the Chinese context institutional seasonality is very important. The establishment of the Golden Week in 1999 particularly boosted domestic travel for Chinese citizens (Wu, Zhu & Xu, 2000). Before 2008, China had three “Golden Week” holidays in a year – Spring Festival (Chinese New Year), International Labour Day (May Day) and National Day. In 2008, the May Day holiday was cut down to one day. However, three new one-day holidays were added – the traditional Tomb-Sweeping Day, Dragon-boat Festival and Mid Autumn Festival. As the holidays turned out to be “golden” for the economy they became known as the “Golden Weeks” (Xinhua, 2006a). Meanwhile, more foreign countries have been added to the list of the Chinese Approved Destination Status (ADS), a policy which officially allows Chinese residents to travel abroad. As a result, it is now fashionable for Chinese to travel to the ADS countries during the three Golden Weeks. Traditionally, the chief beneficiaries of the Chinese tourism trade have been the Northeast and Southeast Asian countries (Zhang, 2006) which have benefited, and will benefit even more, from the Chinese Golden-week tourists. It is the perspectives and impacts of this emerging, seasonally based concentration of Chinese travel both within China and for popular Asian countries that is at the heart of this research. In order to explore the academic context for undertaking studies in this area, a review of the previous literature is undertaken in the following section.

1.2 Review of literature

1.2.1 Introduction to tourism seasonality

Seasonality, of course, exists in a wide range of industries and areas, not only in tourism; however, there is no universally accepted definition of seasonality in tourism. In one case it is described as “a temporal imbalance in the phenomenon of tourism, which may be expressed in terms of dimensions of such elements as numbers of visitors, expenditure of visitors, traffic on highways and other forms of transportation, employment, and admissions to attractions” (Butler, 1994a, p. 332). Allcock (1994) thinks the most important defining element of seasonality is that tourist flows concentrate in short periods of the year. Bar-On (1975) defines seasonality as the effects of demand occurring each year with more or less the same timing and magnitude. In Koenig-Lewis and Bischoff’s (2005) opinion, seasonality can be described as some sort of pattern in the visits that recur each year.

Most of the seasonality definitions only describe this phenomenon in general terms. Koenig-Lewis and Bischoff (2005) point out that there is a lack of a quantifiable definition about when tourism seasonality occurs, how the tourism seasons can be differentiated, and how tourism seasonality can be compared between different destinations or years. Literature on tourism seasonality focuses on the relationship between demand and visitation, and on economic effects on employment and practices to reduce seasonality at specific locations (Butler & Mao, 1997). But limited research exists about the in-depth concepts or a theory of tourism seasonality and the measurement of this problem (Hartmann, 1986). This lack of precision is a key consideration and opportunity for the development of research in this thesis. It can be argued that in some areas of study well specified measurement and exacting description of phenomenon is a necessary building block for enhancing research (Becher, 1989; Pearce, 2005). The better description of seasonality is an example of this kind of research development in the tourism field.

1.2.2 Explanation of tourism seasonality

Table 1.1 introduces some of the suggested explanations and causes of tourism seasonality provided by different researchers.

Table 1. 1 – Classification of causes of tourism seasonality

Author	Categories of causes of tourism seasonality
Bar-On(1975)	Natural seasonality, institutionalized seasonality, calendar effects, sociological and economic causes
Hartmann (1986)	Natural seasonality, institutionalized seasonality
Hylleberg (1992)	Weather, calendar effects, and timing decisions
Butler (1994a)	Natural seasonality, institutionalized seasonality, social pressure and fashion, sporting seasons, inertia and tradition
Butler/Mao (1997)	Physical and socio/cultural factors in the tourism generating and receiving areas
Baum/Hagen (1999)	Climate/weather, social customs/holidays, business customs, calendar effects, and supply side constraints
Frechtling (2001)	Climate/weather, social customs/holidays, business customs, and calendar effects

(Source: based on Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005)

Seasonality is seen by many authors as being caused by similar conditions. The seasonality phenomenon is influenced by two factors – “natural” and “institutional”. Almost all the researchers place these two factors first in their list of causes of tourism seasonality. Natural factors usually refer to climate/weather conditions while the institutional seasonality is based on the available holidays and reflects social norms and practices. Regular business conferences and sporting events in particular destinations may influence tourism seasonality in specific years. All these factors – natural, institutional and other effects impact on tourism seasonality to different extents.

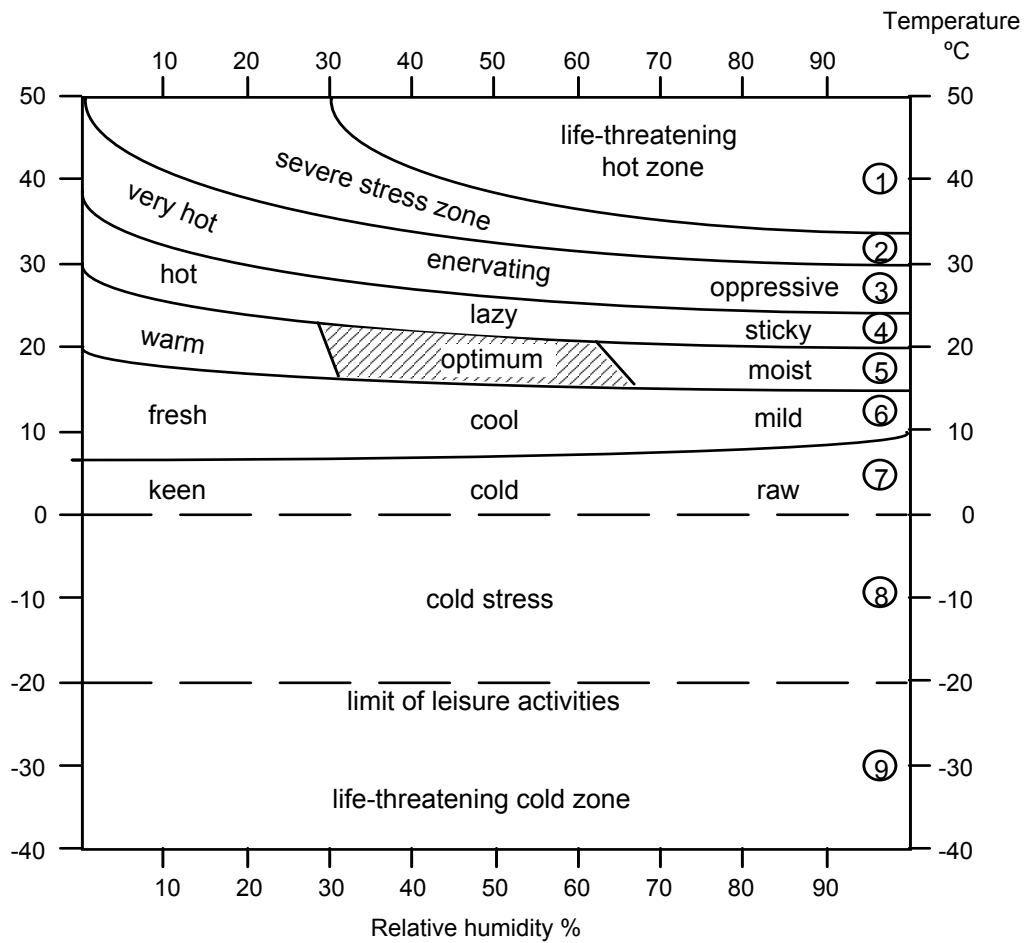
1) Natural seasonality

As most outdoor tourist activities depend heavily on the climate and weather (Smith, 1990), the natural conditions in a destination have a pronounced influence on the area’s tourism seasonality. Hartmann (1986) states that natural seasonality is predictable as the climate is relatively stable in a particular destination and recurs with little change. However, climate change, including global warming, may affect future tourism seasonality (Agnew & Viner, 2001; Butler & Mao, 1997; Scott et al., 2007).

Natural seasonality results from the regular variation in climatic conditions – temperature, rainfall, snowfall and daylight (Bar-On, 1975; Baum, 1999). Natural seasonality impacts on society to different extents, as the farther the destination is from the Equator, the greater are the seasonality differences (Hartmann, 1986; Butler, 1994a).

Studies in cold weather destinations indicate that most visitors arrive in summer and few travel when it is cold in the off-season. However, in the equatorial or tropical destinations, the extreme humidity will influence human thermal comfort (Burton, 1995). Figure 1.1 is Burton's chart (1995) showing human thermal comfort by cross-referencing a range of temperatures and humidity. The best conditions for human thermal comfort are from 18-29 degrees Celsius with humidity between 40 and 60 percent. Less desirable conditions are heat over 35 degrees and humidity over 30 percent. Except for winter sports, nearly all tourists find activities uncomfortable if the temperatures are extremely low. High humidity is debilitating for most visitors and limits most tourist activities.

Obviously, natural conditions play an important role in shaping the seasonality pattern. As the climate in a specific location is relatively stable and unchangeable, it is hard or very expensive to solve the natural seasonality problems by extending the peak season. However, this problem has been addressed internationally in a few select locations. Many destinations with natural seasonality try to attack this problem by creating artificial environments, such as indoor skiing in Dubai (Tourism Dubai, 2006), and tropical indoor swimming beaches in Europe, Japan and North America for winter use. Those efforts are notable exceptions to the prevailing power of climate to influence tourism.



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OPTIONS AND THERMAL COMFORT ZONES

- ① life-threatening hot zone - survival activities only
- ② severe stress zone - extreme sports dangerous
- ③ very hot-energating-oppressive - swimming, cooling activities
- ④ hot-lazy-sticky - limited periods of strenuous activities
- ⑤ warm-optimum-moist - all leisure activities
- ⑥ fresh-cool mild - strenuous activities still possible
- ⑦ keen-cold-raw - few water sports, some strenuous activities
- ⑧ cold stress - winter sports
- ⑨ life-threatening cold zone - survival activities only

(Adapted from Burton, 1995)

Figure1. 1 – Temperature and relative humidity conditions for human thermal comfort
(Source from Pearce & Vogt, 2005)

2) Institutional seasonality

Another important factor influencing seasonality is the institutional holiday. However, institutional seasonality is less predictable than natural seasonality. It is the result of multiple human decisions, involving social, cultural, religious and ethnic factors (Baum, 1999). These human decisions are often enshrined in legislation (Butler, 1994b).

The holiday (i.e. school holidays, industrial holidays and public holidays - Easter, Christmas) is one of the institutional forms that impacts most on tourism seasonality. The most common form is public holidays. At the very beginning, public holidays were mostly single days but, since the early nineteenth century, they have been expanded into weekends and even longer breaks, and have become increasingly important for the tourism industry (Butler, 1994a). The dates of some public holidays, such as Easter, vary from year to year; however, they are predictable (Bar-On, 1975; Hyllebery, 1992). Frechtling (2001) points out that certain events that recur regularly, such as sport events (e.g. Olympic Games), as well as celebrations and festivals, will influence tourism seasonality in particular years for select destinations.

School and industrial holidays have more impact on tourism seasonality than do public holidays. School holidays normally take place in summer when there is a longer time to travel and when there is pleasant weather, both of which promote family tourist activities (Butler, 1994a; Hinch & Jackson, 2000). Hartmann (1986) argues that the fixed school holiday is the most difficult obstacle in reducing seasonality. One solution to this problem is to expand the customer base during the fixed holiday season, and this has been successfully adopted by Eurocamp, a tour operator (Klemm & Rawel, 2001). However, Lundtorp et al. (1999) point out that little research has been done on whether people seek to travel at certain times of the year or simply whether tourists have to travel in the peak season because of their children's fixed school holidays.

3) Other causes of seasonality

Bar-On (1975) also draws attention to the sociological and economic impacts of seasonality. Airfares and accommodation prices increase at peak times and are

reduced at off-peak times, and these varying prices may increase or decrease the concentration of tourist flows.

Social pressure or fashion, sporting seasons and traditions significantly influence seasonality (Butler, 1994a). Social pressure or fashion occurs when people participate in specific social activities in particular destinations at certain times of the year in order to be seen visiting the currently “fashionable” location. Sporting seasons refer to the fact that some sports, such as skiing, can only be undertaken at a certain time. The tradition factor refers to the fact that “many people take holidays at peak seasons because they have always done so, and old habits tend to die hard’ (Butler, 1994a, p 333).

Calendar effects are identified as another important aspect of seasonality (Frechtling, 2001). The effects result from the different days in a month (e.g. 28 days only in February in some years) and the different numbers of weekends in a month. Most short-haul leisure tourist activities concentrate on weekends. The unequal distributions of weekends throughout months or years may influence tourism statistics (Frechtling, 2001).

Table 1.2 identifies the five main causes of tourism seasonality suggested by Frechtling (2001) and Baum (1998).

Table 1. 2 – Causes of seasonality in tourism demand (Source: Frechtling, 2001; italicized material has been added from Baum, 1998)

Cause of seasonality	Tourism examples
Climate/Weather	Summer vacations, snow skiing, fall foliage tours, popularity of tropical destinations in the winter, cruise line departures, ocean resort demand, transport access
Social customs/Holiday	Christmas/New Year holidays, school breaks, <i>industrial holidays or ‘fortnights’</i> , travel to visit friends and relatives, fairs and festivals, religious observances, pilgrimages
Business customs	Conventions and trade shows, government assemblies, political campaign tours, sports events
Calendar effects	Number of days in the month; number of weekends in the month, quarter, season or year, <i>date of Easter</i>
Supply side constraints	Availability of labour (school holidays, competition from other sectors, i.e. agriculture); alternative use of facilities (schools to hotels)

The five factors are not independent but interact. Lundtorp et al. (1999) further argue that the causes of tourism seasonality can be differentiated into push- and pull-factors, as Figure 1.2 presents.

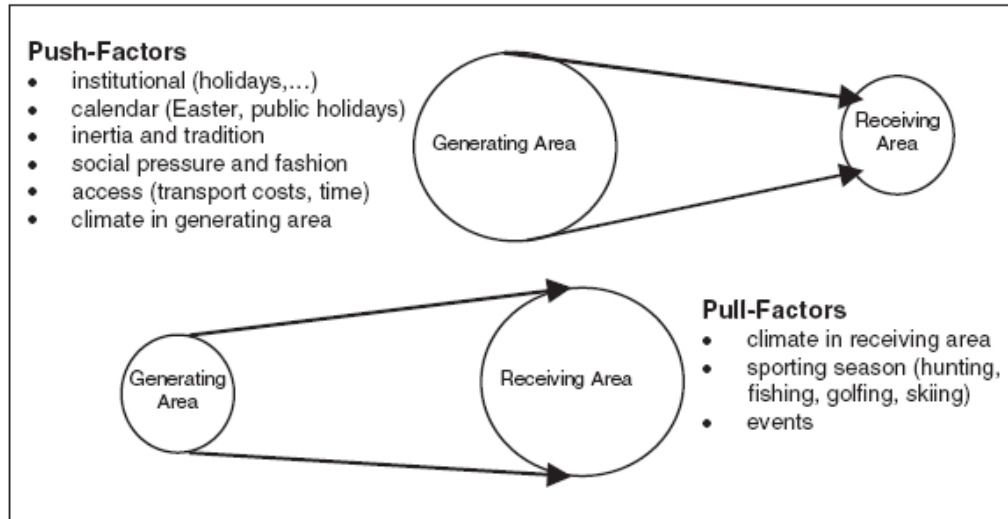


Figure 1. 2 – Push and pull factors causing seasonality in the tourist destination
(Source: based on Lundtorp et al. 1999)

4) Impacts of seasonality

The impacts of seasonality are various and complex but it is probable that these impacts have been exacerbated following the growth of mass tourism (Wall & Yan, 2003).

Some of these effects are positive. For most tourism-related sectors, the peak season generates considerable business. The large number of tourist arrivals and activities significantly boosts the local economy, by creating jobs and income for residents (O'Reilly, 1986). A study of Australian travellers at Easter time reveals that the considerable tourist activity on the Easter weekend generates high total visitor nights and high total expenditure (O'Halloran, 2002). Similarly, a study of Australian Christmas travel revealed that the longer duration trips taken over the Christmas period resulted in the higher expenditure per trip over the Christmas period than that in the non-Christmas period (Grey, 2002).

Less positively, the concentration of tourist flows in short periods of the year will result in crowding at the destination, traffic congestion, overuse of infrastructure and lower quality standards of service during the peak-season (Getz & Nilsson, 2004; Koc & Altinay, 2007). By way of contrast, there may be low rates of hotel occupancy and employment in the off-season (Jeffrey & Barden, 2001). Over-development of land to cope with the flows may damage the environment, and so diminish local social activities and cultural pursuits (Grant et al., 1997; Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005).

Generally speaking, seasonality is often regarded as a problem to be tackled rather than an opportunity for development in tourism. It has great economic importance, but is generally considered to be the reason for difficulty in gaining access to capital, for staffing problems, and for uneconomic returns on investment (Butler & Mao, 1997). According to Baum (1999), seasonality affects all aspects of the supply-side behaviour in tourism, including marketing, the labour market, business finance, stakeholder management and many aspects of operations. The following are the major disadvantages of tourism seasonality from the supply perspective:

- short business operating season with major periods of closure or reduced level of operation;
- the consequent need to generate a full year's revenue within a short operating season while servicing fixed costs over a twelve month period;
- under utilization of capital assets which are inflexible and, generally, do not have obvious alternative uses;
- the consequent problems of attracting inward investment in tourism;
- problems in maintaining the supply chain on the basis of a short operating season;
- problems in ensuring sustained support from transport providers such as airlines and shipping companies who are reluctant to maintain commitment to, and invest in, highly seasonal operations;
- short-term employment rather than sustainable long-term jobs creating high levels of either off-season unemployment or temporary outward migration; and
- problems of maintaining service and product quality standards in the absence of permanent, long-term employees (Baum & Lundtorp, 2001, p2).

A selection of case studies on tourism seasonality demonstrates some existing research concerns. The studies can also be seen as typical of site specific research, where there is often an emphasis on one group of stakeholders; for example visitors or residents or managers.

Lundtorp et al. (1999) surveyed tourists in Bornholm, a tourist destination in a peripheral region in Northern Europe, to explain the phenomenon of seasonality from the demand side. They divided the travellers into two categories: main-season and off-season visitors. The categories were based on several aspects, such as accommodation usage, length of stay, and attitudes about the importance of activities. They found that there was no evidence from the visitors to support the idea of promoting the resort as an off-season destination.

Hinch et al. (2001) explored attitudes towards visits to Fort Edmonton Park, Canada. They adopt a ‘theoretical leisure constraints’ research framework. Two alternative leisure constraints models were discussed — the hierarchical and the non-hierarchical models. The hierarchical model differentiates between general attitudes and motivations, intrapersonal (seasonal travel preferences, e.g. natural factors), interpersonal (e.g. companions with similar seasonal travel preferences) and structural constraints (e.g. institutional factors). It is assumed that these factors are taken into account in a hierarchical way as part of the decision-making process of an individual regarding the timing and destination of the holiday. The non-hierarchical leisure constraints framework explores seasonality using qualitative methods. The key finding from the two constraints models indicated that the influence of individual natural and institutional factors was not consistent. Such models can be helpful both in the design of questionnaires and in the development of guidelines for in-depth interviews.

Thor (2001) used the Jotunheimen area in Norway as a study site and recommended ways to cope with strong seasonality-based tourism. Besides normal procedures, such as importing students in the high season, combinations with agriculture and government employees, expanding seasons by special events, the new adjustments to seasonality were exit travel at low seasons (e.g. migrant workers, expanding personal

knowledge) and exporting knowledge and goods (e.g. chefs designing other menus, craftspeople selling their goods in shops at other places).

The case study of Eurocamp by Klemm and Rawel (2001) provides further perspectives on European seasonality. Eurocamp was originally a small British company. Its product, self-drive camping holidays, was positioned as a lifestyle product aimed at middle class professionals with young families in the United Kingdom. To solve the seasonality problem caused by fixed school holidays, Eurocamp widened the appeal of the holidays through product development (e.g. the introduction of mobile homes), and introduced the Eurocamp product to a non-UK customer base, Netherlands, Germany and other European countries. It finally became the leading and most innovative company in the tourism sector.

There is a study examining the social impacts caused by tourism seasons in Positano, Italy (Canosa et al., 2001). They considered the community attitudes to tourism seasonality. In particular they discussed the different perceptions between two groups of adolescent residents' (aged 13 – 15 years old and aged 16 – 19 years old) attitudes to tourism. Their findings revealed that tourism seasonality was one of the significant factors shaping the lives of the young residents. The older adolescents believed a greater affect on their current life and expressed a stronger desire to move away from their home town.

In a review of the tourism seasonality literature, Andriotis (2005) suggested that there were three main strategies to overcome seasonality: diversification of the product mix, change of the customer mix and aggressive pricing. Bearing in mind that tourism seasonality can be more serious in island destinations, he investigated the seasonality phenomenon in Crete. His study showed that Crete had a high concentration of tourism activities. However, most tourism enterprises ignored local variations in regional income and worried little about dispersing tourists, and so there was little chance to develop tourism for all citizens in Crete. Andriotis (2005) suggested expanding the seasons by attracting new markets, such as senior citizens, conference/incentive tourism and specialized tourism; however, policies to reduce seasonality by increasing tourists out of peak-season should be carefully made, as the seasonality was accepted as a way of life by most locals, who looked forward to the

quiet season without tourists. This finding is similar to the study about Positano and suggests that for some stakeholders seasonality is a welcome phenomenon.

Shih et al, (2009) examined the impact of weather on downhill ski lift ticket sales in two ski resorts in Michigan, USA. As suggested by ski facility managers that weather conditions have different impacts on peak and off-peak sales, the researchers identified the relationship between weather and sales in two seasons – peak season and off-peak season, using regression analyses. In the linear models, the explanatory variables included five daily weather variables (maximum temperature, minimum temperature, snowfall, snow depth, and wind chill), gasoline prices, the price of a standard ski lift ticket, the Consumer Confidence Index (CCI – represent the income factor), and three dummy variables (weekend, holiday and year). Their findings suggested that weather variables do indeed have a statistically significant impact on downhill ski lift ticket sales. Their results also revealed that the greatest influences on daily lift ticket sale at both seasons were the two temporal variables – time of the week and holidays.

These Western studies have been supplemented by a small number of studies of seasonality in Asia. The first of these studies focused on Japan’s Golden Week.

1.2.3 Japan’s Golden Week

In Japan, the term Golden Week is applied to the period containing the public holidays shown in Table 1.3.

Table 1.3 – Japan’s Golden Week

29 th April	Greenery Day (until 2006) Showa Day (from 2007)
3 rd May	Constitution Memorial Day
4 th May	“Between Day” (until 2006) Greenery Day (from 2007)
5 th May	Children’s Day, also known as Boys’ Day

May Day (on 1st May) is not a public holiday, but is nevertheless often granted as a holiday by many companies.

In combination with well-placed weekends, the Golden Week has become one of Japan's three busiest holiday seasons, besides New Year and Obon week (Obon is an annual Buddhist event to commemorate ancestors. Obon week in mid August is one of Japan's three major holiday seasons (Japan-guide, 2006)). The majority of companies, administrations, schools and universities are on holiday during this long period. May is a pleasant season to travel in Japan. During Golden Week, many people take vacations and travel around the country. So the tourism prices increase and the most popular sightseeing and amusement places are very crowded at that time. Also airports and train stations are crammed with tourist flows. Further, it is extremely difficult to book accommodation and transport in this week (Shizuko, 2006). An increasing number of Japanese people are now travelling abroad during Golden Week (Rosenbaum & Spears, 2006). Some foreign destinations, such as mainland Asian countries, Guam, Saipan, Hawaii, and cities on the USA west coast such as Los Angeles, Seattle, and San Francisco, are congested during this time by large numbers of Japanese tourists.

Japanese tourists in Golden Weeks are likely to spend more money than in other periods. Rosenbaum and Spears (2006) conducted questionnaires on “non-Golden” and “Golden” Japanese tourists vacationing in Waikiki (Honolulu, Hawaii). Compared to “non-Golden” Japanese tourists, “Golden” Japanese tourists spend significantly more on gifts during their stays. They were also better-educated and more interested in participating in diverse vacationing and leisure activities.

1.2.4 China's Golden Weeks

In September 1999, the Chinese government issued the policy “Methods for having days off for annual festivals and commemoration days throughout the country”. The policy was intended to promote domestic tourism amongst Chinese. Three gold tourism weeks were formed around the Spring Festival (Chinese New Year), International Labour Day (May Day) and National Day (China National Tourism Administration [CNTA], 2006a). Generally, each of them is a three-day holiday, but the government will declare it to be a seven-day holiday, substituting a weekend for normal working days. That is three days of paid holiday are given, one weekend is added and two further working days are swapped with the adjunct weekend so that

workers in Chinese companies have seven continuous days of holiday. An example illustrated in Table 1.4 would help to understand this holiday system.

Table 1.4 – The dates of National Day Golden Week holiday in 2007

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Sep	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Oct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

In 2007, the holiday period for National Day Golden Week lasted from 1st to 7th October. The real public holidays for National Day were 1st, 2nd and 3rd October. But the government announced the previous weekend 29th and 30th September as two working days with the 4th and 5th becoming substitute days for the weekend work. By combining the following weekend – 6th and 7th, there were seven days for the holiday.

The resulting seven-day holidays are called “Golden Weeks”, which have become an ideal time for the Chinese to make either short or long haul trips. Table 1.5 shows the dates of Golden Weeks holidays from 1999 to 2009.

The Chinese New Year ushers in a week of official holidays, but because Chinese New Year follows the Chinese Lunar Calendar, the date of this holiday week varies considerably from year to year. It generally takes place in January or February. From the year 2000 to 2009, the 2001, 2004, 2006 and 2009 Chinese New Year occurred in January, and the others in February (Table 1.5). On the other hand, the holiday periods for Labour Day and National Day are consistent, and range from 1st to 7th May and from 1st to 7th October respectively, except the National Day Golden Week in 2008, which started from 29th September to 5th October.

Table 1. 5 – Golden Weeks timetable

	Chinese New Year	International Labour Day	National Day
1999	N/A	N/A	1 st – 7 th October
2000	5 th – 11 th February	1 st – 7 th May	1 st – 7 th October
2001	24 th – 30 th January	1 st – 7 th May	1 st – 7 th October
2002	12 th – 18 th February	1 st – 7 th May	1 st – 7 th October
2003	1 st – 7 th February	1 st – 7 th May	1 st – 7 th October
2004	21 st – 27 th January	1 st – 7 th May	1 st – 7 th October
2005	9 th – 15 th February	1 st – 7 th May	1 st – 7 th October
2006	29 th January – 4 th February	1 st – 7 th May	1 st – 7 th October
2007	18 th – 24 th February	1 st – 7 th May	1 st – 7 th October
2008	6 th – 12 th February	1 st – 3 rd May*	29 th September – 5 th October
2009	25 th – 31 st January	1 st – 3 rd May*	1 st – 8 th October**

(Source: Chinese Government online Gov.cn, 05/06/2009)

(*: From the year 2008, the May Day holiday was reduced to one day, resulting in three-day holiday which was combined with two-day weekend. **: It was combined with a one-day public holiday – Mid-Autumn Day.)

1.2.4.1 Impacts on domestic tourism

China is a large country with many different climates and types of landscape. It has both a continental and seasonal climate. Most regions are in the temperate zone but the southern areas are in the tropical or subtropical zone, while the northern areas are in the Frigid Zone. Climates in different areas vary greatly, but generally April, May, September and October are the best time for travelling to China's popular destinations when the weather is the most comfortable (Chinatour, 2006). Therefore, two Golden Weeks – International Labour Day holiday and National Day holiday occur at seasonally propitious times. The Chinese New Year holiday takes place in January or February when it is winter in China. However, it is good time for trips to Hainan Island in the south and to Northeast Harbin which has a world-famous ice-lantern festival (Chinatour, 2006).

It can be argued that the three Golden Weeks are all influential for travelling around China. The Golden Weeks were initiated to expand domestic demand and stimulate consumption. They have rapidly become a part of Chinese life. The seven-day long vacations provide a good time for the whole family to travel around the country and make long-distance trips. However, the concentration of tourist flows has brought congested traffic, overcrowded attractions and poor services in some places. Hence some people in China have suggested cancelling Golden Weeks or reforming the Golden Weeks system (Zhao & Mei, 2005). However, other commentators argue it is too early to call off the Golden Weeks (Wu & Wei, 2005). In the latter view, long holidays have not only motivated consumption and boosted the economy, but they have also enhanced people's quality of life. These two factors are sufficient to outweigh any problems from the holidays. Wu and Wei (2005) also believe the problems can be solved by managing supply and demand.

In the first Golden Week – National Day (1st October, 1999), there was an increase in domestic tourists. From then on, official reports showed that the domestic travel industry enjoyed increases in both tourist arrivals and revenue. Figure 1.3 and 1.4 present the tourist numbers and tourism revenues respectively from the first Golden Week – National Day holiday in 1999 – to National Day holiday in 2006. Because a serious epidemic of SARS broke out around May 2003 in China, there were no statistics of tourist number and tourism revenue on International Labour Day holiday in 2003.

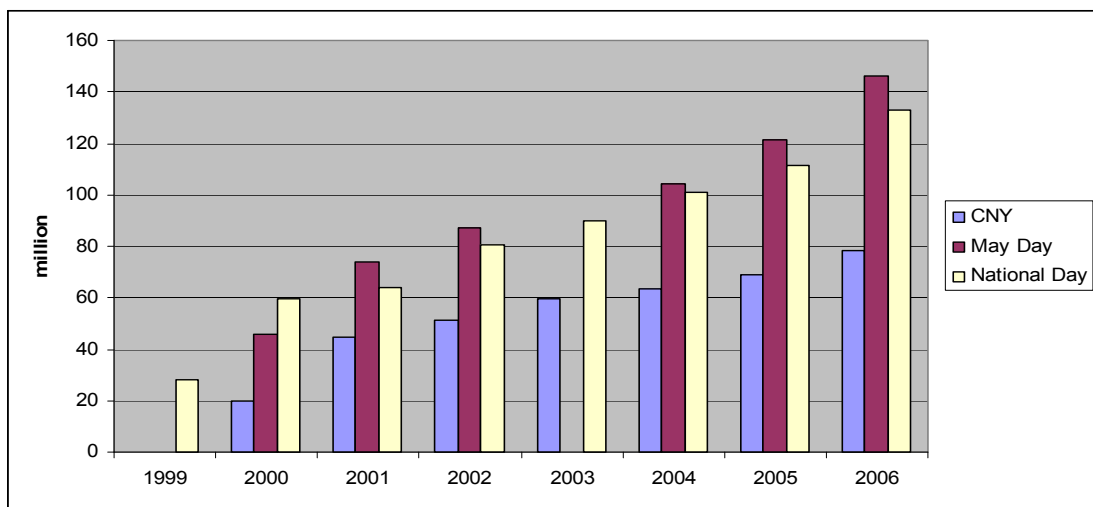


Figure 1.3 – Numbers of tourists during Golden Weeks (Million) (Source: People Daily, 2003a; Chinatour, 2007)

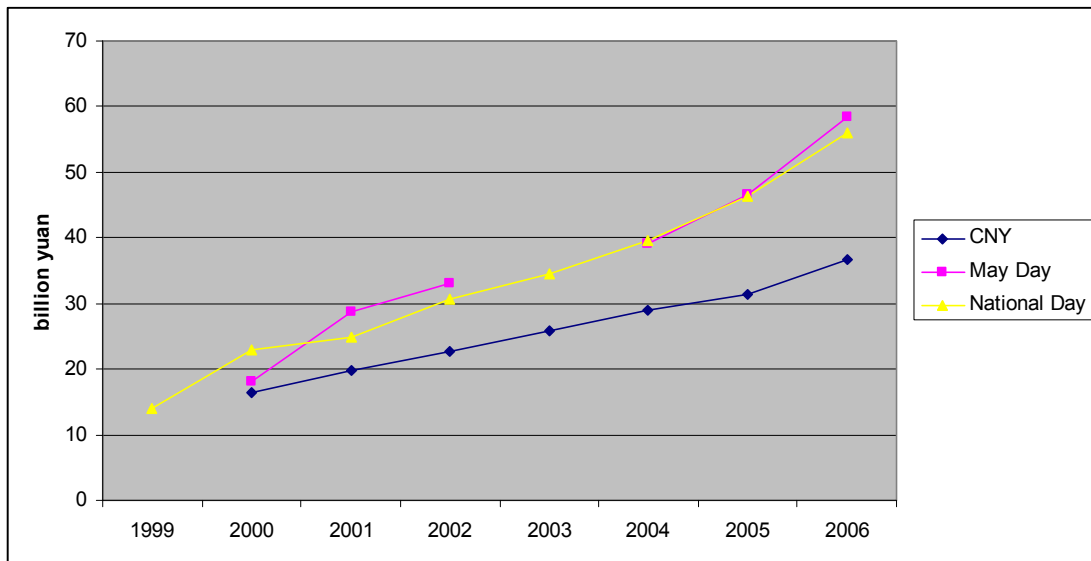


Figure 1. 4 – Revenue during Golden Weeks (billion Chinese Yuan) (Source: People Daily, 2003a; Chinatour, 2007)

From Figure 1.3 and 1.4 it can be seen that the system of Golden Weeks has had a powerful impact on China’s tourism. In the first Golden Week holiday – National Day holiday in 1999, 28 million people travelled around China during the seven-day holiday. From then on, the tourist numbers during the Golden Weeks holiday kept growing and reached 132.8 million during the National Day holiday in 2006. Tourism revenue also increased annually every Golden Week from 14.1 billion Chinese yuan on National Day holiday in 1999 to 55.9 billion Chinese yuan on National Day holiday in 2006. The Chinese have learned to relax, travel and loosen their wallets since the Golden Weeks’ policy was initiated.

1.2.4.2 Impacts on other Asian areas and countries

The three week-long holidays are considered as one of the significant factors influencing Chinese outbound tourism (Zhang, 2006). The Golden Weeks not only influence China’s domestic tourism, but also impact on other countries’ inbound tourism, particularly the Southeast Asian areas and countries. As two special administrative regions influenced by western culture, Hong Kong and Macao are among the most popular destinations for the mainland’s Golden Weeks tourists. After the implementation of relaxed individual travel permits to Hong Kong and Macao in July 2003 (CNTA, 2006b), the two regions were shocked by the massive influx of mainland’s visitors during the Golden Weeks holidays.

Mainland China's Golden Weeks have especially brought "gold" to Hong Kong. The mainland's tourism golden week has become a prime consuming week in Hong Kong, and purchasing in the so-called "shopping paradise" has already become a major attraction for many Chinese mainland tourists. However, visiting scenic spots has also become a popular activity for tourists. The tourism-related sectors in Hong Kong treat the Golden Week seriously and share considerable revenues brought about by the National Day holiday(Oct. 1- 7). The Golden Week has, in fact, become a peak consuming week in Hong Kong. In the National Day holiday in 2003, with a full-range of preparations by the tourism-related sectors, Hong Kong welcomed over 287,000 Chinese mainland visitors from Sept. 28 to Oct. 5. Of these, 80,000 to 90,000 came as "individual tourists". Analysts said that if each mainland tourist spends 6,000 HK dollars (777 US dollars) on average during their stay in Hong Kong, 1.7 billion HK dollars (220 million US dollars) could be expected to pour into Hong Kong during this particular Golden Week (People Daily, 2003b). The Chinese mainland's Golden Week can be seen as substantially boosting Hong Kong's holiday economy. Macao welcomed more than 270,000 visitors from mainland China during the Golden Week period from 1st to 7th October in 2004 (Xinhua, 2004). Mainland China has become the major source of Macao's tourist market growth.

The Golden Weeks holidays also boost the tourism market of China's neighboring countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand have maintained their popularity as destinations for Chinese tourists. Besides the traditional tourist attractions, increasingly more Chinese would also like to travel to other ASEAN nations such as the Philippines and Vietnam. About 100,000 Chinese tourists visited the Philippines in 2005, up 200 percent on the previous year, and the multiple choices of transport modes to Vietnam were also convenient for Chinese tourists (Xinhua, 2006b).

Chinese New Year holidays happen in China's winter time. Many Chinese citizens like to choose those places which are comparatively warm or hot to celebrate their traditional festival. Southeast Asian countries, including Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia are the favourite destinations, as they lie in the tropical zone with pleasant weather during January or February. Some Chinese citizens even travel to Australia

for a completely different experience of Chinese New Year (Xinhua News Agency, 2006).

1.3 Gaps in the literature and opportunities for research

The seasonality phenomenon in tourism has received considerable attention both in academic and practical domains. However, most of the literature focuses on describing seasonality and its causes. Many of the case studies focus on one group of stakeholders and do not develop the seasonality concept or consider its measurement in detail. Most of the studies have been conducted in Europe and North America. There is lack of research in general on tourism seasonality in Asian countries. There remain measurement problems, the need for a broader range of structure and further solutions. Given the increasing importance of Asian countries in international tourism and the influence of seasonality on tourism, an opportunity exists to investigate with greater precision the seasonality phenomenon in Asian tourism.

As mentioned above, most studies have mainly discussed the broad patterns and causes of seasonality. There has only been limited study of the regional effects of seasonality. These natural effects can be predicted as the regional climate is relatively stable. But what about the institutional effects? How will the institutional factors influence the tourism industry and tourists? In particular, how does the system of China's Golden Weeks impact on its domestic tourism and how will it influence its neighbouring countries? China has become an important source of international tourists and so it is necessary to pay attention to the impact of the Golden Weeks, as a special instance of a force shaping seasonality in the Asia Pacific region.

1.4 Proposed research framework

Bearing in mind that there is lack of detailed conceptual work on tourism seasonality, especially in the Asian area, and the two basic factors that influence seasonality, this project utilized a combination of secondary data analysis and surveys to develop a comprehensive coding scheme for seasonality patterns in Asian tourism. The research also explores how the natural and institutional factors influence Chinese tourists' travelling decision and how the tourism managers deal with the seasonality issues. The proposed research framework of this project is presented as Figure 1.5.

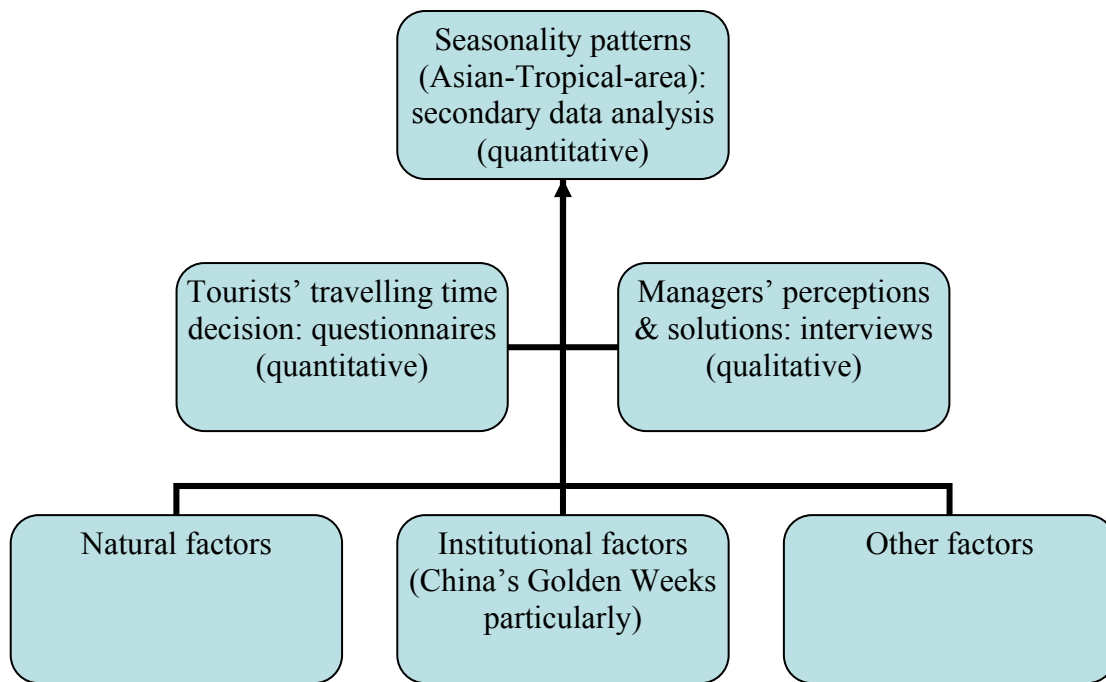


Figure1. 5 – Outline of key topics in the thesis

1.5 Aims of this research

The overall aim of this research is to understand the seasonality phenomenon in Asian tourism, with a focus on Chinese tourism, particularly the Golden Week system. More specifically, the objectives of this research are as follows:

- 1) To construct a comprehensive coding framework of seasonality patterns in Asian tourism;
- 2) To explore the impacts of Chinese tourists on Asian tourism seasonality, particularly the Golden Weeks' tourists;
- 3) To identify how strongly the seasonality factors influence visitors' travelling time period;
- 4) To identify visitors' travelling experiences during Golden Weeks;
- 5) To explore tourism managers' perceptions of seasonality patterns;
- 6) To explore tourism managers' reactions to Golden Week travelling;
- 7) To explore tourism managers' planning for Golden Week travelling.

1.6 Methodological approaches and considerations

In order to meet the research aim, it is necessary to develop an organizing research framework or blueprint for conducting the studies to meet specific research objectives (Yin, 2003). As outlined in Figure 1.5, a mixed-method approach, which combines elements of both quantitative and qualitative research, was utilised in this thesis.

1.6.1 Mixed-method approach

The mixed-method approach is rapidly and increasingly applied in social research as a research style (Brewer & Hunter, 1990; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989; Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003). It is viewed as a way that has complementary strengths offered by quantitative and qualitative methods (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Neuman, 2002). The quantitative approach involves statistical analysis. It is used to draw conclusions or to test hypotheses relying on numerical evidence, and is concerned more with deduction, confirmation and explanation (Bryman, 2001; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Veal, 2005). By way of contrast, the qualitative approach is used to generate hypotheses or theories, focusing on induction, exploration and understanding (Peterson, 1994; Veal, 2005). The mixed-method approach is therefore a combination of strengths from both methods to ensure a better understanding of the social phenomenon. The advantages of mixed-method approach are recognized by scholars as summarised in Table 1.6.

Table 1.6 – Advantages of mixed-method approach in social research

Scholars	Advantages
Hammersley (1996)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eliminate the weaknesses of each method (quantitative & qualitative) employed on its own
Neuman (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid specific sources of error inherent in a single methodology• The complementary strengths offered by qualitative and quantitative methods
Creswell (2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The ability to demonstrate convergence in results through triangulation rather than only one research method
Tashakkori & Teddlie(2003)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allow the researcher to meet with the confirmatory and exploratory research objectives in the same study in the meantime

Tourism is widely accepted as a multi-disciplinary area of study as it involves many industries and sector for catering the needs of travellers (Gunn, 1994), although there is little consideration of the topic of mixed-method approach in tourism research. Due to its multi-disciplinary nature, a variety of methods and approaches were adapted in the tourism literature. It has been suggested that the mixed-method approach can be used more frequently in the tourism study (Davies, 2003; Pansiri, 2005).

There are five purposes for using mixed-method approach: triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation and expansion (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989). The mixed-method approach was employed in the current research according to specific development purpose, which has been stated as “seeks to use the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method, where development is broadly construed to include sampling and implementation, as well as measurement decisions” (Greene, et al., 1989, P259). The “expansion purpose” also has a role in this thesis and is defined as: “seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components” (Greene, et al., 1989, P259).

1.6.2 Mixed-method approach in this thesis

As mentioned in the literature review there is currently little consideration of seasonality issues in Asian tourism at the conceptual and theoretical level. Objective 1 in section 1.5 was set to fill this literature gap. Quantitative methods were first used to review seasonality issues in Asian tourism. Seasonality patterns in Asian tourism were generated by statistical analyses and these results subsequently provided a basis for designing a new research approach to identify seasonality issues from managerial perspective where a qualitative method was employed. This is one of the reasons for using mixed-method approach in this thesis – development: using results from one method to shape a subsequent method (Greene, et al., 1989). The instrument to meet with Objective 5 in a later stage of this research would be difficult to establish without the information resulting from the method employed in the earlier stage. Therefore, the later method depends on the early one.

Objective 3-4 and Objective 5-7 focused on the seasonality phenomenon in the Chinese context. Although the seasonality variables could be measured in a quantitative way, it was recommended from the literature that the use of quantitative

approach alone would not be sufficient to understand this social phenomenon, particularly in the Chinese context. It is advised to look into the cultural insights when conducting tourism research in Asia Pacific region (Pearce, 2004; Ryan, Gu & Zhang, 2009). A particular argument was given to be sensitive to qualitative tourism research in the Chinese context. Ryan et al (2009) have stated that when dealing with the impact of tourism in China relying on purely quantitative research and likert scales is inadequate to capture important Chinese norms. Quantitative and qualitative methods were combined and employed in two separate stages to address Objective 3-4 and Objectives 5-7 respectively. The quantitative methods were used to measure the extent influenced by seasonality factors while the qualitative approaches were utilised to explore how the tourists and managers think their experiences contribute to seasonality influences. Therefore the seasonality phenomenon was investigated and more fully understood from different approaches which were identified as another purpose for using mixed-method approach – expansion (Greene, et al., 1989).

The following section will discuss the mixed-method research design and explained the kind of data collection in each stage. It should be noted that the data collection procedure and data analysis methods will be explained in detail in the subsequent chapters.

1.7 Outline of chapters: the three studies in the thesis

This project consisted of three studies. The first one is based on secondary data analysis where quantitative approach was employed. Data used are obtained from the official tourism websites of five key Asian countries – Japan, Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia, and four Chinese regions – Beijing, Hainan Island, Hong Kong and Macau. Figures of monthly tourist arrivals were selected to run tables and charts and construct a scheme of seasonality patterns. Based on the results of the first study, questionnaires were designed for the second and third studies. The second study is self-administrated surveys which aim to identify to what extent the seasonality factors influence Chinese tourists' travelling decision which was measured by Likert-type questions, and their attitudes towards Golden Weeks travelling which were explored by applying qualitatively open-ended questions. The final study employs face-to-face interviews. Seasonality patterns resulting from the first study were presented to tourism managers to explore how the relevant authorities respond to

the seasonality phenomenon and how they present and manage the Golden Weeks' impacts on the tourism industry. Figure 1.6 provides a schematic outline of this project.

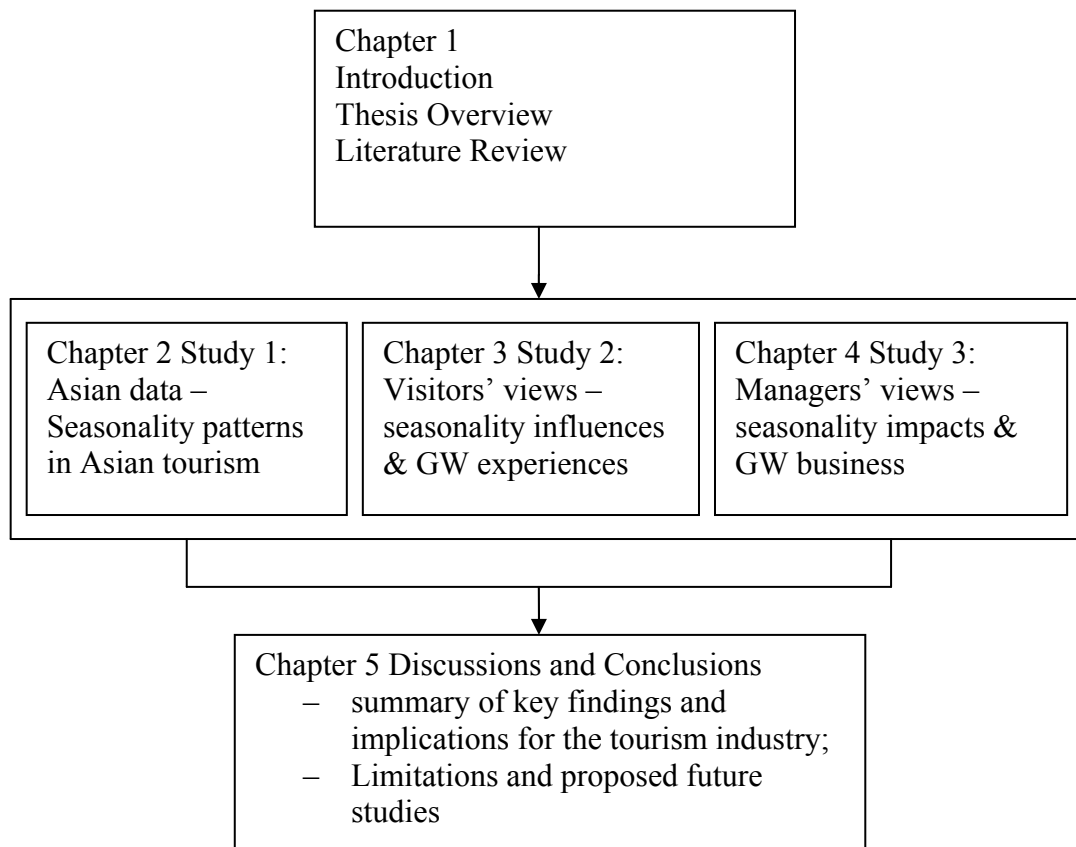


Figure1. 6 – Chapter outline for the thesis

Chapter 2 – Seasonality patterns in Asian tourism (Study 1)

Chapter structure

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Research objectives

2.3 Data and methodology

- 2.3.1 Seasonality data
- 2.3.2 Measures of seasonality
- 2.3.3 Modelling seasonality patterns
- 2.3.4 Data details

2.4 Results and discussion

2.5 Conclusion and implication

2.1 Introduction

As outlined in the previous chapter, seasonality is caused by two major factors – natural and institutional. It is further influenced by other factors, such as social pressure and fashion, sporting events, and traditions (Butler, 1994a). These factors interact with each other and impact on tourism to different extents; as a result, various types of seasonality patterns are formed. Three basic patterns of seasonality are identified by Butler and Mao (1997): (1) single-peak, (2) two-peak and (3) non-peak. The most common one is the single-peak seasonality (Lopez Bonilla et al, 2006), which is most likely to produce extreme seasonality. The extreme peak was found to happen mostly in summer in the northern hemisphere (Duval, 2004; Getz & Nilsson, 2004; Higham & Hinch, 2002). As Fernandez (2003) indicated, the single-peak seasonality also generally prevails in southern European countries, such as Spain, Portugal, Greece and Cyprus. Two-peak seasonality usually occurs in some mountainous areas, which are attractive for both summer and winter tourists (Butler & Mao, 1997). And non-peak seasonality appears in urban destinations, including Hong Kong and Singapore, where there are no obvious fluctuations among monthly tourist arrivals (Butler & Mao, 1997). In a study on Spanish tourism seasonality, a fourth

pattern named multiple-peak seasonality was identified by Lopez Bonilla et al, (2006). In their study, the seasonality fluctuations appeared within the high season.

The peak season concept refers to the intense concentration of visitors at a given time. It is, of course, necessary to record the relativities of the level of concentration of visitors in order to identify the seasonality pattern. There are, however, few clear empirical measures or agreed on parameters to define these patterns. The existing research focuses on general concepts, definitions and the recording of seasonal or month by month data (Bar-On, 1975; Baum & Lundtorp, 2001; Butler, 1994a; Grainger & Judge, 1996; Hartmann, 1986; Lundtorp, 2001; Sutcliffe & Sinclair, 1980). Koenig-Lewis and Bischoff (2005) point out that there are few quantifiable definitions about when tourism seasonality occurs, how the tourism seasons can be differentiated, and how tourism seasonality can be compared between different destinations or years. A key opportunity exists therefore for researchers to define more precisely the nature of seasonality patterns.

To date, most case studies have been carried out in the cold-weather destinations, such as Denmark, England, Ireland, Norway, Canada and New Zealand (Commons & Page, 2001; Douglas & Barden, 1999; Hinch et al., 2001; Kennedy & Deegan, 1999; Lundtorp et al., 1999; Sorensen, 1999; Thor, 2001). It is widely accepted that the extremely cold weather limits tourists' activities and results in the obvious seasonality phenomenon. As suggested in Chapter One, there has been less formal consideration of the possibility that extreme humidity and extremely high temperatures may also affect the level of tourist comfort and so may also result in considerable seasonality. In particular there is a lack of research on tropical seasonality. Additionally, from reviewing the literature on tourism seasonality, it is apparent that most attention is given to Europe and North America. Little seasonality research exists for desert environments and in locations such as Asia, Africa, South America and the Middle East. For the present interests and given the increasing importance of Asian countries in international tourism and the influence of seasonality on tourism, an opportunity exists to investigate the seasonality phenomenon in Asian tourism.

China, as Asia's biggest country in terms of land area, covers various types of climate, including the cold weather (e.g. Beijing) and the typical tropical climate (e.g. Hainan

Island). Due to its vast area and the rich natural and historic resources, China is becoming one of the most popular destinations and is predicted by United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to be the top destination for tourists by 2020 (People Daily, 2002). Further, with the rapid development of its economy, more and more Chinese travel domestically. And it is becoming a fashion for the Chinese to travel overseas, particularly after the implementation of Golden Week system. The Chinese tourism industry was surprised after the first Golden Week by the masses of tourists. As the Golden Week system is maturing and travellers gain confidence, the resulting impact will extend more and more to neighbouring and popular Asian destinations. To get the most benefits from the Golden Week system, the first step is to find out how this institutional factor influences the tourism market and shapes the seasonality patterns within China and Asia.

2.2 Research objectives

The aim of this study is to provide a comprehensive coding system for Asian seasonality by using secondary data and incorporating several Asian and tropical examples into the data sources. Particular attention is given to China to investigate the impact of its Golden Week system. Therefore, the objectives of this study are as follows:

- 1) To construct a comprehensive coding framework of seasonality patterns in Asian tourism;
- 2) To explore the impacts of Chinese tourists on Asian tourism seasonality, particularly the role of the Golden Weeks' tourists.

2.3 Data and methodology

2.3.1 Secondary data

Secondary data analyses are employed here to help achieve the aims of this study. Secondary data are existing data which can be used for a specific project, although the purpose of the project may be different to the initial purpose behind collecting the data (Veal, 2005). The advantages of using secondary data in research are obvious – less expensive and obtained rapidly (Hakim, 1982; Zikmund, 2003). This study involves five Asian countries and four Chinese areas. As time and budget are limited, it is difficult for the researcher to go to all the places for data collection. Therefore,

secondary data is a good source for this research. Also, primary data collection can not be carried out in some cases, and in these instances secondary data can provide a rich database. Secondary data permits analyses for studies of trends over time (Hakim, 1982). The present study explores the seasonality phenomenon over an extended time period. In this case, secondary data can be usefully employed to help understand the seasonality phenomenon.

While secondary data have advantages for research, there are also disadvantages which result from the fact the data were not originally set to meet the needs of current study. Those disadvantages may include:

- (1) Outdated information,
- (2) Variation in definition of terms,
- (3) Different units of measurement, and
- (4) Lack of information to verify the data's accuracy (Zikmund, 2003, pp137).

Care therefore needs to be taken in aligning the research aims and the quality of the available material. Secondary data are particularly useful for addressing two general categories of research objectives – descriptive fact finding and model building (Zikmund, 2003). Fact finding is a simple form of research which employs secondary data for collecting descriptive information to support decision making. And model building is more complicated and involves specifying relationships among multiple variables. One of this study's objectives is to construct a framework of seasonality phenomenon, which locates the work in the predominantly descriptive category of data use. Previous tourism related data can be applied to build up a scheme of seasonality patterns. In keeping with the overall aim of the thesis and a number of points made in Chapter One, the nature of the work being conducted in this part of the thesis may be seen as the necessary descriptive detailing of a phenomenon in anticipation of producing a framework for subsequent refined conceptual treatment and application.

There are many sources of secondary data. The main ones are company information, government agencies, educational institutions, archival material, and internet-based resources. The data for this study are mainly extracted from official tourism websites which help to guarantee the trustworthiness of data. Five key Asian countries were

selected – Japan, Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia. The data were adopted from their national official tourism websites respectively – Japan National Tourist Organization, Korea National Tourism Organization, Singapore Tourism Board, Tourism Authority of Thailand and Tourism Malaysia. And four top Chinese tourist areas – Beijing, Hainan Island, Hong Kong and Macau, were also included to form this study. The secondary data were provided from the four official tourism websites – Beijing Tourism Administration, Hainan Tourism, Hong Kong Tourism Board and Macau Tourism. The choice of these destinations was influenced by the need to select a mix of tropical and cold water settings and to use destinations which are both popular and have good quality and accessible data.

Secondary data of monthly tourist arrivals to these five key Asian countries, ranging from the year 2000 to 2006, and monthly tourist arrivals, both overseas and domestic, to the four top Chinese tourist areas, ranging from the year 2002 to 2006 were used to construct tables and charts for further analysis. As the secondary data were not designed to meet the needs of present study, the format did not fit the current requirements. In such cases, data conversion (or data transformation) is necessary. Data conversion is “the process of changing the original form of data to a format suitable to achieve the research objective” (Zikmund, 2003, pp137). On the original official websites, tourist arrivals were reported in numbers, expenditures, length of stay, purposes of visits, and visitors’ source regions. To meet the aims of this study, data conversion was needed. The problem of how to transform the data depends in part on how to measure the seasonality problem. Attention to this problem is considered in the following section.

2.3.2 Measures of seasonality

The number of visitors is regarded as the basic unit for measuring tourism seasonality. A review of literature reveals that two measurements – seasonality indicator and the Gini-coefficient are used most often for describing the distribution of visitors during the year (Lundtorp, 2001). The seasonality indicator is the inverse value of the seasonality ratio, which is calculated as:

$$R = v_n / \bar{v}, v_0 = \sum_{i=1}^{12} v_i, v_n = v_0 / 12$$

Where v_n is the highest number of visitors, \bar{v} is the average number of visitors and v_0 is the total number of visitor arrivals during the year. Therefore, the seasonality indicator is defined as:

$$\omega = \bar{v}/v_n \quad 1/12 \leq \omega \leq 1$$

The seasonality indicator was found to be influenced by extreme values and has been rejected as a problematic way to measure the equality of monthly data (Wanhill, 1980). The Gini-coefficient thus remains as a tool to consider. It is well-known for measuring inequalities in economics and is derived from Lorenz curve (King, 1999).

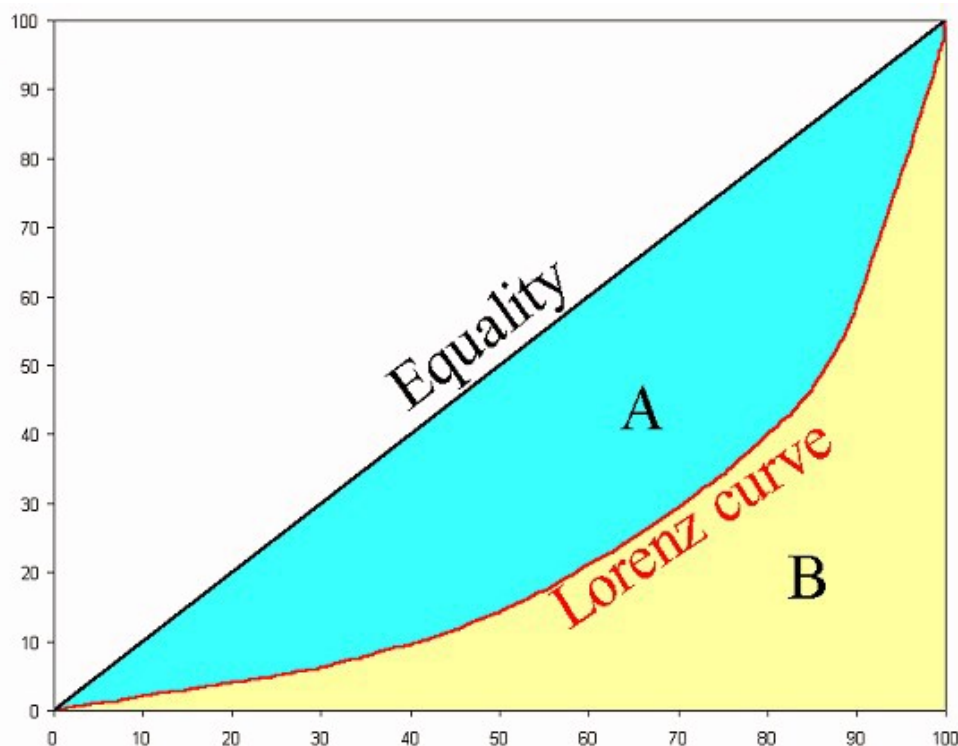


Figure 2. 1 – Illustration of the Lorenz curve

The Gini coefficient is defined as the area between the Lorenz curve and the perfect equality line, divided by the area underneath the perfect equality line: $G = \frac{A}{A+B}$

The following table displays some of previous research which studied the seasonality phenomenon in tourism.

Table 2. 1 – Studies measuring tourism seasonality

Researcher	Study	Measure
BarOn (1975)	Analyses the seasonality pattern of tourist arrivals for 16 different countries over a 17-year time frame.	Average monthly seasonal factors, “seasonal range”, “seasonality ratio”, “peak seasonal factor”
Yacoumis (1980)	Examines the seasonality pattern of foreign tourist arrivals in Sri Lanka.	“coefficient of seasonal variation”, “seasonality ratio”
Sutcliffe and Sinclair (1980)	Identify “changes in the pattern” & “pure changes in the level of seasonality” in tourist arrivals in Spain over the period 1951-1976.	Lorenz curves, Gini coefficients, standard deviations
Drakatos (1987); Donatos and Zairis (1991)	Derive seasonal factors for different nationalities of visitors to Greece from 12-month moving averages, and compare the acuteness of seasonality for different regions.	Coefficients of variability, coefficient of variation, concentration indices, amplitude ratios, similarity indices
Wilton and Wirjanto (1998)	Estimate the magnitude of the seasonal factors for 113 national tourism indicators over the period 1986-1997.	Seasonal absolute deviations
Wall and Yan (2003)	Identify the structure, characteristics and intensity of temporal fluctuations in China’s international visitor arrivals from 1980 to 1998.	Monthly ratios, seasonal index

In these studies, the two tools – seasonality indicator and Gini-coefficient were somewhat useful in demonstrating the importance of seasonality concentration and dispersion. However, Lundtorp (2001) pointed out that these two measures fail to describe the patterns for individual months and they are not able to reveal the important seasonality changes during the year. Furthermore, relatively little research

has been done to examine the ways of quantifying and comparing empirical patterns (Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005).

2.3.3 Modelling seasonality patterns

The seasonality phenomenon is affected by various factors which result in diverse patterns. As noted earlier, three basic forms are recognized: one-peak seasonality, two-peak seasonality, and non-peak seasonality (Butler & Mao, 1997). They are categorized according to the number of peaks in a year. In order to identify the patterns of seasonality, it is necessary to define “peak”. Peak is the high season which refers to a concentration of visitors in a period time. There are several ways to measure the level of concentration. In a study by Lim and McAleer (2001), the peak was identified as those months with the seasonality ratio (R) superior to the unit ($=1$), i.e. $R > 1$. Lopez Bonilla et al. (2006) further developed this system into their study. They looked at the seasonality indices corresponding to the average season. In their study, four seasonality patterns were identified:

- non-peak seasonality: the interval of the peak does not exceed one month;
- single-peak seasonality: the interval of the peak is between one and four months;
- multiple-peak seasonality: the interval of the peak exceeds four months;
- two-peak seasonality: there are two discontinuous peaks over the year.

Based on the accessible data and the ideas from previous research, this study tries to find a format to express seasonality which can be easily accepted and which can effectively display the nature of seasonality variations. The variable of monthly tourist arrivals was selected, corresponding to the average monthly tourist arrivals, to build a coding system to identify seasonality patterns. In essence, the framework builds on these previous efforts and attempts to extend the existing work with both an appealing and easily quantified approach to labelling seasonal variations.

2.3.4 Method details

Monthly data of total visitor arrivals, Chinese visitors and the visitors from five continents – Asia, Europe, Americas, Oceania and Africa to the five key Asian countries, and monthly data of domestic visitors and overseas visitors to the four

Chinese areas, were chosen to provide a comprehensive data set. First of all, data of monthly tourist arrivals in the five key Asian countries and four Chinese areas were extracted from their official tourism websites. The beginning date was chosen on the grounds of availability of the monthly data. Data were provided in web-page format, and the visitor arrivals were recorded based on origin markets. Then the data were re-structured into Excel to describe monthly arrivals from each market. Average monthly arrivals were compared for every month for every year using Pivot Table and Pivot Chart report. Seasonality patterns were obtained from the variations between monthly tourist arrivals and average monthly tourist arrivals.

2.4 Results and discussion

In all, there were 285 charts used to consider the seasonality patterns in Asian tourism. By looking at variances between monthly tourist arrivals and average monthly tourist arrivals, the 285 charts were categorized into six groups and named after six basic types of landforms – the rolling hills, the plain, the single-peak mountain, the multi-peak mountain, the basin and the plateau. An iterative process of looking at possible patterns and defining and refining them was undertaken to distinguish among the many tables. The process was underpinned by a strong approach of being able to define the types in quantitative terms. For each of the types identified there is a verbal definition, an illustration, a quantitative measure and some examples.

2.4.1 Type 1 – The rolling hills pattern

- Verbal definition: This pattern is similar to the landform of rolling hills, which refer to the land rising and falling in long gentle slopes.

- Illustration:

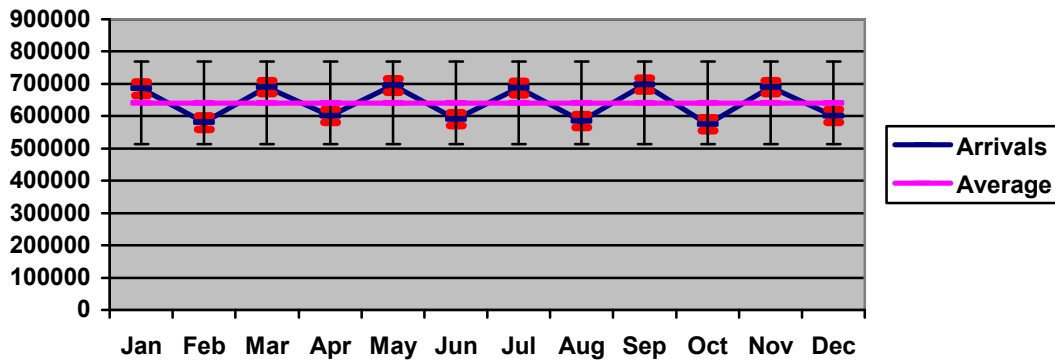


Figure 2. 2 – Illustration of the rolling hills pattern

- Empirical measure:

Figure 2.2 illustrates the rolling hills pattern. The thick solid line represents monthly tourist arrivals while the thin solid line shows the average. The long vertical bars indicate 20% variation compared to the mean while the short vertical bars indicate 5% variation compared to the mean. The empirical measures for the rolling hills pattern are as follows:

- Three or more points above the mean, which vary by no more than 20% but at least by 5% from the mean;
- Three or more points below the mean, which vary by no more than 20% but at least by 5% from the mean.

- Examples:

This is the most common pattern in the cases examined. Sixty percent of the cases studied conform to this pattern. In Table 2.2 and Table 2.3 below, those markets with an asterisk conformed to this pattern.

Table 2. 2 – Markets to five countries performing in the rolling hills pattern

Source\ Destination	Japan	Korea	Singapore	Thailand	Malaysia
Americas	*	*	*	*	*
Asia	*	*	*	*	
Africa		*		*	
Europe		*			
Oceania		*		*	
Total	*	*	*	*	
China	*				

Generally speaking, except for Malaysia, tourism seasonality in the other four Asian countries conforms to the rolling hills pattern in terms of total inbound visitors. For the five continental markets, American visitors are most likely to be in this pattern, followed by the Asian visitors. American visitors conform to the rolling hills pattern when visiting all five destination countries while the pattern applies to four Asian source markets. As Asian visitors dominate the total inbound visitors in the five Asian destinations (Japan National Tourism Organization, 2006; Korea National Tourism Organization, 2006; Singapore Tourism Board, 2006; Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2006; Tourism Malaysia, 2006), the performance of Asian visitors shapes the overall patterns. Both African and Oceania visitors conform to this pattern when they go to Korea and Thailand. European visitors are least likely to fall into this pattern, and it applies only when they visit Korea. Regarding the particular source market – China, this is an uncommon pattern for the outbound Chinese visitors as well. It only applies when the Chinese travel to Japan.

Table 2. 3 – Markets to four Chinese areas performing in the rolling hills pattern

Source\ Destination	Beijing	Hainan	Hong Kong	Macao
Domestic	*		*	*
Overseas			*	*

By looking at the four areas within China, the rolling hills pattern seems to dominate the seasonality patterns in China’s domestic tourism. Except Hainan Island, Chinese domestic visitors to Beijing, Hong Kong and Macao are in the rolling hills pattern. This pattern applies to overseas visitors only when they go to visit Hong Kong and Macao.

There is no extremely high or low point in this pattern. The highest and the lowest points do not vary by more than 20% from the mean. However, exceptions exist when special events happen. In 2002, both African and European visitors to Korea did not fit the rolling hills pattern, peaking in May and in June respectively. And in 2006, overseas visitors to Macao peaked in December with more than a 20% variance from the mean.

2.4.2 Type 2 – The plain pattern

- Verbal definition: This pattern is similar to the landform of a plain, which refers to a large stretch of flat land.
- Illustration:

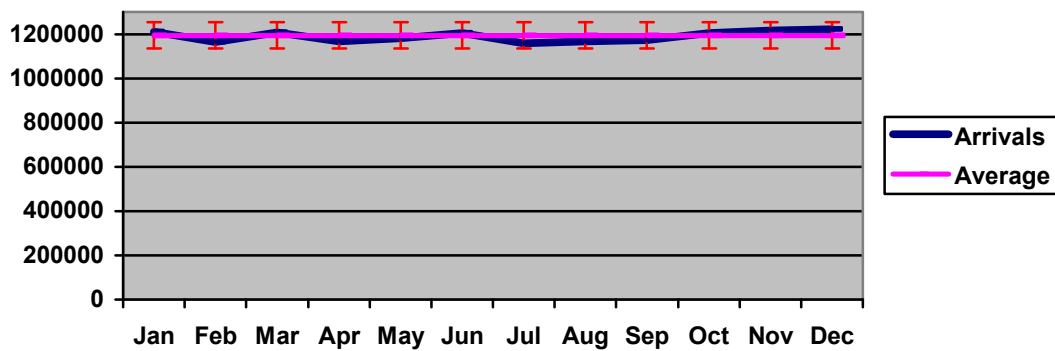


Figure 2. 3 – Illustration of the plain pattern

- Empirical measure:
Figure 2.3 illustrates the plain pattern. The thick solid line represents monthly tourist arrivals while the thin solid line shows the average. The short vertical bars

indicate 5% variation compared to the mean. The empirical measures for the plain pattern are as follows:

- Every point varies by no more than 5% from the mean.

- Examples:

This is not a common pattern among the cases examined. Only seven percent of the cases studied conform to this pattern, that is, the total visitors and Asian visitors to Malaysia over a seven-year time period. It shows that Malaysia has no obvious seasonality in terms of total inbound visitors or Asian visitors.

Neither the Chinese market nor any Chinese destinations fall into this pattern.

2.4.3 Type 3 – The single-peak mountain pattern

- Verbal definition: This pattern is similar to the landform of a single-peak mountain, which refers to clearly defined elevated land, with a single distinctive high point.

- Illustration:

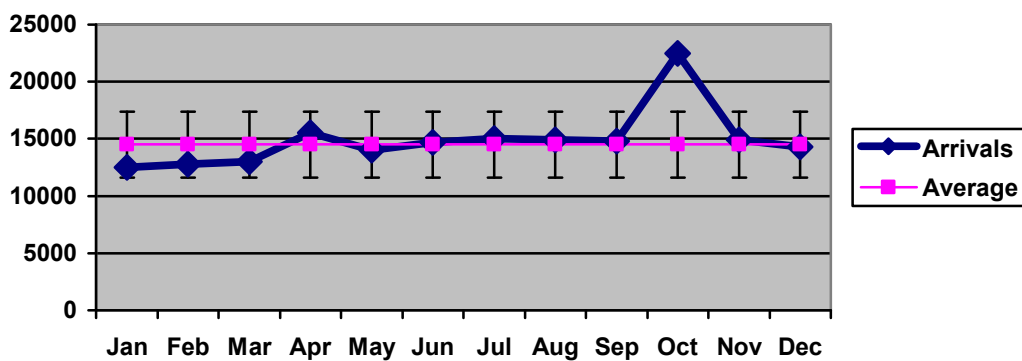


Figure 2. 4 – Illustration of the single-peak mountain pattern

- Empirical measure:

Figure 2.4 illustrates the single-peak mountain pattern. The thick solid line represents monthly tourist arrivals while the thin solid line shows the average. The

long vertical bars indicate 20% variation compared to the mean. The empirical measures for the single-peak mountain pattern are as follows:

- One or more points above the mean, which vary by 20% or more from the mean and which are consecutive;

- Examples:

Table 2.4 and Table 2.5 describe those groups belonging to this pattern with their very high and very low points indicated. Twenty-four percent of the cases studied conform to this pattern.

Table 2. 4 – Markets performing in the single-peak mountain pattern

Origin\ Destination	Japan		Singapore		Malaysia	
	Peak	Base	Peak	Base	Peak	Base
Africa	October	December	December	February	#April	#November
Oceania	September	January	July	February	January	November
Europe	October	December			March	June

(# indicates it only applies to the year 2000 & 2001)

African visitors to Japan are most likely to concentrate in October, while they are least likely to go to Japan in December. But when they go to Singapore, December seems to be the most popular month, while February has the lowest number of African visitors. And when they go to Malaysia, this pattern applies to them only in the year 2000 and 2001. The peak and the lowest months for European visitors to Japan are the same as for African visitors, but European visitors conform to a single-peak mountain pattern when they go to Malaysia instead of Singapore. Most European visitors go to Malaysia in March while the least number go in June. Oceania visitors also conform to this pattern when they go to visit the three countries – Japan, Singapore and Malaysia; however, their peak and low months are different from each other respectively. They go to visit Japan peaking in September and travel there least in January. But January is the peak in terms of going to Malaysia for them, while they are least likely to go to Malaysia in November. The peak and lowest months for them to travel to Singapore are completely different as well, peaking in July and being lowest in February.

Some exceptions exist in the year 2002 in this category as well. For both the markets of African visitors and European visitors to Japan, their peak is in June instead of October in the year 2002.

Table 2. 5 – The peaks and bases for Chinese visitors to Thailand (2000 – 2006), Singapore (2000 – 2006) and Korea (2000 only)

Thailand		Singapore		Korea (2000)	
Peak	Base	Peak	Base	Peak	Base
January/ February	October	2000-2003: January/ February 2004-2006: July-August	June	August	January

The Chinese visitors tend to be most likely to perform in the single-peak mountain pattern. Among the five Asian destinations examined, this pattern applies to the Chinese visitors when they go to Thailand, Singapore and Korea in the year 2000 with different peaks and low points. January or February is the most popular month for the Chinese visitors to go to Thailand, and they are least likely to visit Thailand in October. As mentioned before, the Chinese New Year (CNY) is based on the Chinese Lunar calendar, so the dates of CNY are different from year to year. In accord with the calendar, it was found that the peak month for Chinese visitors to Thailand follows the month of CNY month, that is, their peak month in 2001, 2004 and 2006 fell in January as CNY fell in this month in these years, and the rest are in February. So it is the same with the Chinese visitors to Singapore from the year 2000 to 2003. However, the peak for them to go to Singapore shifted from January or February in 2000-2003 to July and August from 2004 to 2006. And the Chinese visitors were least likely to visit Singapore in June. In 2000, the Chinese visitors to Korea concentrated in August, and they were least likely to go there in January. However, from 2001, the seasonality pattern for Chinese visitors to Korea shifted to be in the multi-peak mountains which will be discussed in the following section.

2.4.4 Type 4 – The multi-peak mountain pattern

- Verbal definition: This pattern is similar to a landform of multi-peak mountains, which refers to land higher than a hill, with two or more distinctive high points.
- Illustration:

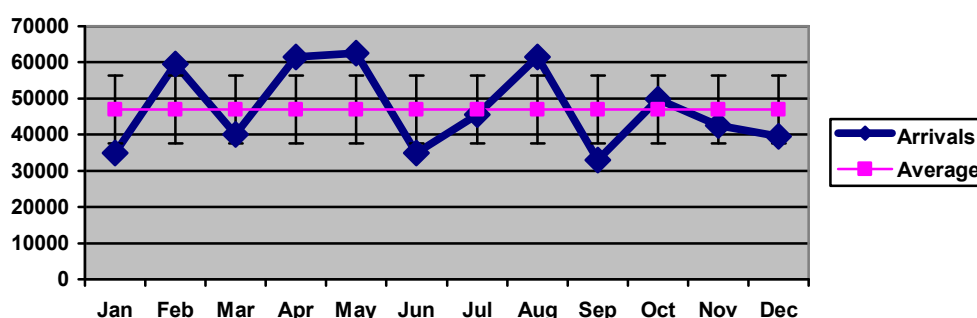


Figure 2. 5– Illustration of the multi-peak mountains pattern

- Empirical measure:

Figure 2.5 illustrates the multi-peak mountains pattern. The thick solid line represents monthly tourist arrivals while the thin solid line shows the average. The long vertical bars indicate 20% variation compared to the mean. The empirical measures for the multi-peak mountain pattern are as follows:

 - Two or more points above the mean, which vary by 20% or more from the mean and at least two of which are not consecutive.
- Examples:

Two percent of cases studied conform to this pattern. African visitors to Malaysia tend to conform to this pattern from the year 2002 to 2006. Their peaks come in January, March and October. African visitor arrivals in these three months are more than 20% above the mean. An examination of the charts reveals that there is a shift of seasonality for African visitors to Malaysia. In the previous two years examined (2000 and 2001), they displayed the single-peak mountain pattern.

This pattern applies to Chinese outbound visitors when they go to visit Malaysia as well. And the peaks for them come in February, May and August from 2000 to 2004. In the year 2005 and 2006, May became a low month for them, and November became another peak, together with February and August. As mentioned above, there is a shift for the Chinese visitors to Korea. From the year 2001 to 2006, they fall into the multi-peak mountains pattern. Except the year 2002, the peak months for them were August and October, and the low seasons came in January or February, and June. However, June is the very peak season for them to Korea in 2002, together with the other two peaks, August and October.

This pattern does not exist in China's domestic tourism.

2.4.5 Type 5 – The basin pattern

- Verbal definition: This pattern is similar to the landform of a basin, which refers to an area of low land largely surrounded and defined by higher land.
- Illustration:

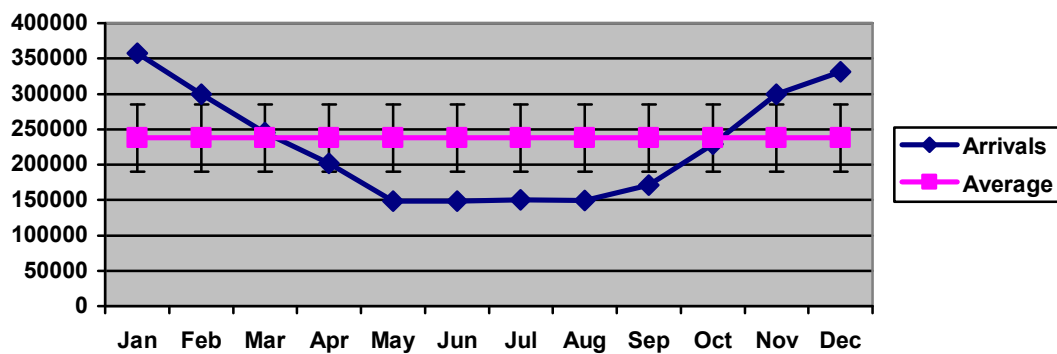


Figure 2. 6– Illustration of the basin pattern

- Empirical measure:
Figure 2.6 illustrates the basin pattern. The thick solid line represents monthly tourist arrivals while the thin solid line shows the average. The long vertical bars

indicate 20% variation compared to the mean. The empirical measures for the basin pattern are as follows:

- Two or more consecutive points below the mean, at least one of which varies by 20% or more from the mean;
- Those consecutive low points mentioned above are in the middle of the pattern;
- On the left side of those consecutive low points mentioned above, the points are on the decline;
- On the right side of those consecutive low points mentioned above, the points are on the increase.

- Examples:

Seven percent of cases studied conform to this pattern. In this pattern, tourist arrivals are most likely to visit at both the very beginning and the very end of the year; and the low seasons happen in the middle of the year. The seasonality type for European visitors to Thailand and Singapore fits this pattern. The low seasons for European visitors to Thailand last from May to September; while they go to Singapore least in May but start to rise from July.

For the Chinese market, both domestic visitors and overseas visitors to Hainan performed in this seasonality pattern as well. The very low season for them is from June to September; however, there are slightly more domestic visitors in July and August (when it is China's school summer holiday) than in June and September.

2.4.6 Type 6 –The plateau pattern

- Verbal definition: This pattern is similar to the landform of a plateau, which refers to a flat highland area with at least one steep face.

- Illustration:

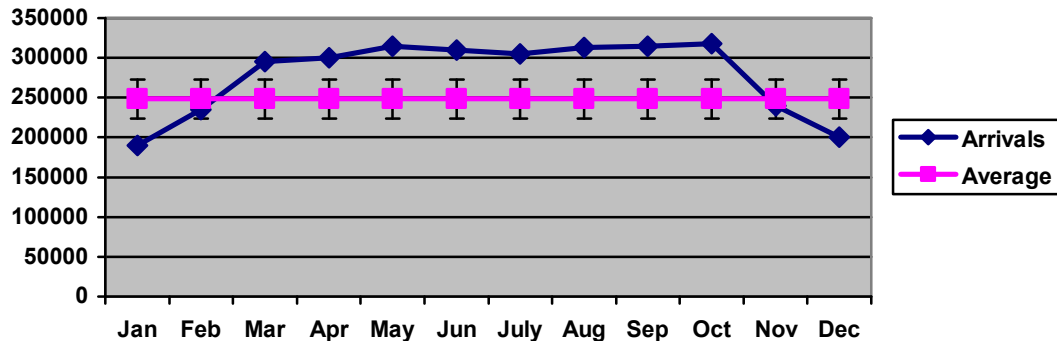


Figure 2. 7– Illustration of the plateau pattern

- Empirical measure:

Figure 2.7 illustrates the plateau pattern. The thick solid line represents monthly tourist arrivals while the thin solid line shows the average. The vertical bars indicate 10% variation compared to the mean. The empirical measures for the plateau pattern are as follows:

- The first two/three and the last one/two points are below the mean, and the others are above the mean;
- The points above the mean vary by 10% or more from the mean.

- Examples:

No cases examined in the five key Asian countries fit this pattern, but this pattern suits the performance of overseas visitors to Beijing. In the plateau pattern, travellers are least likely to visit either at the beginning or at the end of the year; and for the rest months of the year, there is little fluctuation of tourist arrivals and each arrival is above the monthly mean arrival. In the case of overseas visitors to Beijing, the low season fell in January, February and December; and overseas tourists tend to visit Beijing over the remaining months.

2.5 Conclusion and implications

The six patterns identified provide a comprehensive and inclusive approach to seasonality in Asian tourism. The most basic and common type was the rolling hills pattern. Among the 285 cases examined, 60% of them correspond to this pattern. This finding confirms the view that extreme seasonality, as evidenced in the single or multi-peak mountain types, does not dominate Asian tourism. Nevertheless seasonality in some new and different forms appears in the data. The basin pattern and the plateau pattern turn out to perform in a completely different way. Among the cases examined, the European visitors to Thailand and Singapore and the domestic and overseas visitors to Hainan Island conform to the basin pattern; while only the overseas visitors to Beijing fit the plateau pattern. By looking at the location of Hainan (in the south of China) and Beijing (in the north of China), it is easy to see that the climates in the two places are completely different. The climate at beginning and the end of year is very cold in Beijing while it is quite cool in Hainan Island; and in the middle of the year, it is very hot in Hainan while it is cool in Beijing. The differences in climate result in the different seasonality patterns for the two areas, which indicate that in this instance the powerful natural factors play an important part in shaping the local seasonality pattern.

Only the total visitors and the Asian visitors to Malaysia appear to be in the one and only pattern, the plain, which could be interpreted as a flow of visitor arrivals with no time linked changes in tourism demand. Many specific markets show strong seasonality in relation to certain destinations. Among the six patterns discussed above, the last four patterns have extremely high or low seasons, which affect both tourists' travelling experience and tourism management in the destinations. The concentrations of tourists in short time periods will bring more profits to tourism business, but crowds may be a great burden to the attractions and reduce tourists' satisfaction as well. The low seasons may impose high costs for labour and reduce income through little use of tourism infrastructure. It is important for the tourism industry to strive to achieve the most efficient seasonality patterns which may benefit both themselves and their tourists. As mentioned in the example of the fourth pattern, the multi-peak mountain, there is a shift of seasonality pattern for African visitors to Malaysia, from the single-peak mountain to the multi-peak mountains, which suggests that Tourism

Malaysia may have undertaken marketing to create more attractive points to bring in more African visitors.

In this study the six seasonality patterns were derived by identifying the variations between monthly tourist arrivals and average tourist arrivals. The method is simple and effective, and it quantifies and further develops the seasonality patterns mentioned by Butler and Mao (1997). This study not only verifies how much seasonality exists in Asian area, but also identifies the patterns and fills the gap in describing the individual monthly patterns further revealing the importance of seasonality changes previously assessed by the seasonality indicator and the Gini-coefficient (Lundtorp, 2001). As established in the study of Spanish tourism seasonality by Lopez Bonilla et al (2006), diverse locations even in the one country (China) showed significant differences with regard to seasonality patterns. The coding system for the seasonality patterns employed examples from several countries and over a long time period, and thus addressed requests by researchers to quantify and compare empirical patterns (Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005).

The operation of major world events is apparent in the data. The outbreak of SARS in 2003 had a serious impact on the tourism seasonality patterns. All the 2003 cases examined in this study showed a sharp decline from April to June when SARS broke out. Another important point is that both African and European visitors to Japan and Korea performed differently in the year 2002. The two markets peaked in June in 2002 when more travellers visited Japan and Korea. The 17th football World Cup was held in Japan and Korea from 31st May to 30th June. This study shows that this event affected African and European markets considerably, but did not influence visitors from other continents very much. The Chinese tourists also responded to this event held in the neighbouring countries. Although there is not an obvious change in the fluctuations of Chinese visitors to Japan, there is a different peak for visiting Korea in 2002. In that year, June became the most popular month for the Chinese to visit Korea, instead of their normal peak, which is August. Another sporting event also had an influence on the Macau tourism seasonality pattern. In December 2006, when the International Kart Grand Prix was held in Macau, there was an increase of tourist arrivals from overseas to Macau, with a 20% increase compared to the average monthly arrivals. This event made Macau perform in the single-peak mountain pattern

in 2006 in terms of overseas visitors, which is quite different to its normal pattern – the rolling hills pattern.

As indicated by Koenig-Lewis and Bischoff (2005), Chinese outbound tourism and particularly the Chinese New Year present an interesting area for research. This study found several interesting points by looking specifically into the performance of Chinese visitors. Generally speaking, there are two favourite time periods for them to travel overseas. One is the month with Chinese New Year (CNY). As discussed above in the six patterns, the month with CNY is the peak or one of the peaks for Chinese visitors to go to Thailand from 2000 to 2006, to Singapore from 2000 to 2003, and to Malaysia from 2000 to 2006. In one of the previous studies, CNY was found to be an influential factor in shaping the seasonality patterns for inbound tourists to China. In that study by Wall and Yan (2003), it was found that the number of Compatriots (which can be also regarded as overseas Chinese) to China is higher for the month containing CNY than for the preceding and following months. The other one is August when the school summer holiday comes. August is the favourite month for Chinese to visit Korea from 2000 to 2006 (except 2002). For 2004 to 2006, the peak time to visit Singapore for Chinese tourists was August.

The coding scheme defining the six seasonality patterns can be applied to various uses within the tourism area. First, tourism managers can apply the coding scheme to identify benchmarks and form comparisons. From this information they may choose to follow a number of established strategies. There are multiple ways to extend and modify seasonality benefits through promotion and incentives, including pricing options, developing special attractions and fostering events. Additionally, some jobs and tasks in tourism facilities may be able to be shifted to predicted low season times when pressure on staff and managers are less. Secondly, the seasonality coding scheme can be used by the policy makers when they are planning certain tourism-related events. Sports events in particular may be used in this way. It is insightful and necessary to conceptualize key sport events as tourist attractions (Higham, 2006). As mentioned above, the Chinese, African and European markets were affected by the World Cup. The implication for the related policy makers is to arrange specific events, notably sports, to target specific markets in order to mitigate side effects resulting from the low seasons. Finally, the coding scheme established here can also be applied

to future academic studies. Good conceptual analysis and theory building in tourism research relies on a comprehensive and rich understanding of the phenomenon. The scheme proposed here may help provide a contribution to this understanding. These six patterns are based on examining cases using a strong Asian and tropical focus. They could also be applied and tested in the study of seasonality patterns in other countries and for other climate conditions. These extensions, comparisons and checking procedures could be undertaken in the Middle East, Africa and central and South America.

Chapter 3 – Chinese travellers’ attitudes towards seasonality and Golden Week travelling (Study 2)

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3.5 Conclusion and implications – summary of Study 2

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Background information – China’s Golden Week holiday system

As noted in Chapter One, the Golden Week holidays were set up by the Chinese government in October 1999, seeking to boost consumption and expand domestic demand. Before May 2008, China had three “Golden Weeks” for Spring Festival (Chinese New Year), International Labour Day (May Day) and National Day holidays. The “Golden Weeks” are actually three days only as a weekend on one side of the holiday is designated as two working days. The seven-day holiday week has become a significant opportunity for the development of China’s tourism market. China’s tourism industry has been growing at double-digit rates for almost 10 consecutive years. An estimated 28 million Chinese travelled during the first Golden Week in 1999. In 2007, this number had increased to over 120 million (McCabe, 2007). Golden Weeks have become a part of the Chinese life and since then the Chinese have spent more and more each year at tourist hot spots across the country – a total of more than \$70 billion over seven years up to May 2006, according to official statistics. The prolonged holidays indeed turned out to be “golden” for the economy.

Despite the great benefits for economic development, problems are arising as a result of visitor concentration over the short time periods. The rising number of visitors has

exerted great pressure on the transportation, catering and hotel and tourism infrastructure. There have been disputes concerning whether or not to cancel the Golden Weeks system. People who argue for cancellation of the Golden Weeks system have argued that so many people move at the same time that it has made travel in the Golden Weeks a nightmare. An analogy in Western countries is to view the Golden Weeks as three times more intense than Christmas. Flights are fully booked, trains and buses are jammed and the highways are congested in every direction. And the contradictions between consumer demand and service capacity caused by the imbalanced development has negatively influenced the quality of people's travelling experience. Previous studies indicated that once an attraction reaches its carrying capacity, every additional tourist will increase every other tourists' travelling cost, which means that the satisfaction level for existing tourists will be reduced (He, 2002; Feng, 2005).

All the negative phenomena mentioned above have resulted in calls for cancelling the Golden Week system ranging from ordinary people, to government policy makers and to academic researchers. The question is framed as whether the Golden Week system should be cut off or not? Taking China's low development level into consideration, on 23rd November, 2004, a Chinese tourism authority from CNTA declared to the public that China will continue to implement the Golden Week holiday system. This statement was supported by some Chinese academics. Their research showed that the Golden Week system reflects the inherent requirement of Chinese residents; therefore the cancellation would directly suppress the travel demand for residents (Gao, 2005; Liu, D.Q., 2005; Liu, S.M., 2005; Zhang, 2001; Zhang & Wang, 2005). It was decided however that the system should be kept under constant review and change made whenever necessary. As mentioned in Chapter One, from 2008, the May Day holiday was reduced to one day, with new one-day holidays for the Tomb-sweeping (Qingming) Festival, Dragon Boat Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival.

The Golden Week holiday system is a nation wide policy, which is acting as a powerful measure to protect and nurture tourism by the Chinese people and to regulate the development of China's tourism industry. Problems arising in Golden Weeks travelling have resulted from the imbalance between rising demands of tourism for Chinese people and inadequate supply. Such problems may still occur in

China's tourism development even without the Golden week system. Therefore, the cancellation of Golden Week holiday system will not avoid these problems. Some academics argue that the way to solve those problems is to manage, not to cancel the system (Zhang & Wang, 2005). Therefore, it is important for policy makers to look into the actual needs of the Chinese people and their attitudes concerning Golden Weeks travelling. The present study seeks to contribute to this understanding.

3.1.2 Seasonality influences in China

As discussed extensively in Chapter One, seasonality patterns are basically influenced by two factors – natural and institutional, and other factors, like special events and religions. Such factors interact with each other and influence people's decision making to different extents. It is hard to determine which factor is more influential for policy makers to take into account when they are making policy decisions concerning seasonality. It could be of assistance to policy makers to know the travelling public's attitudes concerning seasonality.

To clarify the seasonality issues in China, a brief review of the general ideas presented about seasonality previously are summarised as follows. These studies and considerations contribute substantially to the construction of the study in this chapter.

3.1.2.1 Natural seasonality influences in China

Natural seasonality is the result of regular variation in climatic conditions – temperature, rainfall, snowfall and daylight (Barry & Perry, 1973; Boucher, 1975; Butler, 1994a). China, with its vast territory and abundant resources, has a continental and seasonal climate. Most parts are in the temperate zone but the southern areas are in tropical or subtropical zone while northern areas are in the frigid zone. China has a four-season climate, however, climates in different areas are complicated. For example, northern Heilongjiang Province has a winter climate the year round without much of a summer, while Hainan Island has a summer climate the year round without a true winter. Generally, the northeast experiences hot and dry summers and bitterly cold winters. The north and central region has almost continuing rainfall, hot summers and cold winters. The southeast region has substantial rainfall, with subtropical summers and cool winters. Central, western and southern China are also susceptible to flooding. As a result, the natural seasonality in China varies in different areas. People

from different parts of China will be influenced by different natural seasonality concerns.

3.1.2.2 Institutional seasonality influences in China

Institutional seasonality is the outcome of a combination of religious, cultural, ethnic and social factors – periods of religious worship, holidays or pilgrimages as well as school or industry holidays. The public holiday is one of the most common forms that affect tourism, and the most significant elements of institutionalized seasonality are school and industry holidays (Butler, 1994a).

In China, there are currently seven official public holidays which are applicable to the whole population and four official public holidays applicable to specific sections of the population, as illustrated in Table 3.1.

Table 3. 1 – China’s public holidays

Date	Name	Duration	Remarks
1 st January	New Year	1 day	
1 st day of 1 st lunar month	Chinese New Year	3 days*	Last day of last lunar month from 2008
8 th March	International Women’s Day	Half-day	Applicable to women
5 th Solar Term (4 th April or 5 th April)	Qingming Festival	1 day	Applicable from 2008
1 st May	Labour Day	3 days* (1 day)	1 day since 2008
4 th May	Youth Day	Half-day	Applicable to youth above the age of 14
5 th day of 5 th lunar month	Dragon Boat Festival	1 day	Applicable from 2008
1 st June	Children’s Day	1 Day	Applicable to children below the age of 14
1 st August	Army Day	Half-day	Applicable to military personnel in active service
15 th day of 8 th lunar month	Mid-Autumn Day	1 day	Applicable from 2008
1 st October	National Day	3 days*	

(* indicates that the three-day holiday is combined with two well-placed weekends to form a week long holiday, which is named Golden Week as mentioned in Chapter One.)

School holidays are another good time for the Chinese to go travelling either within China or internationally. Basically, there are two school holidays per year in China, one is the winter holiday between mid January and mid February and the other is the summer holiday period in July and August. The latter one is the more preferred travelling time as it lasts longer and it occurs in the season with good weather.

3.1.2.3 Other seasonality influences in China

Other seasonality influences include social pressure or fashion, sporting seasons and traditions (Butler, 1994a). With the economic development, the Chinese people have become more enthusiastic travellers (Liu, 2009). Indeed travelling is becoming fashionable for the Chinese. After the introduction of the two-day weekend system in 1995 in China, people tended to quite enjoy two relaxing days travelling in local surrounds. And since the implementation of Golden Week system from 1998, domestic tourism has been growing vigorously. In 1998, the number of domestic tourists reached 695 million, spending a total of 239.1 billion yuan (RMB – Chinese currency) – 10 percent and 74 percent increases over 1995, respectively (Asianinfo, 2000). With the development of the Chinese people's living standards, Chinese citizens have an increasingly strong interest in travelling abroad. In recent years, it has become more common to see Chinese tourists during the three Golden Weeks at the Sydney Opera House, Egypt's pyramids, Mount Fuji in Japan and other scenic spots around the world.

The factor of sporting seasons seems not to influence Chinese tourism seasonality very much. However, it was reported that the 2008 Olympic Games had brought in large number of tourists to Beijing after the Olympic Games. Beijing received a record number of tourists during the weeklong Spring Festival in 2009. The municipal tourism authority said that it handled 3.24 million domestic tourists from 25th to 31st January, 2009, up 20 percent on last year (CNTA, 2009a). The Olympic venues are among the most popular attractions. The main Olympic venue of Bird's Nest opened to the public from 1st October 2008. The stadium attracted 60,000 tourists on its opening day and an average of 20,000 to 30,000 visitors every day since then (CNTA, 2009b). Approximately 80,000 people visited the Bird's Nest and Water Cube during the first four days of the 2009 CNY Golden Week. With the development and progress of society, these ancillary seasonality influences are influencing and will increasingly shape the seasonality patterns of Chinese tourism.

3.2 Research gaps and study objectives

Disputes concerning the Golden Weeks holiday system appear likely to continue. It is obvious that all the problems resulting from Golden Weeks travelling can not be ignored; however, the impacts of Golden Weeks both on China's economy and

Chinese life should be taken into account by the policy makers. Golden Weeks have offered great opportunities for economic restructuring and employment expansion in popular tourist destinations. The goal of the Chinese government in setting up the Golden Week system is to assist China's 1.3 billion people to enjoy the holiday. In particular, this system acts as a guarantee for employees of private enterprises in China to have and to enjoy their holiday rights. Therefore, in order to solve the Golden Weeks' problems, simply cancelling the system is not a solution. As it is a policy for the whole nation, it is important to review this system from the perspective of the Chinese people. In brief it is necessary for the policy makers to listen to what the general public are saying about their Golden Weeks' travelling.

The research components of this chapter initially present Chinese concerns about seasonality based on demographic factors. In this section, the respondents are divided into groups according to their demographic profiles – residence, gender, age, education level, occupation and level of income. Within each demographic category, the means of their ratings on 20 seasonality influences are compared among the groups. The next section focuses on the Chinese attitudes towards Golden Weeks travelling. The advantages and disadvantages regarding their travelling experiences in each Golden Week will be identified. Finally the respondents will be divided into two groups based on two different categories of previous travelling experiences – frequent travellers versus infrequent travellers, and Golden-week tourists versus non-Golden-week tourists. Within each category, their perceptions and attitudes towards seasonality and Golden Week travelling will be compared.

3.3 Data and methodology

3.3.1 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire in this study was developed with the aim of providing basic information about Chinese views of seasonality influences and their attitudes towards travelling in the Golden Weeks. The questionnaire followed a largely structured format with mostly closed-ended questions, but also contained a limited number of open-ended questions. It has been argued that survey questionnaire designed with some open-ended questions effectively supplements researcher driven categories and options (Lazarsfeld et al, 1944; Mckennell, 1974; Moser & Kalton, 1971; Schuman & Presser, 1996).

The questionnaire contained three main sections. Part A began with gathering demographic information from respondents, including their age, gender, education, occupation, income level and their previous travelling experiences both domestic and international. Part B sought to identify how strongly the seasonality factors influence the respondents' decision making on when to travel. It was presented as a structured table with a seven-point Likert type scale (from "not strongly at all" to "very strongly") for each variable. Those variables were constructed according to the two major factors – natural and institutional as well as other factors that influence the seasonality patterns. The final part of this questionnaire used open-ended questions which asked respondents about the advantages and disadvantages of travelling in each Golden Week.

3.3.2 Data collection and sampling

The questionnaire was administered to Chinese respondents in China. It was first constructed in English and then translated into Mandarin. Then the translation was verified by back-translating the questionnaire into English to correct any expressions lost in the translation process and to improve the reliability of the translation (Graciano, 2001). Finally the responses were translated back into English for coding. The full-scale survey was conducted between early April and late September, 2007.

Five major Chinese tourist locations were chosen for the distribution of the questionnaire: Beijing, Shanghai, Xi'an, Quanzhou and Guangzhou & Guangxi province. The five places were chosen for two reasons: one is that they are all popular tourist places in China, the other is that the selection covers different parts of China – North (Beijing), East (Shanghai), West (Xi'an) and Southeast (Quanzhou and Guangzhou & Guangxi province).

Due to time and cost constraints and anticipated response rates, the questionnaires were distributed through a snowball sampling method. Each of the researcher's friends in the six places was given 10 copies of the questionnaire. Those friends include students in universities, employees in private companies or government, or businessmen who are self-employed. They completed one by themselves, and were asked to distribute the others to their family members and their colleges in the study

locations. The aim of using the snowball approach was to target a group of people with diverse ages. The contacts of the researcher were studying or working in different areas which helped to contact respondents with different educational and travel backgrounds. The completed surveys were collected from the contacts within two weeks of the initial distribution.

A total of 530 copies were distributed in the five locations, 100 each in Beijing, Shanghai, and Quanzhou, 110 in Xi'an and 120 in Guangzhou & Guangxi Province. These figures were based on the feedback from the distributing personnel and a planned effort to reach tourists in each location. Out of 100 copies of the questionnaire distributed in Beijing, 5 questionnaires were not returned and 9 questionnaires were invalid either because they were empty or uncompleted; out of 100 questionnaires distributed in Shanghai, 15 questionnaires were not returned and 11 questionnaires were invalid either because they were empty or uncompleted; out of 110 questionnaires distributed in Xi'an, all were returned and 6 questionnaires were invalid either because they were empty or uncompleted; out of 120 questionnaires distributed in Guangzhou & Guangxi province, 27 questionnaires were not returned and 11 questionnaires were invalid either because they were empty or uncompleted; and out of 100 questionnaires distributed in Quanzhou, all were returned and valid. The overall response rate was 84%. Table 3.2 summarises the key statistics for survey completions.

Table 3. 2 – Questionnaire distributions

Survey distributions	Number distributed	Number returned	Number returned not or invalid	Total response rate
Beijing	100	86	9	86%
Shanghai	100	79	26	74%
Xi'an	110	104	6	95%
Guangzhou & Guangxi Province	120	81	38	68%
Quanzhou	100	100	0	100%
Total	530	450	79	85%

3.3.3 Data analysis methods

SPSS was used to assist data analysis in this study. There were several methods applied in the analyses according to the different types of data available and different purposes for each individual part.

First, the respondents' demographic profiles were described by frequency, which provides numbers and percentages for each sub-group. Secondly, one-way ANOVA was employed to compare the means of respondents' ratings on the 20 seasonality influences for each demographic group. For the gender comparison, the t-test was used as there were only two groups. Then there is a detailed description of Chinese's travelling experiences in each of the Golden Weeks, including advantages and disadvantages. The last section explained travellers' perceptions of seasonality and Golden Week tourism, by linking to their previous travel experiences – frequent tourists versus non-frequent tourists and Golden-week tourists versus non-Golden-week tourists. It employed a cross tabulation, which was used to present the demographic characteristics for groups based on their previous travel experiences and Chi-square was applied to test the significances of the differences. Additionally, discriminant analysis was applied to assess which of the 20 seasonality influences contribute most to differentiate groups with varied travel levels – frequent tourists versus non-frequent tourists. The application of the discriminant analysis was selectively applied in this research to the variable of travel experience which has been shown to be one of the most effective integrating factors linking traveller characteristics (Pearce & Lee, 2005). Finally a descriptive appraisal of the perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of travelling in Golden Weeks between Golden-Week tourists and non-Golden-Week tourists was constructed using frequencies and plots of the factors reported by the two groups.

3.4 Results and discussion

3.4.1 Demographic profiles of respondents

Table 3.3 presents the information concerning the respondents' demographic profiles. The sample consisted of 48.4% males and 51.6% females. In terms of age, most of the respondents (66.0%) fell into the "18 - 30" group. While this distribution reflects the snowball approach used, it is broadly consistent with the demographics of the cities studied (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2009; Zhang, 2005) since this age

group is a dominant part of the Chinese urban population. The others (44.0%) were from the older age groups, with 23.6% from the “31 - 45” group and 10.4% from the “more than 45” category.

In terms of education, only 16.0% of the respondents had not completed high school or the high school degree while 20.0% of them had been awarded the technical or vocational certificate. Around 17.1% of the respondents were still undertaking their university courses. A larger group (38.7%) had finished their university undergraduate degree while only a small number had obtained or were undertaking their post graduate degree, either at the masters or doctoral level.

The occupation of the respondents included various fields. A number of them were professionals/lecturers (24.4%) and a number students (21.6%). There were also smaller groups of clerical worker and labourers. In terms of income, the majority of them (37.1%) earned between ¥ 500 and ¥ 2000 (RMB, Chinese currency) per month, followed by 26.0% earning between ¥ 2001 and ¥ 8000 and 14.9% more than ¥ 8000. A further 18.9% of the respondents had no income, which can be interpreted as largely due to their student status.

Table 3.3 – Respondents’ demographic profiles

Demographic profiles	Frequency (N=450)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male N=218	48.4
	Female N=232	51.6
Age	18 ~ 30 N=297	66.0
	31 ~ 45 N=106	23.6
	More than 45 N=47	10.4
Education level	High school degree or under N=72	16.0
	Technical / Vocational N=90	20.0
	Current university student N=77	17.1
	University graduate N=174	38.7
	Post graduate (master/doctorate) N=29	6.4
	Others N=8	1.8
Occupation	Executive / Government position N=50	11.1
	Professional / Lecturer N=110	24.4
	Business N=38	8.4
	Skilled worker N=34	7.6
	Labour / Famer N=16	3.6
	Student N=97	21.6
	Office / Clerical N=67	14.9
	Other N=38	8.4
Income	No income or less than RMB ¥ 500 N=85	18.9
	RMB ¥ 500 ~ RMB ¥ 2000 N=167	37.1
	RMB ¥ 2001 ~ ¥ 8000 N=117	26.0
	More than ¥ 8000 N=67	14.9
	Other N=14	3.1

3.4.2 Previous travelling experiences

Table 3.4 presents the number of places that the respondents had visited both within China and overseas. When the respondents were asked how many Chinese cities they

had visited, most of them (44.2%) responded with the answer of five or more. Forty-three percent had travelled to two to four Chinese cities, with 16.2% to four places, 14.4% to three places and 12.7% to two places. There were still 12.4% of respondents with little travel experience within China, 6% had travelled to just one place and 6.4% had never travelled within China.

When describing their previous overseas travelling experience, more than two thirds of the respondents (69.3%) said they had never travelled overseas before. This reveals that the Chinese lack overseas travel experiences. This finding confirms previous studies which mentioned that the Chinese had limited outside world experiences (Chang, 2007; Wei, et al. 1989). Among those respondents with overseas travel experiences, 17.3% of them had travelled to one foreign country or place; 9.4% had travelled to two to four places (6.7% - two, 1.6% - three, 1.1% - four); and 4.0% had travelled to five or more foreign countries.

Table 3. 4 – Number of places the respondents had visited

No. of places	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more
Within China	29 (6.4%)	27 (6.0%)	57 (12.7%)	65 (14.4%)	73 (16.2%)	199 (44.2%)
Overseas	312 (69.3%)	78 (17.3%)	30 (6.7%)	7 (1.6%)	5 (1.1%)	18 (4.0%)

With respect to the times during which they travelled, the respondents provided different responses for travelling within China and for travelling overseas. For the responses to travelling within China, the majority (42.6%) said that they normally travelled during three Golden Week holidays, with 6.0% on Chinese New Year, 20.7% on May Day and 16.2% on National Day holiday respectively. For the school holiday period, 33.1% of the sample indicated they travelled in this period. As mentioned before in the introduction of this chapter, the school holiday, particularly the summer holiday is an ideal time for travelling over an extended time period and enjoying better weather. Working leave is another good option for the Chinese to travel within China, fitting 21.3% of the responses in this sample. Only 14.0% of the respondents undertook their domestic travelling on weekends. Another 21.3%

responded to this question with “other”. Among those who specified “other”, “on business travel” was the most frequent answer. Some respondents specified “other” as “just took a break whenever I wanted to”.

The situation is completely different in the responses to the time spent travelling internationally. As most of respondents had little international travelling experience, the majority (71.1%) of answers to this question were “other”, and “other” here was specified as “never travelled internationally before”. Working leave is the time taken most (13.3%) by those who had travelled internationally, followed by school holiday (10.0%). Only 7.6% of respondents travelled internationally during the three Golden Week holidays, with 2.0% on Chinese New Year, 2.7% on May Day and 2.9% on National Day holiday respectively. This may due to the expensive cost of travelling internationally. The seven-day holiday is long enough for Chinese to go abroad, but most of them can not afford to travel abroad and would rather travel within China due to financial issues. Only 1.6% stated that they undertook international travel on weekends. The two-day weekend only offers the opportunity to travel to neighbouring countries.

Table 3. 5 – The time periods for Chinese travellers*

Travel time	Within China	International
Weekends	63 (14.0%)	7 (1.6%)
Chinese New Year holiday	27 (6.0%)	9 (2.0%)
May Day holiday	92 (20.4%)	12 (2.7%)
National Day holiday	73 (16.2%)	13 (2.9%)
School holiday	149 (33.1%)	45 (10.0%)
Working leave	96 (21.3%)	60 (13.3%)
Others	96 (21.3%)	320 (71.1%)

(*Note: as this was a multiple-answer question, respondents could choose as many answers as apply to them, the total number of responses here exceeds the sample number 450.)

3.4.3 Overview of seasonality influences

Table 3.6 presents the mean value for the itemised factors shaping seasonality. The results indicate that overall, personal factors influence the respondents’ decision-

making most concerning when to travel (mean = 4.67), followed by the natural factors (mean = 4.62). The mean values for institutional factors and social factors are less than 4.00, with 3.96 and 3.22 respectively. But within the institutional factors, the mean value for Golden Weeks is above 4.00 (mean = 4.15), which indicates that Golden Weeks act as a significant factor influencing respondents' decision-making for when to travel. It seems that social factors have least impact on respondents' decision-making for choosing their travel time.

When looking into the single influence, the most powerful one is "crowding" (mean = 5.65). This may be due to the large population of China. It is almost impossible to imagine 1.3 billion people travelling at the same time. Most of the respondents would have had an experience of the "crowding" problem in their previous travelling experience. The next two factors influencing the choice of travel period were the "amount of rain" (mean = 5.45) and "very high temperature" (mean = 5.44). These data indicate that when people were deciding on their travelling time, they would strongly consider wet weather and very high temperatures. The mean value for the remaining influences is less than 5.00. However, the figure for "overall cost (transport and accommodation)" is quite close to 5.00 (mean = 4.92), which indicates that money is still an important influence for the Chinese people when they are making a decision on when to travel. The "very low temperature" (mean = 4.84), the "travel companions" (mean = 4.63) and the "standard of service at the time of the year" (mean = 4.53) are also considerable factors for shaping the time to travel. By way of contrast, the "religious and cultural factors", the "special events" and the "amount of sunshine" were less powerful in influencing people's decision-making concerning their travelling time, with mean values of 3.00, 3.12 and 3.21 respectively. This result indicates that the Chinese people are not strongly influenced by the religious and cultural factors in their travelling time decision making.

Table 3. 6 – The overall means for seasonality influences (N=450)

Natural factors	Mean 4.62	Institutional factors	Mean 3.96	Personal factors	Mean 4.67	Social factors	Mean 3.22
Amount of rain	5.45	School commitments	3.64	Your favourite time to travel	3.82	Fashion	3.53
Very high temperature	5.44	Work commitments	3.93	Time available	4.46	Special events	3.12
Very low temperature	4.84	Long weekend/ public holiday	3.71	Overall cost (transport & accommodation)	4.92	Religious and cultural factors	3.00
High humidity	4.18	Golden Weeks	Mean 4.15	Travel companions	4.63		
Amount of sunshine	3.21	Celebrating Chinese New Year	4.34	Standard of service at the time of the year	4.53		
		Celebrating May Day	4.07	Crowding	5.65		
		Celebrating National Day	4.04				

In the subsequent sections of this chapter, these means are analysed in more detail by considering the differences among the respondents. The data reported derive from the results of t-tests or one-way ANOVA on the means of the ratings on seasonality influences. In the associated tables the two columns on the right hand side of the table report F values and significant levels resulting from t-tests or one-way ANOVAs. A significant level $\alpha = 0.05$ is set for the analysis. Those significant levels with an asterisk indicate that there are significant differences between groups on that variable. The Scheffe post hoc test was applied to identify the significant differences among the means. Means with significant differences received different notations in the following tables.

3.4.3.1 Seasonality influences for respondents from different parts of China

Table 3.7 provides the means for each seasonality influence for respondents from different parts of China. Based on the places where the surveys were conducted, the respondents were divided into five groups for this ANOVA analysis – Beijing (group 1), Shanghai (group 2), Xi'an (group 3), Quanzhou (group 4), and Guangzhou & Guangxi province (group 5).

Table 3. 7 – Seasonality influences for respondents from different parts of China

Items	Beijing	Shanghai	Xi'an	Quan-zhou	Guangzhou and Guangxi	F value	Sig. (*)
Amount of rain	5.06 ^a	5.72 ^a	5.39 ^a	5.50 ^a	5.63 ^a	2.139	0.075
Very high temperature	5.43 ^a	5.72 ^a	5.35 ^a	5.26 ^a	5.54 ^a	1.182	0.318
Very low temperature	4.71 ^{a,b}	5.35 ^b	4.70 ^{a,b}	4.58 ^a	4.98 ^{a,b}	2.973	0.019*
High humidity	4.17 ^a	4.28 ^a	4.16 ^a	4.06 ^a	4.27 ^a	0.242	0.914
Amount of sunshine	3.26 ^a	3.39 ^a	3.36 ^a	2.80 ^a	3.32 ^a	1.423	0.225
School commitments	3.80 ^{a,b}	4.29 ^b	3.46 ^{a,b}	2.82 ^a	4.06 ^b	6.412	0.000*
Work commitments	3.94 ^{a,b}	4.44 ^b	4.15 ^{a,b}	3.38 ^a	3.80 ^{a,b}	3.292	0.011*
Long weekends/ Public holidays	3.65 ^{a,b}	4.28 ^b	3.73 ^{a,b}	3.28 ^a	3.74 ^{a,b}	2.678	0.031*
Your favourite time to travel	4.13 ^a	4.10 ^a	3.97 ^a	3.32 ^a	3.62 ^a	3.115	0.093
Time available	4.72 ^b	5.08 ^b	4.37 ^{a,b}	3.79 ^a	4.52 ^{a,b}	5.104	0.000*
Travel companions	4.90 ^a	4.99 ^a	4.68 ^a	4.15 ^a	4.51 ^a	2.781	0.076
Overall cost	4.65 ^{a,b}	5.05 ^{a,b}	5.22 ^{a,b}	4.41 ^a	5.33 ^b	4.611	0.001*
Standard of service at the time of year	4.57 ^a	4.76 ^a	4.62 ^a	4.10 ^a	4.69 ^a	2.394	0.050
Crowding	5.71 ^{a,b}	6.13 ^b	5.64 ^{a,b}	5.35 ^a	5.49 ^{a,b}	3.672	0.006*
Fashion	3.88 ^{a,b}	3.39 ^{a,b}	3.35 ^{a,b}	3.16 ^a	3.96 ^b	3.702	0.006*
Religious and cultural factors	3.12 ^a	2.91 ^a	2.91 ^a	2.92 ^a	3.20 ^a	0.460	0.765
Special events	3.20 ^a	3.10 ^a	3.09 ^a	2.82 ^a	3.47 ^a	1.596	0.174
Celebrating Chinese New Year	4.59 ^a	4.32 ^a	4.45 ^a	4.01 ^a	4.38 ^a	1.189	0.315
Celebrating May Day	4.17 ^a	4.08 ^a	4.30 ^a	3.91 ^a	3.86 ^a	0.837	0.502
Celebrating National Day	4.02 ^a	4.09 ^a	4.30 ^a	3.92 ^a	3.84 ^a	0.791	0.532

Means with different notations (a versus b) were reliably differently in the Scheffe post hoc tests.

Among the four dimensions of seasonality influences as categorised in Table 3.6, there were three items with significant differences in the institutional factors and the personal factors respectively, while there was one each in the natural factors and the social factors.

The three items with significant differences in the dimension of institutional factors were “school commitments”, “work commitments” and “long weekend/public holidays”. For the item of “school commitments”, Quanzhou respondents showed significantly lower rating than the respondents from Shanghai and Guangzhou and Guangxi Province. Considering “work commitments”, the only difference was between respondents from Quanzhou and respondents from Shanghai, where Quanzhou respondents put less emphasis than respondents from Shanghai. And for the item of “long weekend/public holidays”, again the difference existed between the Quanzhou group and Shanghai group, where Shanghai respondents’ ratings were considerably higher than Quanzhou respondents. All the groups showed no differences in opinion toward celebrating the three Golden Weeks.

Half of the six items in the personal factors had significant differences among the groups. “Time available” was an important factor influencing travel time period for respondents from Shanghai and Beijing, with the means over 4.50; however, it was relatively weak in influencing Quanzhou respondents’ travel time period (mean less than 4.00). Respondents from Quanzhou rated overall cost as less important than respondents from Guangzhou and Guangxi Province in “overall cost”, and there was no difference among other groups. Except for Quanzhou, the means for respondents from the other four locations were more than 4.50. Concerning the problem of “crowding”, Quanzhou respondents rated this item significantly lower than Shanghai respondents, while there was no significant difference among other groups. And the means for all the groups on this item were more than 5.00.

The only item with significant differences among the groups in the natural factors was “very low temperature”, where Shanghai respondents rated this feature more highly

than respondents from Quanzhou. The item “fashion” was the only social factor where significant differences were found. Here Quanzhou respondents rated fashion lower than respondents from Guangzhou and Guangxi Province, and there were no differences among the other groups.

3.4.3.2 Seasonality influences for respondents by gender

Table 3.8 illustrates the views of seasonality influences by different gender groups. According to the results of the independent t-test, the different gender groups had the same attitudes towards most of the seasonality influences. Differences only arose between males and females in two items: “amount of rain” and “school commitments”. The results showed that females took more consideration of the “amount of rain” than males when they made a decision on travelling time. But considering the “school commitments”, males valued it more than females during their decision making. No significant difference was identified between groups on other seasonality influences.

Table 3. 8 – Seasonality influences for respondents by gender

Items	Female	Male	T value	Sig. (*)
Amount of rain	5.68	5.22	3.028	0.003*
Very high temperature	5.56	5.32	1.705	0.089
Very low temperature	4.82	4.86	-0.275	0.783
High humidity	4.17	4.19	-0.124	0.901
Amount of sunshine	3.13	3.30	-0.916	0.360
School commitments	3.42	3.87	-2.173	0.030*
Work commitments	3.75	4.12	-1.903	0.058
Long weekends/ Public holidays	3.65	3.78	-0.666	0.506
Your favourite time to travel	3.78	3.85	-0.354	0.724
Time available	4.30	4.62	-1.678	0.094
Travel companions	4.60	4.66	-0.312	0.755
Overall cost	4.97	4.88	0.531	0.596
Standard of service at the time of year	4.55	4.51	0.243	0.808
Crowding	5.70	5.59	0.817	0.414
Fashion	3.54	3.51	0.204	0.838
Religious and cultural factors	3.81	2.89	1.221	0.223
Special events	3.22	3.01	1.300	0.194
Celebrating Chinese New Year	4.49	4.19	1.611	0.108
Celebrating May Day	4.22	3.91	1.700	0.090
Celebrating National Day	4.20	3.88	1.772	0.077

3.4.3.3 Seasonality influences for respondents by age

Means of seasonality influences for respondents by age are displayed in Table 3.9 with the F values and significant levels. Based on the age range they provided, the respondents were divided into three groups for this ANOVA analysis – age 18 - 30 (Group 1), age 31 - 45 (Group 2) and age 46 or older (Group 3).

Table 3. 9 – Seasonality influences for respondents by age

Items	18 – 30	31 – 45	46 or older	F value	Sig. (*)
Amount of rain	5.60 ^a	5.34 ^b	4.81 ^a	5.236	0.006*
Very high temperature	5.54 ^a	5.35 ^a	5.06 ^a	2.190	0.113
Very low temperature	4.89 ^a	4.69 ^a	4.87 ^a	0.570	0.566
High humidity	4.22 ^a	3.98 ^a	4.38 ^a	1.115	0.329
Amount of sunshine	3.31 ^a	2.87 ^a	3.38 ^a	2.092	0.125
School commitments	3.93 ^b	3.07 ^a	3.06 ^a	7.933	0.000*
Work commitments	4.14 ^b	3.49 ^a	3.55 ^{a,b}	4.650	0.010*
Long weekends/ Public holidays	3.94 ^b	3.32 ^{a,b}	3.17 ^a	5.498	0.004*
Your favourite time to travel	4.06 ^b	3.40 ^{a,b}	3.21 ^a	7.470	0.001*
Time available	4.85 ^b	3.74 ^a	3.60 ^a	17.594	0.000*
Travel companions	4.90 ^b	4.07 ^a	4.15 ^a	9.290	0.000*
Overall cost	4.95 ^a	4.86 ^a	4.91 ^a	0.094	0.910
Standard of service at the time of year	4.69 ^b	4.41 ^{a,b}	3.85 ^a	5.723	0.004*
Crowding	5.72 ^a	5.57 ^a	5.36 ^a	1.544	0.215
Fashion	3.68 ^b	3.33 ^{a,b}	2.98 ^a	4.190	0.016*
Religious and cultural factors	3.19 ^b	2.65 ^a	2.62 ^a	4.214	0.015*
Special events	3.30 ^b	2.92 ^{a,b}	2.43 ^a	6.162	0.002*
Celebrating Chinese New Year	4.44 ^a	4.25 ^a	3.96 ^a	1.443	0.237
Celebrating May Day	4.21 ^a	3.87 ^a	3.66 ^a	2.457	0.087
Celebrating National Day	4.20 ^a	3.78 ^a	3.62 ^a	3.137	0.056

Different age groups showed the same view on most of the natural factors. There was significant difference among groups on the only one item, which was the “amount of

rain” in the natural dimension. The respondents aged 31 – 45 rated this item significantly higher than the younger group and the older group, while there was no difference between the youngest group and the oldest group.

In the institutional dimension, there was no significant difference among age groups on the influences of celebrating the three Golden Weeks. However, views were strongly different among different age groups on the other institutional factors. The respondents aged 18 – 30 rated higher than the other two groups of respondents aged 31 or older on the item of “school commitments”. Rating on the item of “work commitments”, the oldest group (age 46 or older) showed no difference to the youngest group (age 18 – 30) and the middle age group (age 31 – 45), but the middle age group rated work commitments as significantly less important than the youngest group. Concerning the “long weekends / public holidays”, the middle age group showed no difference to the other two groups respectively, but significant difference existed between the other two groups, where the youngest group rated higher than the oldest group.

In the personal dimension, there were significant differences among age groups on all the items except two concerns – “overall cost” and “crowding”, which all the groups rated highly. The youngest group showed higher influence than the other two older groups on the items of “time available” and “travel companions” while the other two older groups showed no difference to each other. On the other two items with significant difference – “your favourite time to travel” and “standard of service at the time of year”, the middle age group had no different opinion to the other two groups respectively while differences existed between these two groups. Ratings on both of the items, the mean for the youngest group was significantly higher than that for the oldest group.

The age groups had different views on all the three social factors. The youngest group tended to be more religiously/culturally concerned than the other two groups. On the other two items – “fashion” and “special events”, the middle age group showed no difference to the other two groups, but differences existed between these two groups. The youngest group rated fashion significantly higher than the oldest group on both items.

3.4.3.4 Seasonality influences for respondents by education

Table 3.10 displays the means of seasonality influences by respondents with different education backgrounds. The F values and significant levels resulting from one-way ANOVA are also attached to the left of the figure. By responding to the highest degree they obtained, the respondents were divided into 5 groups – high school degree or under (Group 1), technical/vocational (Group 2), current university student (Group 3), university graduate (Group 4) and post graduate, including master and doctorate (Group 5).

Table 3. 10 – Seasonality influences for respondents by education

Items	High school degree or under	Technical / vocational	Current university students	University graduates	Post graduates	F value	Sig. (*)
Amount of rain	5.65 ^a	5.24 ^a	5.49 ^a	5.57 ^a	5.31 ^a	0.929	0.447
Very high temperature	5.18 ^{a,b}	5.13 ^{a,b}	5.36 ^{a,b}	5.87 ^b	4.97 ^a	5.867	0.000*
Very low temperature	4.49 ^a	4.62 ^a	4.86 ^a	5.19 ^a	4.41 ^a	3.702	0.130
High humidity	4.22 ^a	3.94 ^a	4.18 ^a	4.36 ^a	3.72 ^a	1.430	0.223
Amount of sunshine	3.00 ^{a,b}	2.71 ^a	2.94 ^{a,b}	3.62 ^{a,b}	3.72 ^b	4.413	0.002*
School commitments	3.11 ^a	2.97 ^a	3.77 ^{a,b}	4.02 ^{a,b}	4.72 ^b	6.471	0.000*
Work commitments	3.26 ^a	3.49 ^a	4.01 ^{a,b}	4.07 ^{a,b}	5.07 ^b	6.334	0.000*
Long weekends/ Public holidays	3.39 ^{a,b}	3.21 ^a	3.83 ^{a,b}	4.05 ^{a,b}	4.17 ^b	3.437	0.009*
Your favourite time to travel	3.28 ^{a,b}	3.14 ^a	4.03 ^{a,b,c}	4.21 ^{b,c}	4.52 ^c	7.627	0.000*
Time available	3.42 ^a	3.67 ^a	4.88 ^b	4.93 ^b	5.86 ^b	16.845	0.000*
Travel companions	3.89 ^a	4.50 ^{a,b}	4.88 ^{a,b}	4.90 ^{a,b}	5.07 ^b	4.434	0.002*
Overall cost	4.53 ^a	4.19 ^a	5.14 ^a	5.12 ^a	4.59 ^a	2.109	0.079
Standard of service at the time of year	3.94 ^a	4.08 ^{a,b}	4.87 ^b	4.78 ^{a,b}	4.90 ^b	6.449	0.000*
Crowding	5.07 ^a	5.38 ^{a,b}	5.94 ^b	5.88 ^b	6.03 ^b	6.684	0.000*
Fashion	3.04 ^a	3.29 ^{a,b}	3.82 ^b	3.80 ^{a,b}	3.24 ^{a,b}	3.621	0.006*
Religious and cultural factors	2.85 ^a	2.77 ^a	2.99 ^a	3.10 ^a	3.55 ^a	1.238	0.294
Special events	2.85 ^a	2.97 ^a	3.47 ^a	3.16 ^a	3.17 ^a	1.386	0.238
Celebrating Chinese New Year	4.15 ^a	4.03 ^a	4.57 ^a	4.44 ^a	4.79 ^a	1.517	0.196
Celebrating May Day	4.21 ^a	3.74 ^a	3.97 ^a	4.25 ^a	4.07 ^a	1.165	0.326
Celebrating National Day	4.10 ^a	3.69 ^a	3.99 ^a	4.23 ^a	4.14 ^a	1.216	0.303

Respondents with different education backgrounds had the same view on “amount of rain”, “very low temperature” and “high humidity” when they made a travelling time decision, however, there were differences among groups on the other two of the natural factors. For the item of “very high temperature”, there was no difference among groups of respondents with high school degree only or under that, respondents with technical / vocational degree and respondents who were current university students. The different opinions existed between respondents who were university graduates and those who were post graduates, and the former one rated significantly higher than the latter one. Regarding the “amount of sunshine”, the different views were between the groups of respondents with technical / vocational degree and those who were post graduates, where the post graduates rated higher than the previous ones. The means of rating on this item showed no statistical difference among the other three groups.

In the dimension of institutional factors, different groups had no different views on celebrating the three Golden Weeks factors, but great differences existed among groups on the other three institutional factors. For the items of “school commitments” and “work commitments”, post graduates rated higher than respondents with high school degree or under and respondents with technical / vocational degree; and there was no difference between current university students and university graduates. When thinking about the influence of the factor of “long weekends / public holidays”, post graduates thought it more important than respondents with technical / vocational degree while there was no difference on the means of rating on this item among the other groups.

In the personal dimension, all the groups showed the same opinion only on the item of “overall cost (accommodation and transport)”. Various differences existed among groups on the other personal factors. For the item of “your favourite time to travel”, respondents with high school degree or under and technical / vocational workers rated statistically lower than the respondents who were post graduates; and the respondents with technical / vocational degree also rated lower than respondents who were university graduates. The other groups showed no difference on this item. But when considering the “time available”, there was no different views between the respondents who obtained only high school degree or under and respondents with

technical / vocational degree, and there was no different views among the other three groups; but the means for the former two groups were significantly lower than the latter three groups of respondents who obtained higher education degree. Regarding the “travel companions”, the different views were between the groups of respondents with high school degree only or under and those who were post graduates, where the former group rated significantly lower (mean less than 4.00) than the latter group (mean more than 5.00). There was no difference among other groups. Concerning the “standard of service at the time of year”, respondents with high school degree or under rated lower than the respondents who were current university students and post graduates. On the perception of “crowding”, all the groups rated very high on this item, with all the means more than 5.00. Significant difference existed among groups, where the respondents with high school degree only or under rated lower than the respondents who were current university students, who were university graduates and who were post graduates.

In the three social factors, all the groups only showed differences on the item of “fashion”, where respondents with high school degree or under rated lower than current university students; and there was no difference among other groups.

3.4.3.5 Seasonality influences for respondents by occupation

Opinions of seasonality influences for respondents with different occupations are illustrated in Table 3.11. By answering what job they are doing, the respondents are divided into seven groups – executive / governor (Group 1), professional / lecturer (Group 2), business (Group 3), skilled worker (Group 4), labour / farmer (Group 5), student (Group 6), and officers / clerical (Group 7).

Table 3. 11 – Seasonality influences for respondents by occupation

Item	Executive / Governor	Professional / lecturer	Business	Skilled worker	Labourer / Farmer	Student	Officer / clerical	F value	Sig. (*)
Amount of rain	5.50 ^a	5.39 ^a	5.34 ^a	5.47 ^a	5.62 ^a	5.48 ^a	5.31 ^a	0.161	0.987
Very high temperature	5.14 ^a	5.72 ^a	5.37 ^a	5.56 ^a	4.62 ^a	5.46 ^a	5.27 ^a	1.838	0.090
Very low temperature	4.80 ^a	4.94 ^a	4.87 ^a	5.06 ^a	4.31 ^a	4.95 ^a	4.39 ^a	1.338	0.239
High humidity	4.38 ^a	4.16 ^a	4.42 ^a	4.53 ^a	4.00 ^a	4.28 ^a	3.79 ^a	1.127	0.346
Amount of sunshine	3.20 ^a	3.03 ^a	4.11 ^a	3.68 ^a	3.50 ^a	3.66 ^a	2.73 ^a	3.063	0.143
School commitments	3.20 ^a	3.57 ^a	3.21 ^a	3.65 ^a	3.19 ^a	4.87 ^b	3.22 ^a	6.338	0.000 *
Work commitments	3.76 ^a	4.20 ^a	3.45 ^a	4.35 ^a	3.44 ^a	4.46 ^a	3.70 ^a	2.072	0.056
Long weekends/ Public holidays	3.74 ^a	3.88 ^a	3.18 ^a	4.36 ^a	3.00 ^a	4.12 ^a	3.67 ^a	1.915	0.077
Your favourite time to travel	3.86 ^{a,b}	3.95 ^b	3.95 ^b	3.71 ^{a,b}	2.38 ^a	4.33 ^b	3.46 ^{a,b}	3.241	0.004 *
Time available	4.22 ^{a,b}	4.77 ^{a,b}	4.13 ^{a,b}	4.38 ^{a,b}	3.69 ^a	5.52 ^b	3.76 ^a	7.372	0.000 *
Travel companions	4.82 ^a	4.54 ^a	4.68 ^a	4.47 ^a	3.94 ^a	5.21 ^a	4.52 ^a	1.950	0.072
Overall cost	5.26 ^a	4.81 ^a	5.00 ^a	5.00 ^a	4.81 ^a	5.23 ^a	4.25 ^a	2.521	0.354
Standard of service at the time of year	4.48 ^b	4.71 ^b	4.71 ^b	4.41 ^{a,b}	3.12 ^a	4.80 ^b	4.19 ^{a,b}	3.211	0.004 *
Crowding	5.80 ^a	5.69 ^a	5.68 ^a	5.74 ^a	5.06 ^a	5.88 ^a	5.55 ^a	1.011	0.418
Fashion	3.46 ^{a,b}	3.51 ^{a,b}	3.21 ^{a,b}	3.97 ^b	2.19 ^a	3.85 ^b	3.48 ^{a,b}	2.732	0.013 *
Religious and cultural factors	3.02 ^a	3.13 ^a	3.11 ^a	3.06 ^a	2.12 ^a	3.11 ^a	2.79 ^a	0.941	0.465
Special events	3.22 ^{a,b}	2.87 ^{a,b}	3.21 ^{a,b}	3.62 ^b	2.00 ^a	3.53 ^b	3.07 ^{a,b}	2.862	0.010 *
Celebrating Chinese New Year	4.14 ^{a,b}	4.44 ^b	4.34 ^{a,b}	4.79 ^b	2.88 ^a	4.56 ^b	4.67 ^b	2.489	0.022 *
Celebrating May Day	3.78 ^{a,b}	4.08 ^{a,b}	4.39 ^b	4.79 ^b	2.69 ^a	4.12 ^{a,b}	4.48 ^b	3.144	0.005 *
Celebrating National Day	3.78 ^{a,b}	4.00 ^{a,b}	4.26 ^b	4.94 ^b	2.75 ^a	4.18 ^{a,b}	4.49 ^b	3.360	0.003 *

For all the groups with different occupations, there was no difference among them on all the items of the natural factors.

In the dimension of institutional factors, the groups showed various differences on most items, except “work commitments” and “long weekends / public holidays”. The students put more focus on the item of “school commitments” than all the other groups while there was no difference among these other groups. Different from other demographic groups, the groups divided by occupation showed different opinions on the items of celebrating the three Golden Weeks. For the item of “celebrating CNY”, the group of labourers / farmers rated significantly lower than three groups who were skilled workers, students and officers / clericals while there was no difference among other groups. For the other two items – celebrating the other two Golden Weeks, the mean for the labourers / farmers again was very low. The statistics showed the labourers / farmers rated significantly lower than three other groups who were businessmen, skilled workers and officers / clericals while there was no difference among other groups.

All the groups hold the same opinion on half of the personal factors, which were “travel companions”, “overall cost” and “crowding”. For the other three items, various differences existed among groups. When considering the factor of “your favourite time to travel”, the labourers / farmers rated significantly lower than professional persons / lecturers, businessmen and students, while there was no difference among other groups. For the item of “time available”, the students group rated highest among all the groups, and the mean for this group was significantly higher than the labourers / farmers and officers / clericals while the means showed no significant difference among other groups. For the factor of “standard of service at the time of year”, the group of labourers / farmers rated lowest among all the groups and their mean was significantly lower than the means of executives / governors, professionals / lecturers, businessmen, and the students.

Among the three social seasonality influences, differences existed among groups in two concerns – “fashion” and “special events”. For the both of them, the labourers / famers rated significantly lower than the skilled workers and students while there was no significant difference among other groups. Respondents from different occupation fields showed no difference on the influence of the religious and cultural factors on their decision of travelling time period.

3.4.3.6 Seasonality influences for respondents by income

Table 3.12 displays the views on seasonality influences from respondents with different levels of income. Based on their monthly income in Chinese currency, the respondents are divided into 4 groups – no income or less than RMB \$500 (Group 1), RMB \$500 – 2000 (Group 2), RMB \$2001 – 8000 (Group 3) and more than RMB \$8000 (Group 4).

Table 3. 12 – Seasonality influences for respondents by income

Item	No income or less than RMB \$500	RMB \$500 – 2000	RMB \$2001 – 8000	More than RMB \$8000	F value	Sig. (*)
Amount of rain	5.59 ^a	5.49 ^a	5.50 ^a	5.24 ^a	0.647	0.585
Very high temperature	5.52 ^a	5.36 ^a	5.67 ^a	5.33 ^a	1.151	0.328
Very low temperature	4.87 ^a	4.74 ^a	5.07 ^a	4.78 ^a	0.954	0.414
High humidity	4.31 ^a	4.12 ^a	4.27 ^a	4.09 ^a	0.381	0.767
Amount of sunshine	3.51 ^a	3.10 ^a	3.12 ^a	3.30 ^a	0.917	0.433
School commitments	4.47 ^b	3.43 ^a	3.43 ^a	3.48 ^a	5.098	0.002*
Work commitments	4.22 ^a	3.87 ^a	3.90 ^a	3.70 ^a	0.844	0.470
Long weekends/ Public holidays	4.07 ^a	3.50 ^a	3.86 ^a	3.63 ^a	1.692	0.168
Your favourite time to travel	4.18 ^a	3.54 ^a	3.81 ^a	3.91 ^a	2.149	0.093
Time available	5.16 ^b	4.11 ^a	4.27 ^a	4.72 ^{a,b}	5.891	0.001*
Travel companions	5.01 ^a	4.44 ^a	4.68 ^a	4.66 ^a	1.688	0.169
Overall cost	5.22 ^b	5.05 ^b	4.25 ^a	4.91 ^{a,b}	4.427	0.004*
Standard of service at the time of year	4.72 ^a	4.38 ^a	4.51 ^a	4.66 ^a	0.976	0.404
Crowding	5.78 ^a	5.47 ^a	5.79 ^a	5.78 ^a	1.743	0.157
Fashion	3.71 ^a	3.23 ^a	3.78 ^a	3.57 ^a	2.667	0.198
Religious and cultural factors	3.22 ^a	2.77 ^a	3.03 ^a	3.19 ^a	1.504	0.213
Special events	3.68 ^b	2.85 ^a	3.09 ^{a,b}	3.15 ^{a,b}	4.294	0.005*
Celebrating Chinese New Year	4.62 ^a	4.02 ^a	4.45 ^a	4.49 ^a	2.354	0.072
Celebrating May Day	4.20 ^a	3.76 ^a	4.40 ^a	4.03 ^a	2.771	0.143
Celebrating National Day	4.25 ^{a,b}	3.69 ^a	4.39 ^b	3.94 ^{a,b}	3.550	0.015*

The one-way ANOVA results showed that people belonging to different income range had the same opinion on natural seasonality influences when they made decision on travel time period.

In terms of the institutional factors, differences among groups existed on two items – “school commitments” and “celebrating National Day”. Respondents with no income or less than RMB \$500 seemed to value “school commitments” more than the other three groups when they chose travel time period. And the rating on “celebrating National Day” for respondents with income between RMB \$500 – 2000 was statistically lower than that for respondents with income between RMB \$2001 – 8000 while there was no difference among other groups.

In the personal dimension, people with different income levels had different attitudes on the two factors – “overall cost” and “time available”. For the financial concern, respondents with no income or less than RMB \$500 rated highest for the importance of the “overall cost” for making decision on their travel time period while the respondents with income between RMB \$2001 – 8000 rated lowest, and their mean was significantly lower than those respondents with lower incomes. Concerning the “time available”, respondents with no income or less than RMB \$ rated higher than respondents with income between RMB \$500 – 2000 and respondents with income between RMB \$2001 – 8000, and the group of respondents with lowest income show no difference to the group of respondents with the highest income.

In the area of social factors, all the groups had similar responses on two items – “fashion” and “religious and cultural factors”. The different opinions existed on only one social factor – “special events”. Respondents with no income or less than RMB \$500 valued the factor of “special events” more than respondents with income between RMB \$501 – 2000 while there was no difference among other groups.

3.4.3.7 Summary of seasonality influences in terms of demographic groups

Results from one-way ANOVA and t-test showed that significant differences existed among demographic groups in various aspects of seasonality influences. For the groups divided by their original places, people from Shanghai generally put more emphasis on the natural influences, the institutional influences and some of the

personal and social influences (time available and crowding); by contrast, people from Quanzhou rated lower than people from the other four places on most of the 20 seasonality influences. There were not many differences between the gender groups. Different opinions only arose between male and female when they considered the two items – “amount of rain” and “school commitments”. The factor of “amount of rain” influenced females’ travel time decisions making to a greater extent while males thought more about the factor of “school commitments”. In the age group, significant differences existed among groups on many items of seasonality influences. The results obviously showed that the young group (age 18 – 30) rated higher than the middle age group (age 31 – 45) and the oldest group (age 46 or older) on most of the seasonality concerns. People with different education backgrounds had different opinions over many aspects of seasonality influences. Generally speaking, people with university degrees or postgraduate qualifications rated higher on the institutional influences, the social influences and the personal influences; while people with high school degree only or under rated higher than others on the natural influences. Opinions varied among groups from different working fields. People with different occupations held the same opinion on the natural influences. However, their attitudes towards influences on other dimensions varied as their occupations varied. The group of “labourers /farmers” rated lowest on most of those items where significant differences existed. The group of “students” rated relatively highest on these items – “school commitments”, “work commitments”, “your favourite time to travel”, “time available”, “travel companion”, “standard of service at the time of year”, and “crowding”. Within the last category, people with different levels of income, different opinions existed in five items – two in the institutional dimension, two in personal dimension and one in social dimension. The group with no / lower income rated significantly higher than other groups on those items with significant difference.

Table 3.13 summarises those items with significant differences among groups within each demographic category. It can be easily seen that all the demographic groups had different opinions towards the influence of “school commitments”; by contrast, the opinion on the influence of “high humidity” was the same within each demographic group, and only the different age groups had different ideas on the item of “religious and cultural factors” and respondents with different education backgrounds had

different opinions on the item of “very high temperature” while respondents from different locations showed difference on the item of “very low temperature”.

Table 3. 13 – Items with significant differences (indicated by asterisk) among different demographic groups

Concerns/demographics	Origin	Gender	Age	Education	Occupation	Income
Crowding (M=5.65)	*			*		
Amount of rain (M=5.45)		*	*			
Very high temperature (M=5.44)				*		
Overall cost (M=4.92)	*					*
Very low temperature (M=4.84)	*					
Travel companions (M=4.63)			*	*		
Standard of service at the time of year (M=4.53)			*	*	*	
Time available (M=4.46)	*		*	*	*	*
Celebrating CNY (M=4.34)					*	
High humidity (M=4.18)						
Celebrating May Day (M=4.07)					*	
Celebrating National Day (M=4.04)					*	*
Work commitments (M=3.93)	*		*	*		
Your favourite time to travel (M=3.82)			*	*	*	
Long weekends/ Public holiday (M=3.71)	*		*	*		
School commitments (M=3.64)	*	*	*	*	*	*
Fashion (M=3.53)	*		*	*	*	
Amount of sunshine (M=3.21)				*		
Special events (M=3.12)			*		*	*
Religious and cultural factors (M=3.00)			*			

3.4.4 Experience in Golden Weeks travelling

As mentioned in the literature review above, travelling in the Golden Weeks is becoming a controversial topic among the Chinese. The public opinions could be considered by the policy makers when they make decisions on whether to keep or to cancel or to make changes to the Golden Weeks system. This study asked the respondents to express their ideas on the advantages and disadvantages of Golden Weeks travelling. By summarising their ideas expressed in words, there are 11 advantages and seven disadvantages mentioned for Chinese New Year Golden Week; seven advantages and six disadvantages mentioned for May Day Golden Week; eight advantages and seven disadvantages mentioned for National Day Golden Week. Table 3.14, 3.15 and 3.16 summarise the advantages and disadvantages for each Golden Week resulting from the respondents' answers.

3.4.4.1 Experience in Chinese New Year Golden Week travelling

Table 3. 14 – Advantages and disadvantages for travelling Chinese New Year Golden Week

Advantages (N=476)	Chinese New Year Golden Week
1 (N=122)	Time available
2 (N=71)	Can go travelling with family and friends
3 (N=64)	Full of CNY festive atmosphere
4 (N=51)	Experience different CNY traditions and customs in other places
5 (N=34)	Fewer tourists, not crowded (service/transport/attractions)
6 (N=31)	Escape from VFR
7 (N=26)	Personally like travelling in winter
8 (N=21)	VFR
9 (N=19)	More travelling routes to choose, and more activities to take part in
10 (N=19)	Good weather
11 (N=18)	Relatively lower price, with discounts and concessions
Disadvantages (N=524)	
1 (N=199)	Too many people travelling, short of transport tickets during the CNY travel season
2 (N=141)	The tradition of CNY is to VFR, no time available for travelling; if go travelling, will lose the opportunity of getting together with friends and relatives
3 (N=82)	Too cold, and sometimes it rains
4 (N=64)	Higher prices for travelling and transport
5 (N=20)	The closure of transport and service industry will bring in some inconveniences
6 (N=15)	Lower level of the quality of service
7 (N=3)	The scenery is not as beautiful as in spring and autumn

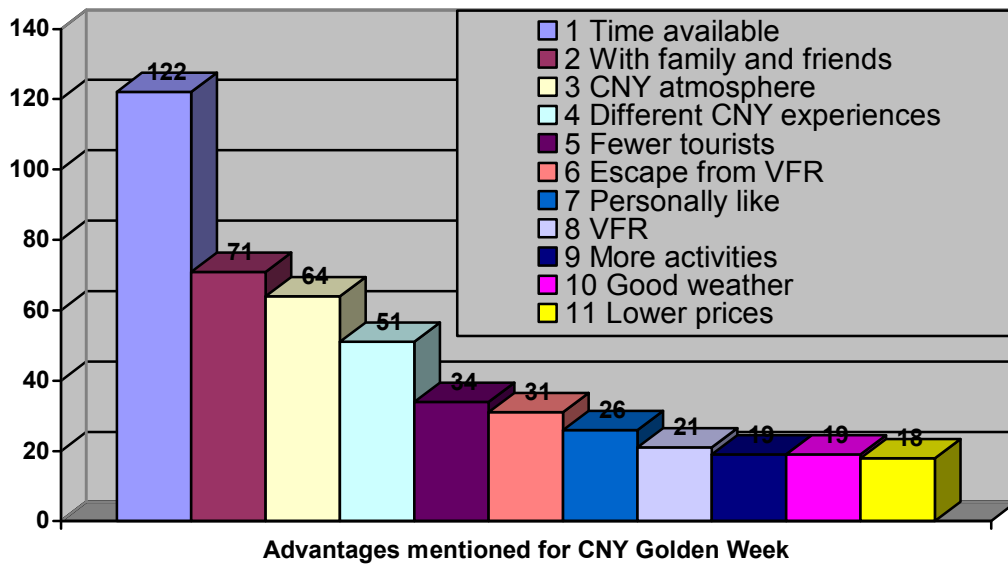


Figure 3. 1 – Frequencies of advantages mentioned by respondents for travelling in CNY (As every respondent can mention more than one advantage, the total frequency of advantages mentioned is more than 450. This also applies to the other two Golden Weeks.)

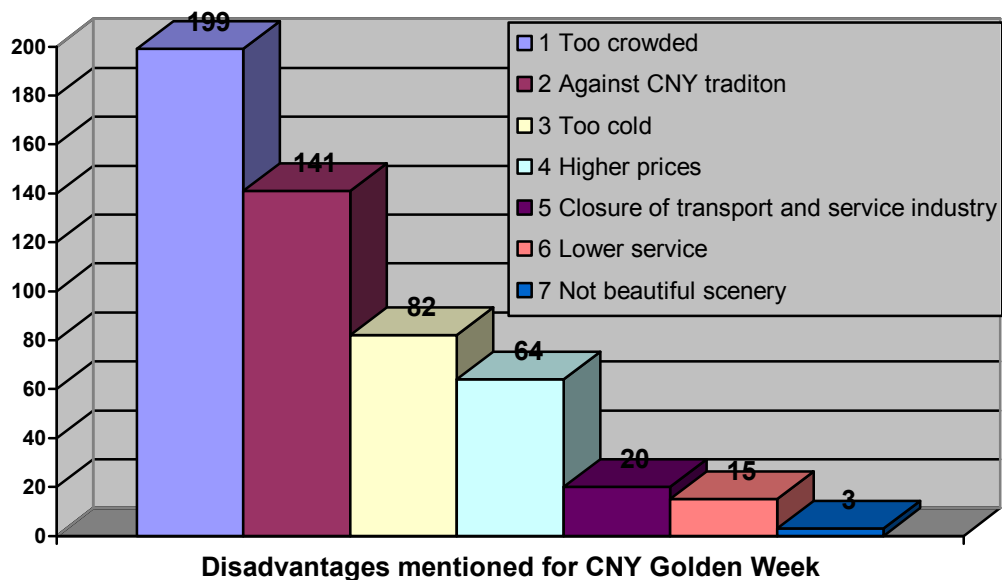


Figure 3. 2 – Frequencies of disadvantages mentioned by respondents for travelling in CNY (As every respondent can mention more than one advantage, the total frequency of advantages mentioned is more than 450. This also applies to the other two Golden Weeks.)

There were a lot of advantages mentioned by respondents for travelling in CNY Golden Week. The most frequently mentioned one was “time available”, mentioned by near 1/3 of the respondents (122 out of 450). Since CNY was considered as the most important festival for the Chinese, a parallel to the importance of Christmas in Western countries, many of the advantages mentioned by respondents were related to the celebration of CNY. Fourteen point two percent of respondents said that it was good to travel during CNY Golden Week as it was “full of CNY festive atmosphere” everywhere; 11.3% respondents referred to “experience different CNY traditions and customs in other places” and 15.8% said they were happy as they could “go travelling with family and friends” since most Chinese were on holiday and back home for CNY. Other advantages were mentioned less than 50 times. Twenty-one respondents said that CNY Golden Week provided them with a good chance to visit friends and relatives, while 34 said that going out for travelling during this holiday was a good way to escape from visiting friends and relatives. As it was a public holiday, this week turned out to be peak time for travelling. Only a small portion of respondents considered travelling during this week could experience the three benefits – fewer tourists (7.6%), lower prices (4.0%) and more activities (4.2%). With regards to the natural seasonality concerns, 26 respondents said they “personally like travelling in winter”. “It is good weather” was mentioned just 19 times, which indicated that winter is not a good time for travelling for most of the Chinese.

With regard to the disadvantages of travelling in CNY Golden Week, nearly half of the respondents (44.2%) pointed out that one of the big problems was that there were too many people travelling at the same time which results in crowding and the shortage of transport tickets. And 31.3% of the respondents agreed that travelling outside during the CNY was against the CNY tradition, resulting in missing the chance to visit friends and relatives. This indicated that the Chinese valued their tradition a lot. The cold weather during CNY was another problem which prevented people travelling. Eighteen point two percent of respondents said that they did not want to go travelling as it was too cold, and sometimes it was rainy. Further, 14.2% of the respondents referred to the higher prices for travelling during CNY. There were another three disadvantages mentioned by a small portion of respondents. Four point four percent said the closure of some transport and service industry during the holiday

would be inconvenient, 3.3% said they were unhappy with the lower level of service quality during the holiday, and zero point six percent of them said they did not enjoy the winter scenery as it was not as beautiful as it was in either spring or autumn.

3.4.4.2 Experience in May Day Golden Week travelling

Table 3. 15 – Advantages and disadvantages for travelling in May Day Golden Week

Advantages (N=473)	May Day Golden Week
1 (N=179)	Nice weather, neither too cold nor too hot
2 (N=141)	Holiday time is long enough to make a long distance trip
3 (N=45)	Best natural scenery
4 (N=42)	To take a break and relax from stressful work
5 (N=36)	Most of the attractions are well prepared, and most facilities are accessible, staff are in a positive state (More activities available at the attractions)
6 (N=27)	Can go travelling with friends and colleagues
7 (N=3)	Fashion
Disadvantages (N=600)	
1 (N=335)	Too crowded at the destinations
2(N=84)	Higher prices than usual on accommodations and transportation
3 (N=59)	Inconvenient transport, accommodation and dining – hard to buy tickets
4 (N=53)	Traffic congestion
5 (N=39)	Hot weather
6 (N=30)	Lower level of service standard

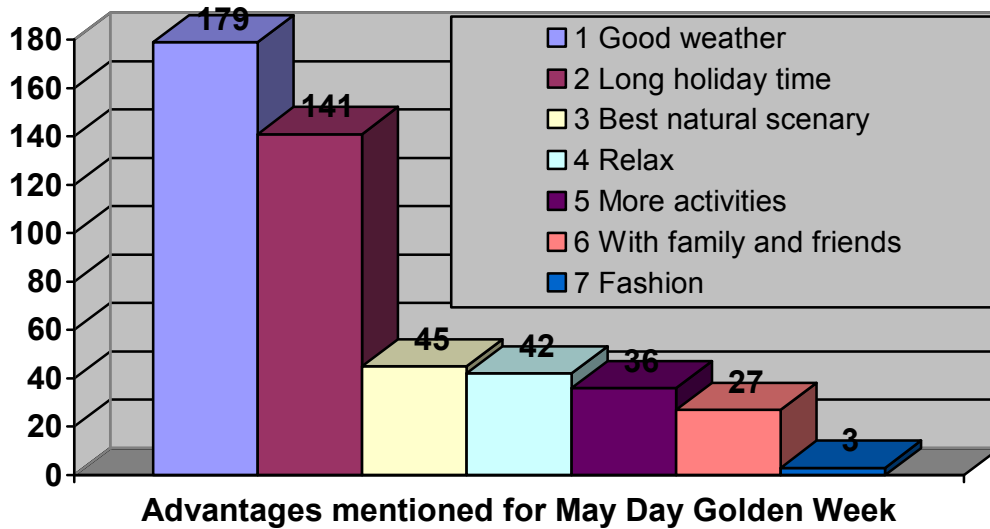


Figure 3. 3 – Frequencies of advantages mentioned by respondents for travelling in May Day Golden Week

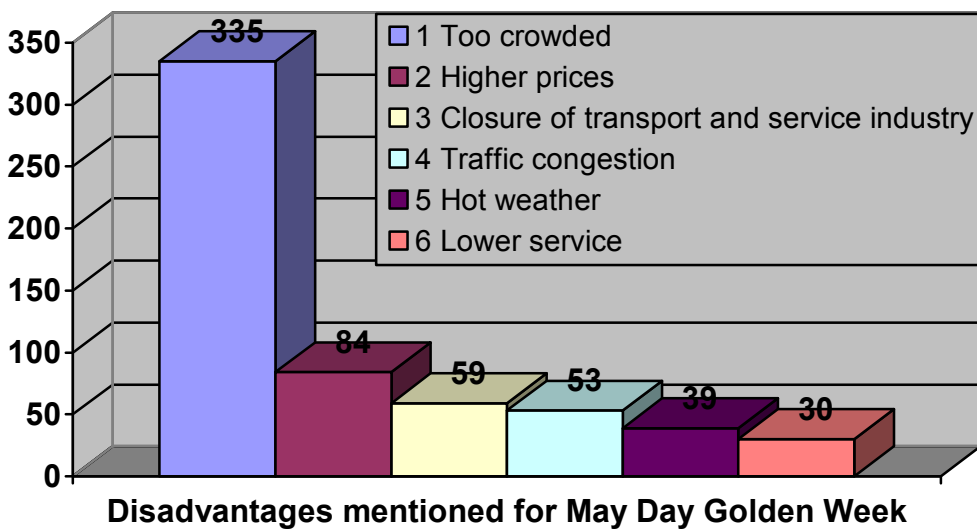


Figure 3. 4 – Frequencies of disadvantages mentioned by respondents for travelling in May Day Golden Week

There were seven advantages mentioned by the respondents for travelling during May Day Golden Week. May Day holiday is in the middle of the year when the spring is about to end and the summer is approaching in China. As a result, the weather then was very nice for travelling which was identified by 39.7% respondents as an advantage of travelling during May Day Golden Week. “Time available for travelling” was mentioned as an advantage for travelling in the first Golden Week by

31.3% of the respondents. The other five advantages were mentioned by no more than 10% of the respondents respectively. As May Day comes at the end of spring and the beginning of summer, 10% of the respondents said that when travelling during the May Day holiday they could enjoy the “best natural scenery”. 9.3% referred to this holiday as a good opportunity and excuse for them to take a break from the stressful work in the middle of the year. About 8% respondents pointed out that there were more activities and facilities available during the May Day Golden Week, which could bring them more fun and make them happier to travel during this time period. Six percent of the respondents said that one of the benefits was that most of the people were on holiday so that they could go travelling with families and friends. At last, only three respondents said they went travelling during this holiday due to the influence of fashion.

Disadvantages mentioned for this holiday focused almost exclusively on problems from transportation and attractions. “Too crowded” was mentioned most as a very serious problem. Nearly three quarters of the respondents said that the worst thing was the crowding at the destination, while another 11.8% added “traffic congestion” to the problem list. As a result, it was very hard for travellers to buy the transportation and accommodation tickets. Thirteen point one percent of the respondents said the inconvenience of arranging their travel transportation and accommodation frustrated their travelling mood. “Higher price” was a policy carried out by most tourism businesses during the peak season, and 18.7% of the respondents said that the “higher price” on accommodation and transportation during May Day holiday unacceptable. Even though the price during the holiday was higher than usual, the service standard was seen as less; a perspective pointed out by 6.7% of the respondents. Besides those problems arising from destination and transport crowding, a weather-related problem was mentioned as a disadvantage while travelling during this holiday. Eight point seven percent of the respondents said that they felt it somewhat hot to travel during the May Day holiday, although 39.8% considered it as nice weather for travelling, as illustrated above. This indicated that different people have different feeling towards the weather at the same time while they were travelling.

3.4.4.3 Experience in National Day Golden Week travelling

Table 3. 16 – Advantages and disadvantages for travelling in National Day Golden Week

Advantages (N=484)	National Day Golden Week
1 (N=179)	Cool climate for travelling
2 (N=129)	Holiday time is long enough to make a long distance trip
3 (N=48)	To celebrate our country's great birthday, full of festive atmosphere
4 (N=40)	More activities with discounted prices at the destinations
5 (N=34)	To take a break and relax from stressful work
6 (N=27)	It is time for harvest, can taste various kinds of fruits
7 (N=25)	Easy to get travelling companions
8 (N=2)	fashion
Disadvantages (N=580)	
1 (N=334)	Too crowded at the destinations
2 (N=81)	Higher prices than usual on accommodations and transportation
3 (N=54)	Traffic congestion
4 (N=52)	Inconvenient transport, accommodation and dining – hard to buy tickets
5 (N=31)	Lower level of service standard
6 (N=15)	Much work to do before the end of the year
7 (N=13)	Bad weather

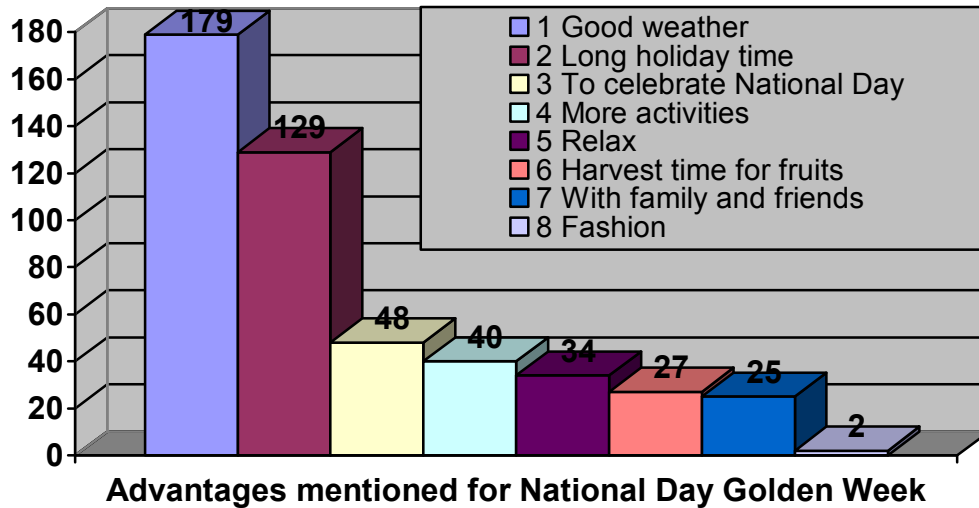


Figure 3. 5 – Frequencies of advantages mentioned by respondents for travelling in National Day Golden Week

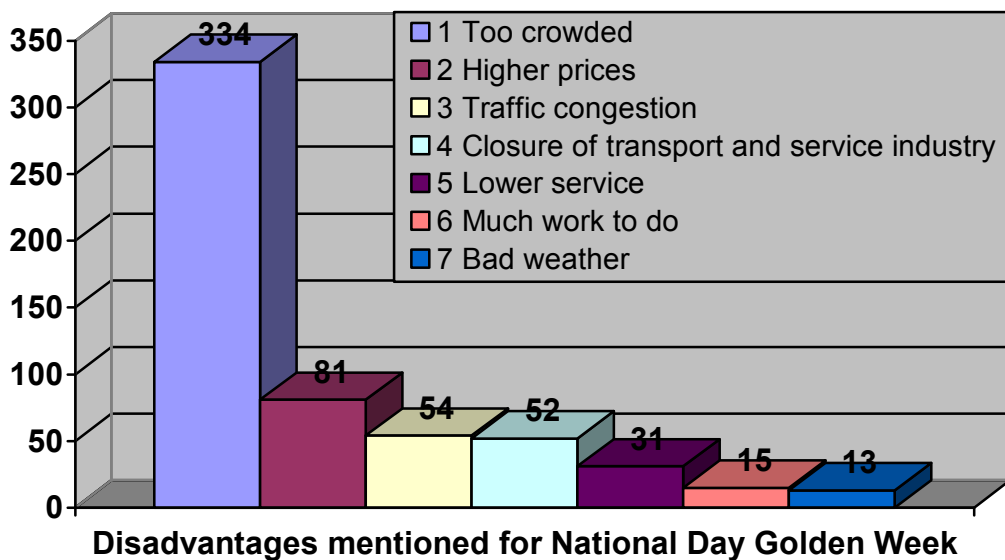


Figure 3. 6– Frequencies of disadvantages mentioned by respondents for travelling in National Day Golden Week

Eight advantages were mentioned by respondents for travelling during National Day holiday. The most frequently mentioned one was the “cool weather for travelling”. As the National Day is on the 1st October, the weather then is neither hot nor cold which is just perfect for travelling. Thirty-nine point eight percent of the respondents said they enjoyed travelling in the cool weather, followed by “holiday time is long enough to make a long distance trip” (28.7% of the respondents). As National Day is regarded

as the birthday of this country, there are celebrations throughout the whole country. In this case, 10.7% of the respondents said that the fully festive atmosphere would make their journeys more pleasant. The other five advantages were mentioned by less than 10% of the respondents. Eight point nine percent of the respondents said it was good to travel during the National Day Golden Week as there were more activities provided at the destinations, and some of them were even made with a discounted price. Seven point six percent felt relaxed while travelling as this holiday entitled them to escape from the stressful work. As the National Day comes in the autumn when most of the fruits are ripe, 6% of the respondents mentioned that they could have more chances to taste the natural fruits while travelling around. “Easy to get travelling companion” was mentioned by 5.6% of the respondents. Only two respondents said that it was good to travel as it was the fashion.

With regards to the disadvantages mentioned for the National Day Golden Week, the responses were more or less the same as those for the May Day Golden Week. Most disadvantages mentioned were related to the problems arising from the large amount of people travelling out at the same time. Seventy-four point two percent of the respondents all pointed out that it was too crowded at the destinations, and 12% added that the traffic congestion was terrible too. Eleven point six percent of the respondents said it was very hard for them to book their accommodation and transportation during this holiday. The price was also a big concern for the travellers. Eighteen percent of the respondents said they could not accept such high prices during this Golden Week. Although the price was higher than usual, the service quality was not better than usual, but even worse, as pointed out by 6.9% of the respondents. Early October is quite cool, but still 2.9% of the respondents said they did not like to go travelling during this holiday due to the bad weather then. Compared to problems of travelling in May Day, an additional problem was mentioned for travelling in National Day. As October is approaching the end of the year, 3.3% of the respondents complained that they had to make use of this holiday to make up their unfinished work as they did not want to leave it to the next year.

3.4.4.4 Summary of Chinese experiences in three Golden Weeks travelling

Generally speaking, the Golden Week system is welcome by the public as they get various benefits from it. The most significant one was that this system provided them

time availability which makes their travelling feasible. More than 27% of the respondents mentioned “time available” as a great benefit for each Golden Week. Good weather at that time was another considerable advantage mentioned by 39.8% of the respondents for travelling in May Day and National Day Golden Weeks. However, as Chinese New Year happens in winter when it is quite cold then in China, only 4.2% of the respondents mentioned the weather as an advantage for travelling during CNY Golden Week. The Chinese people have a strong traditional concept, therefore, they were happy with the CNY holiday as this offered them the chance to “experience different CNY traditions and customs in other places” (11.3%), to enjoy the “CNY festive atmosphere” (14.2%) while travelling, and to “go travelling with families and friends” (15.8%). Other benefits mentioned for May Day and National Day Golden Weeks were that this holiday system provided “more activities to participate in” (about 8%) and the opportunity to “take a break and relax” (about 8%). Another good point resulting from the holiday system was that they “can go travelling with families and friends”, which was mentioned by about 6% of the respondents for the two Golden Weeks.

The negative side of Golden Week holiday system consistently arose from the problem of crowding. More than 74% of the respondents said it was quite a headache to travel during May Day and National Day Golden Weeks as it was “too crowded”. Forty-four point two percent of respondents mentioned the crowding problem for CNY travelling. More than 10% of the respondents mentioned “traffic congestion” and “inconvenient transport, accommodation and dining” respectively for travelling during May Day and National Day holiday and these two problems were also the result of crowding. Another serious problem was their complaints about prices. “Higher price than usual” was mentioned by 14.2% for CNY, 18.7% for May Day and 18% for National Day. Besides the problems of crowding and higher prices, there were another two negative features that many of the respondents did not like about travelling during CNY – “too cold, and sometimes it rains” (18.2%) and “if I go travelling, will lose the opportunity of getting together with friends and families” (31.3%). Other problems for travelling during May Day and National Day holiday were about the standard of service and the weather, but each of them were mentioned by less than 10% of the respondents.

3.4.5 Explaining travellers' perceptions of seasonality and Golden Weeks tourism

As mentioned early in this chapter, a part of the questionnaire for this study was designed to explore the respondents' previous travelling experience. This was undertaken by asking the respondents' domestic and overseas travelling experience in two ways – how many places they have travelled to and when did they make their trips. As discussed before, most Chinese have limited overseas travelling experience, therefore, in this section, the respondents are divided into two groups – frequent tourists and non-frequent tourists, based on the number of domestic places to which they have travelled (less than 5 – non-frequent tourists, 5 or more – frequent tourists), and they are also divided as – Golden Week tourists and non-Golden Week tourists, based on whether they made their domestic trips during Golden Week holiday or not.

3.4.5.1 Demographic characteristics of groups with different travelling experiences

1) Frequent tourists versus non-frequent tourists

(1) Residence

Respondents from Shanghai are most likely to be frequent tourists. Among the frequent tourists, 27.1% of them are from Shanghai. Respondents from Beijing (22.6%) and Xi'an (20.6%) also are quite frequent travellers. Less than 20% of frequent tourists are from Quanzhou, and the respondents from Guangzhou and Guangxi Province are the least likely to be frequent tourists (10.1%). Within each residence group, more than half of the Beijing respondents and Shanghai respondents are frequent tourists; however, the situation is different in other three places, with over 60% belonging to the non-frequent tourists group respectively.

Table 3. 17 – Residence of respondents: Non-frequent / Frequent tourists crosstabulation

		Non-frequent/Frequent tourists		
		Non-frequent	Frequent	Total
Beijing	Number	41	45	86
	% within Beijing respondents	47.7%	52.3%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	16.3%	22.6%	19.1%
Shanghai	Number	25	54	79
	% within Shanghai respondents	31.6%	68.4%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	10.0%	27.1%	17.6%
Xi'an	Number	63	41	104
	% within Xi'an respondents	60.6%	39.4%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	25.1%	20.6%	23.1%
Quanzhou	Number	61	39	100
	% within Quanzhou respondents	61.0%	39.0%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	24.3%	19.6%	22.2%
Guangzhou & Guangxi Province	Number	61	20	81
	% within Guangzhou & Guangxi respondents	75.3%	24.7%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	24.3%	19.6%	18%
Total	Number	251	199	450
	% within total respondents	55.8%	44.2%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Pearson Chi-square	35.544	Sig.	0.000*

(2) Age

According to the statistics, the younger the respondents, the more likely they tend to be frequent tourists. The number of young (under 31) frequent tourists is more than six times of that of older (more than 45) frequent tourists. However, there are more non-frequent tourists than frequent tourist in any age group.

Table 3. 18 – Age of respondents: Non-frequent / Frequent tourists crosstabulation

		Non-frequent/ Frequent tourists		
		Non-frequent	Frequent	Total
Not more than 31	Number	165	132	297
	% within respondents not more than 31	55.6%	44.4%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	65.7%	66.3%	66.0%
31 ~ 45	Number	59	47	106
	% within respondents aged 31 ~ 45	55.7%	44.3%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	23.5%	23.6%	23.6%
More than 45	Number	27	20	47
	% within respondents more than 45	57.4%	42.6%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	10.8%	10.1%	10.4%
Total	Number	251	199	450
	% within respondents in all age groups	55.8%	44.2%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Pearson Chi-square	0.060	Sig.	0.971

(3) Gender

Males are more likely to be frequent tourists than females. And there are more non-frequent tourists than frequent tourists in both male and female groups.

Table 3. 19 – Gender of respondents: Non-frequent / Frequent tourists crosstabulation

		Non-frequent/ Frequent tourists		
		Non-frequent	Frequent	Total
Male	Number	115	103	218
	% within male respondents	52.8%	47.2%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	45.8%	51.8%	48.4%
Female	Number	136	96	232
	% within female respondents	58.6%	41.4%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	54.2%	48.2%	51.6%
Total	Number	251	199	450
	% within respondents in both gender groups	55.8%	44.2%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Pearson Chi-square	1.569	Sig.	0.210

(4) Education

The university graduates seem to like travelling most, as more than half of the frequent tourists fall into the university graduates group, followed by the technical / vocational group (19.6%), the current university students group (12.1%), and the group with high school degree or under (11.1%); and the post-graduate group is least likely to travel, composing 5.5% of the frequent tourists. Within each group with different education backgrounds, only the university graduates group has more frequent tourists than non-frequent tourists; in other groups, there are more non-frequent tourists than frequent tourists.

Table 3. 20 – Education level of respondents: Non-frequent / Frequent tourists crosstabulation

		Non-frequent/Frequent tourists		
		Non-frequent	Frequent	Total
High school degree or under	Number	50	22	72
	% within respondents with high school degree or under	69.4%	30.6%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	20.6%	11.1%	16.3%
Technical/Vocational	Number	51	39	90
	% within respondents with technical/ vocational degree	56.7%	43.3%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	21.0%	19.6%	20.4%
Current university student	Number	53	24	77
	% within respondents who are current university students	68.8%	31.2%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	21.8%	12.1%	17.4%
University graduate	Number	71	103	174
	% within respondents with university graduate degree	40.8%	59.2%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	29.2%	51.8%	39.4%
Post-graduate (master/doctorate)	Number	18	11	29
	% within respondents with post-graduate degree	62.1%	37.9%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	7.4%	5.5%	6.6%
Total	Number	243	199	442
	% within total respondents	55.0%	45.0%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Pearson Chi-square	26.872	Sig.	0.000*

(5) Occupation

Frequent tourists cover all areas of the occupation classification with different percentages for each one. The largest portion of them is professional / lecturer (30.7%), followed by student (17.6%), office / clerical (16.1%), and executive / governor (11.6%). The percentages for any of the others are less than 10.0%, with the labour / farmer composing the fewest, 1.0%. Within the individual occupation category, only the professional / lecturer group has more frequent tourists (55.5%) than non-frequent tourists. This may be due to the fact that the Chinese lecturers have two school holidays (summer holiday and winter holiday), which provide them with more time available for more travelling. The different percentages between non-frequent tourists and frequent tourists do not vary a lot for each occupation category, except for two groups – labour / farmer (87.5% - non-frequent and 12.5% frequent) and student (63.9% - non-frequent and 36.1% frequent). The percentages of non-frequent tourists for each other groups are well above 40%. This shows that the labour / farmer group is most likely to be non-frequent tourists, followed by the student group. Although the student group have two school holidays as the lecturers have, they presumably have little income which limits their travels.

Table 3. 21 – Occupation of respondents: Non-frequent / Frequent tourists crosstabulation

		Non-frequent/Frequent tourists		
		Non-frequent	Frequent	Total
Executive / Governor	Number	27	23	50
	% within executives/governors	54.0%	46.0%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	10.8%	11.6%	11.1%
Professional/ Lecturer	Number	49	61	110
	% within professionals / lecturers	44.5%	55.5%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	19.5%	30.7%	24.4%
Business	Number	21	17	38
	% within Businessmen	55.3%	44.7%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	8.4%	8.5%	8.4%
Skilled worker	Number	19	15	34
	% within skilled workers	55.9%	44.1%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	7.6%	7.5%	7.6%
Labour Farmer /	Number	14	2	16
	% within labourers / farmers	87.5%	12.5%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	5.6%	1.0%	3.6%
Student	Number	62	35	97
	% within students	63.9%	36.1%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	24.7%	17.6%	21.6%
Office/ Clerical	Number	35	32	67
	% within officers / Clericals	52.2%	47.8%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	13.9%	16.1%	14.9%
Others	Number	24	14	38
	% within respondents in other occupations	63.2%	36.8%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	9.6%	7.0%	8.4%
Total	Number	251	199	450
	% within total respondents	55.8%	44.2%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Pearson Chi-square	16.007	Sig.	0.025*

(6) Income

Among the frequent tourists, 30.6% of them are from the less than RMB \$ 500 monthly income bracket and RMB \$ 500 ~ RMB \$ 2000 monthly income bracket respectively. Twenty-four point nine percent of them belong to the more than RMB \$ 2000 monthly income bracket. The smallest portion of frequent tourists is from the no income bracket. Looking at the individual income level, it can e be seen from Table 3.22 that the more income earned, the more likely respondents are to travel. Seventy-one point six percent of the people with more than RMB \$ 2000 monthly income are frequent tourists, compared to 28.4% of them are non-frequent tourists. And more than half of the people with RMB \$ 500 to RMB \$ 2000 monthly income are frequent tourists. By contrast, less than 40% of people with no income and less than RMB \$ 500 monthly income are frequent tourists respectively. This indicates that income is a key factor facilitating travel in China.

Table 3. 22 – Monthly income of respondents: Non-frequent / Frequent tourists crosstabulation

		Non-frequent/ Frequent tourists		
		Non-frequent	Frequent	Total
No income	Number	58	27	85
	% within respondents have no income	68.2%	31.8%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	23.9%	14.0%	19.5%
Less than RMB \$500	Number	108	59	167
	% within respondents with monthly income less than RMB \$500	64.7%	35.3%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	44.4%	30.6%	38.3%
RMB \$500 ~ RMB \$2000	Number	58	59	117
	% within respondents with monthly income between RMB \$500 ~ RMB \$2000	49.6%	50.4%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	23.9%	30.6%	26.8%
More than RMB \$2000	Number	19	48	67
	% within respondents with monthly income more than RMB \$2000	28.4%	71.6%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	7.8%	24.9%	15.4%
Total	Number	243	193	436
	% within respondents in all income level groups	55.7%	44.3%	100.0%
	% within non-frequent/frequent tourists	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Pearson Chi-square	32.943	Sig.	0.000*

2) Golden-week tourists versus Non-Golden-week tourists

(1) Residence

Most respondents do not travel during Golden Week (72.2%). Among those who travel during Golden Week, 26.4% are from Xi'an, 22.4% are from Quanzhou and 20.8% are from Beijing. Less than 1/5 of them are from Shanghai (16.8%) and Guangzhou and Guangxi Province (13.6%). Within each place, more than 65% of the residencies are non-Golden-week tourists respectively, with Guangzhou and Guangxi Province are in the leading place (79.0%).

Table 3. 23 – Residence of respondents: Non-Golden-week / Golden-week tourists
 crosstabulation

		Non-Golden-week/Golden-week tourists		
		Non-Golden-week	Golden-week	Total
Beijing	Number	60	26	86
	% within Beijing respondents	69.8%	30.2%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	18.5%	20.8%	19.1%
Shanghai	Number	58	21	79
	% within Shanghai respondents	73.4%	26.6%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	17.8%	16.8%	17.6%
Xi'an	Number	71	33	104
	% within Xi'an respondents	68.3%	31.7%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	21.8%	26.4%	23.1%
Quanzhou	Number	72	28	100
	% within Quanzhou respondents	72.0%	28.0%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	22.2%	22.4%	22.2%
Guangzhou & Guangxi Province	Number	64	17	81
	% within Guangzhou & Guangxi respondents	79.0%	21.0%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	19.7%	13.6%	18%
Total	Number	325	125	450
	% within total respondents	72.2%	27.8%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Pearson Chi-square	2.989	Sig.	0.560

(2) Age

Looking at the crosstab for age groups below, it can be found that the older the people are, the less likely they are to be Golden-week tourists. More than half of the Golden-week tourists are not more than 31 years old (68.0%), followed by 24.0% of them between 31 ~ 45. Only 8.0% of them are more than 45 years old. Within each age range group, over 70% of each are non-Golden-week tourists, with the group of more than 45 in the leading (78.7%, and 71.7% for 31 ~ 45, and 71.4% for not more than 31).

Table 3. 24 – Age of respondents: Non-Golden-week / Golden-week tourists crosstabulation

		Non-Golden-week/Golden-week tourists		
		Non-Golden-week	Golden-week	Total
Not more than 31	Number	212	85	297
	% within respondents not more than 31	71.4%	28.6%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	65.2%	68.0%	66.0%
31 ~ 45	Number	76	30	106
	% within respondents aged 31 ~ 45	71.7%	28.3%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	23.4%	24.0%	23.6%
More than 45	Number	37	10	47
	% within respondents more than 45	78.7%	21.3%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	11.4%	8.0%	10.4%
Total	Number	325	125	450
	% within respondents in all age groups	72.2%	27.8%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Pearson Chi-square	1.110	Sig.	0.574

(3) Gender

In the gender groups, female are more likely to travel during Golden Week than male. Among the Golden-week tourists, 53.6% of them are female. And within each gender group, more than 70% of them each are non-Golden-week tourists. However, the portion for female (71.1%) is slightly lower than that for male.

Table 3. 25 – Gender of respondents: Non-Golden-week / Golden-week tourists crosstabulation

		Non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists		
		Non-Golden-week	Golden-week	Total
Male	Number	160	58	218
	% within male respondents	73.4%	26.6%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	49.2%	46.4%	48.4%
Female	Number	165	67	232
	% within female respondents	71.1%	28.9%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	50.8%	53.6%	51.6%
Total	Number	325	125	450
	% within respondents in both gender groups	72.2%	27.8%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Pearson Chi-square	0.290	Sig.	0.590

(4) Education

Among the Golden-week tourists, nearly half of them are the university graduates (41.6%), followed by technical / vocational (20.8%). Other education backgrounds occupy less than 20% each, 16.8% for current university students, 13.6% for high school degree or under, and only 7.2% for post-graduates. Within each education level, it is the same situation as in other demographic categories, where there are more non-Golden-week tourists than Golden-week tourists. It seems that the higher education level the group is, then proportionally there is a larger number of Golden-week tourists (31.0% of the post-graduates are Golden-week tourists while 23.6% of the high school degree or under are Golden-week tourists).

Table 3. 26 – Education level of respondents: Non-Golden-week / Golden-week tourists crosstabulation

		Non-Golden-week/Golden-week tourists		
		Non-Golden-week	Golden-week	Total
High school degree or under	Number	55	17	72
	% within respondents with high school degree or under	76.4%	23.6%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	17.4%	13.6%	16.3%
Technical/ Vocational	Number	64	26	90
	% within respondents with technical/ vocational degree	71.1%	28.9%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	20.2%	20.8%	20.4%
Current university student	Number	56	21	77
	% within respondents who are current university students	72.7%	27.3%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	17.7%	16.8%	17.4%
University graduate	Number	122	52	174
	% within respondents with university graduate degree	70.1%	29.9%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	38.5%	41.6%	39.4%
Post-graduate (master/ doctorate)	Number	20	9	29
	% within respondents with post-graduate degree	69.0%	31.0%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	6.3%	7.2%	6.6%
Total	Number	317	125	442
	% within total respondents	71.7%	28.3%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Pearson Chi-square	1.158	Sig.	0.885

(5) Occupation

Most Golden-week tourists are concentrated in two areas of work – professional / lecturer (25.6%) and executive / governor (23.2%), followed by office / clerical (16.0%) and student (12.8%). Golden-week tourists in other occupation areas are less than 10% - business (8.8%), skilled worker (7.2%), labour / farmer (4.8%) and others (1.6%). Looking into separate occupation areas, only the executive / governor group has more Golden-week tourists (58.0%) than non-Golden-week tourists. For other occupations, more than 70% of them are non-Golden-week tourists respectively, except for the labour / farmer group, since 62.5% of them are non-Golden-week tourists. The student group has the highest portion of non-Golden-week tourists, because 83.5% of them report not travelling during the Golden Weeks.

Table 3. 27 – Occupation of respondents: Non-Golden-week / Golden-week tourists crosstabulation

		Non-Golden-week/Golden-week tourists		
		Non-Golden-week	Golden-week	Total
Executive / Governor	Number	21	29	50
	% within executives/governors	42.0%	58.0%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	6.5%	23.2%	11.1%
Professional / Lecturer	Number	78	32	110
	% within professionals / lecturers	70.9%	29.1%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	24.0%	25.6%	24.4%
Business	Number	27	11	38
	% within Businessmen	71.1%	28.9%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	8.3%	8.8%	8.4%
Skilled worker	Number	25	9	34
	% within skilled workers	73.5%	26.5%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	7.2%	7.7%	7.6%
Labour Farmer /	Number	10	6	16
	% within labourers / farmers	62.5%	37.5%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	3.1%	4.8%	3.6%
Student	Number	81	16	97
	% within students	83.5%	16.5%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	24.9%	12.8%	21.6%
Office/ Clerical	Number	47	20	67
	% within officers / Clericals	70.1%	29.9%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	14.5%	16.0%	14.9%
Others	Number	36	2	38
	% within respondents in other occupations	94.7%	5.3%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	11.1%	1.6%	8.4%
Total	Number	325	125	450
	% within total respondents	72.2%	27.8%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Pearson Chi-square	39.568	Sig.	0.000*

(6) Income

Among the Golden-week tourists, the largest portion falls into the bracket of people with less than RMB \$ 500 monthly income (45.5%), followed by the bracket of

people with RMB \$ 500 ~ RMB \$ 2000 monthly income (27.3%). The other two brackets occupy less than 20% each – 16.5% for the group with more than RMB \$ 2000 monthly income and 10.7% for the one with no income. There is still a bias between the portion of non-Golden-week and Golden-week tourists, with more than 65% of them being non-Golden-week tourists within each income bracket. The group with no income has the highest percentage (84.7%) of non-Golden-week tourists. The group of people with less than RMB \$ 500 monthly income has a slightly lower portion of non-Golden-week tourists than the other groups (67.1%).

Table 3. 28 – Monthly income of respondents: Non-Golden-week / Golden-week tourists crosstabulation

		Non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists		
		Non-Golden-week	Golden-week	Total
No income	Number	72	13	85
	% within respondents have no income	84.7%	15.3%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	22.9%	10.7%	19.5%
Less than RMB \$500	Number	112	55	167
	% within respondents with monthly income less than RMB \$500	67.1%	32.9%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	35.6%	45.3%	38.3%
RMB \$500 ~ RMB \$2000	Number	84	33	117
	% within respondents with monthly income between RMB \$500 ~ RMB \$2000	71.8%	28.2%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	26.7%	27.3%	26.8%
More than RMB \$2000	Number	47	20	67
	% within respondents with monthly income more than RMB \$2000	70.1%	29.9%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	14.9%	16.5%	15.4%
Total	Number	315	121	436
	% within respondents in all income level groups	72.2%	27.8%	100.0%
	% within non-Golden-week/ Golden-week tourists	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	Pearson Chi-square	8.975	Sig.	0.030*

3.4.5.2 Discriminant analysis of tourists' perceptions of seasonality between groups with different travel levels

There were two different travel levels identified in this study. As categorised previously, people travelling to five or more Chinese places are regraded as frequent tourists while those travelling to less than five places are non-frequent tourists.

The main objective of this section of the results is to determine the seasonality variables that contribute most to the distinction between groups with different travel levels – frequent tourists versus non-frequent tourists. Discriminant analysis is a statistical technique which is used to investigate and simultaneously describe the significant differences between two or more exclusive groups on several dependent variables (Brown & Tinsley, 1983; Diekhoff, 1992; Johnston, 1978; Murphy, 1983; Pearch & Lee, 2005). Therefore discriminant analysis was applied here to provide an objective method of comparing the responses. Variables measuring respondents' feeling towards seasonality influences were examined (The 20 seasonality influences were listed earlier in Table 3.29).

Table 3. 29 – Variables used in discriminant analysis of groups with different travel levels (Frequent versus non-frequent)

Classification	Variables categories	Number (20)
Perceptions of seasonality (7-point scale for factors influence on making travelling time – very strongly/not at all)	1) Natural factors – amount of rain, very high temperature, very low temperature, high humidity, amount of sunshine	5
	2) Institutional factors – school commitments, work commitments, long weekends / public holidays, celebrating CNY, celebrating May Day, celebrating National Day	6
	3) Social factors – fashion, religious and cultural factors, special events	3
	4) Personal factors – your favourite time to travel, time available, travel companions, overall cost, standard of service at the time of year, crowding	6

It is basically assumed that to achieve optimum results, the discriminant variables are low in multicollinearity when conducting a discriminant analysis (Diekhoff, 1992; Pearce & Lee, 2005). In this case, Pearson correlation was used to test the intercorrelations among the 20 seasonality concerns. All the R values from the calculation ranged from .065 to .436, which showed relatively low correlations among the 20 seasonality influences. This result enables their use as discriminant variables in the discriminant analysis.

Among the various methods of discriminant analysis, the Stepwise Discriminant Analysis (SDA) was chosen in order to see which variables have the greatest power for discriminating between groups. All the 20 seasonality influences were entered into a SDA process. SDA is a technique to calculate discriminant functions with which to discriminate the groups. Table 3.30 presents the results for the discriminant function. With an eigenvalue of .028, the function accounted for 100% of the explained variance. The canonical correlation associated with the function was .164, showing that the function is related to the group differences. The relatively high value of Wilk's Lambda (.973) indicated not a strong separation of the groups. The chi-square test of Wilk's Lambda (12.150) showed that the overall separation of groups achieved using this discriminant function is significant at the level of .002.

Table 3.30 – Tests of significance of the discriminant functions level

Function	Eigenvalue	Variance (%)	Canonical Correlation	Wilk's Lambda	Chi-Square	Sig. Level
1	.028	100	.164	.973	12.150	.002

An iterative process of SDA starts with a single variable, calculates the rate of success for discrimination, adds another variable, calculates the improvement or worsening in discrimination, adds another variable, and so on until there are no longer any variables improving the results (Klawiter, 2000). By doing so, this approach chooses which variables in a data set have the best discriminatory power and which ones are not useful.

Stepwise procedure resulted in two attributes that were significantly related to tourists' travelling frequencies – "overall cost" and "crowding". Discriminant

function coefficients and loadings were examined to determine which related variable contributes the most to the function. Table 3.31 lists the coefficients and loadings in a descending order. Given the low intercorrelation among the discriminant variables, an examination of the standardized discriminant function coefficients suggests that travellers' perception of "overall cost" contributes most in discriminating between groups, followed by their perception of "crowding". The same result can be achieved by investigating the discriminant loadings. The unstandardized discriminant function coefficients were provided to apply to the raw values of the variables for classification purpose.

Table 3. 31 – Canonical discriminant function coefficients and loadings for the related variables that contribute the most to the function

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	Discriminant Loadings
Overall cost	.472	.838	.632
Crowding	-.564	-.802	-.586
(Constant)	.864	NA	NA

Table 3. 32 – Functions at group centroids

Tourists	Function
Non-frequent tourists	.147
Frequent tourists	-.186

The functions at group centroids, the mean discriminant scores for each of the dependent groups, are also identified in the process. The non-frequent-tourist group has a positive value (.147) while the frequent-tourist group has a negative value (-.186). Looking back at Table 3.31, the sign of the coefficients associated with the influence "overall cost" is positive while that with the influence "crowding" is negative. This indicates that people with more concern on "overall cost" are more likely to result in the non-frequent-tourist group. In other words, people who are concerned more with "overall cost" are less likely to travel. It was not surprising to find that overall cost had a negative correlation with the tourists' travelling frequencies since cost is well established as one of the major barriers to travel (Botha et al, 1999; Chen & Hsu, 2000; Clark & Downing, 1984; Gilbert & Hudson, 2000;

Jackson, 2000; Krumpel & McLaughlin, 1982; Morley, 1994; Nyaupane & Andereck, 2008). The more barriers tourists have, the less frequently they travel. The results suggest that price cuts could help travel agencies or tourist attractions entice tourists' spur-of-the-moment demand although the cost constraint has been identified as a difficult problem to overcome (Nyaupane & Andereck, 2008).

The negative discriminant coefficients associated with the concern "crowding" revealed that people who perceived "crowding" as a more influential factor are more likely to be in the frequent-tourist group. People with more travel experiences considered crowding as a more important factor influencing their travelling time period than people who did not travel much. Previous studies also suggested that the crowding issue is a major constraint to leisure travel (Jackson, 2005; Walker & Virden, 2005). This indicated that crowding was indeed a problem existing in tourism area and it did affect tourists' travel experiences, which should be considered by tourism related authorities and business.

3.4.5.3 Comparison of perceptions of Golden Week travelling between Golden-week tourists and non-Golden-week tourists

As identified previously in this chapter, people who have travelled during Golden Week holidays are treated as Golden-week tourists while those who never travelled during Golden Week are non-Golden-week tourists. In this section, the perceptions of Golden Week travelling between these two groups will be explored by identifying their descriptions of the separate Golden Week travel experiences which were identified for the whole sample earlier in this chapter.

(1) CNY Golden Week

Figure 3.7 and 3.8 present the frequencies mentioned for each variable describing the advantages and disadvantages by both Golden-week tourists and non-Golden-week tourists. By examining the tendency of the graph lines, it can be seen that the most frequently mentioned advantage/disadvantage variable and the least frequently mentioned advantage/disadvantage variable are quite similar between the Golden-week-tourist group and the non-Golden-week-tourist group. However, as identified earlier, there is an uneven distribution of these two groups (Number of Golden-week tourists = 125; number of non-Golden-week tourists = 325), a plot (Figure 3.9) of the

relative frequency of variables mentioned by both groups was applied to further explore the differences between these two groups.

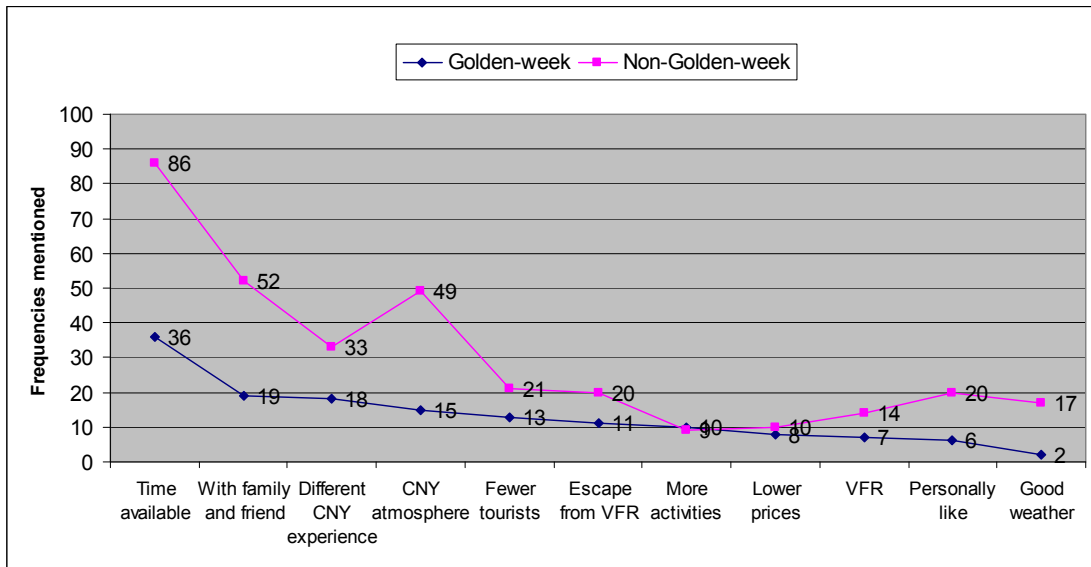


Figure 3. 7 – Frequencies of the advantages of CNY Golden Week by Golden-week tourists (N=125) and non-Golden-week tourists (N=325)

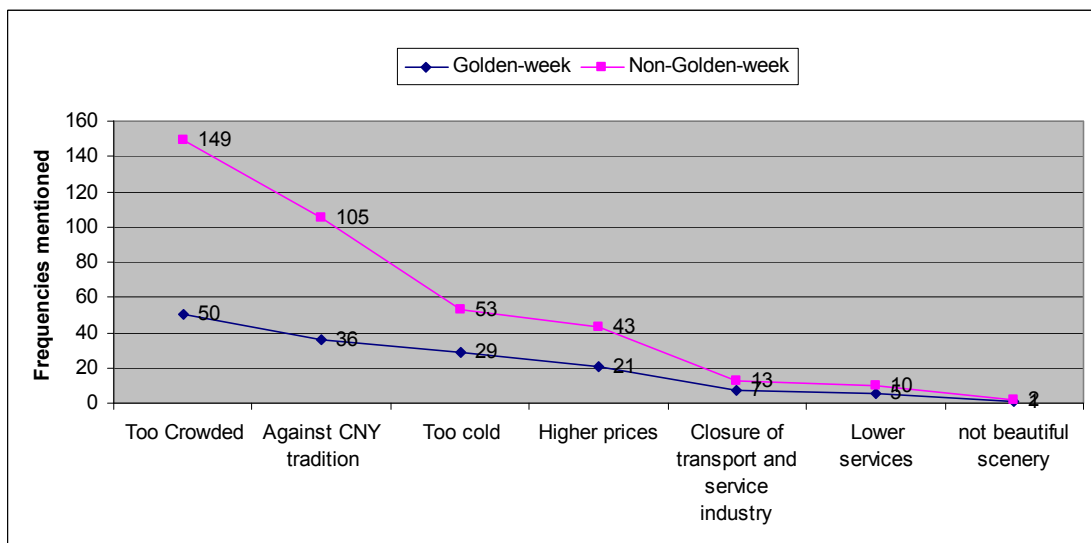


Figure 3. 8 – Frequencies of the disadvantages of CNY Golden Week by Golden-week tourists (N=125) and non-Golden-week tourists (N=325)

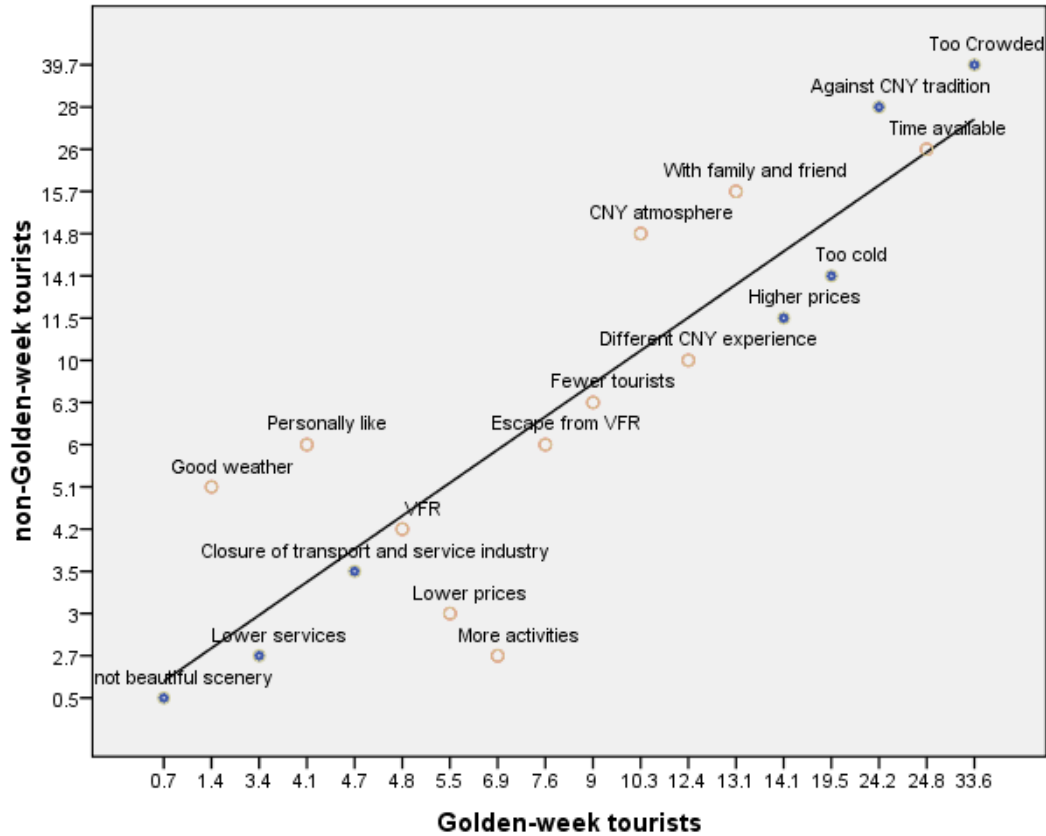


Figure 3. 9 – Perceptions of CNY Golden Week – % of variables mentioned

In Figure 3.9, the residuals represent the variations regardless of the number of times the variable is mentioned. The diagonal line indicates equal mention by both groups. Therefore, the largest residuals show the greatest differences in the perceptions, notably with “more activities”, “personally like”, “good weather”, “CNY atmosphere”, “with family and friend”, “against CNY tradition” and “too crowded”. Six of these features are more dominant in the perception of non-Golden-week tourists than Golden-week tourists. Only two of these features were identified as disadvantages of CNY Golden Week experiences, and other disadvantage variables are quite close to the equal line. This indicates that irrespective of whether or not the respondents had previous Golden Week travel experiences, their perceptions of the drawbacks of CNY Golden Week are relatively similar to each other. However their previous travel experiences influence their perceptions of the benefits of CNY Golden Week. Six of the advantage variables are far away from the equal line, two of which are more dominant in the perception of Golden-week tourists while the other four are more dominant in the perception of non-Golden-week tourists. It can be found that the two features – “lower prices” and “more activities” which are more dominant in the profits of Golden-week tourists are more objective benefits while the other four features are

more subjective benefits. It is clear that people believe more in what they have experienced.

(2) May Day Golden Week

The same procedure as stated in CNY Golden Week was employed to document the perceptions of May Day Golden Week by the same two groups. The graph lines in Figure 3.10 and 3.11 show similar tendency of frequencies of the advantage /disadvantage variables for both groups. A plot (Figure 3.12) of the relative frequency of variables mentioned by both groups was further examined.

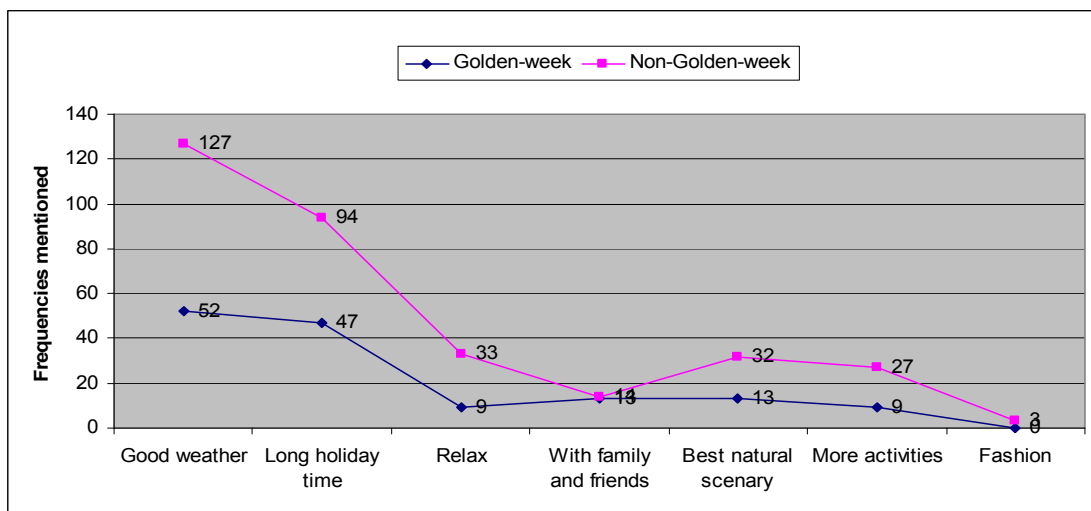


Figure 3. 10– Frequencies of the advantages of May Day Golden Week by Golden-week tourists (N=125) and non-Golden-week tourists (N=325)

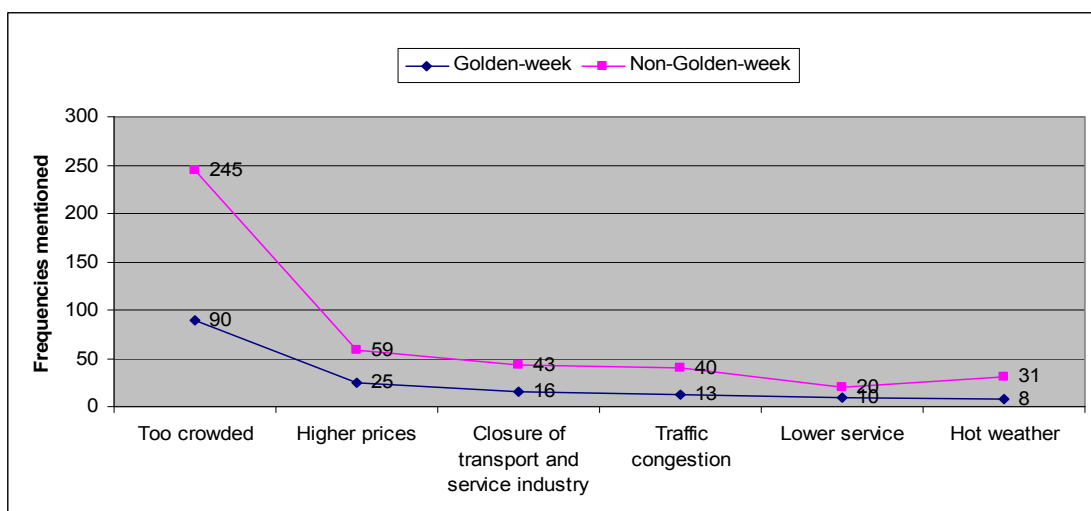


Figure 3. 11– Frequencies of the disadvantages of May Day Golden Week by Golden-week tourists (N=125) and non-Golden-week tourists (N=325)

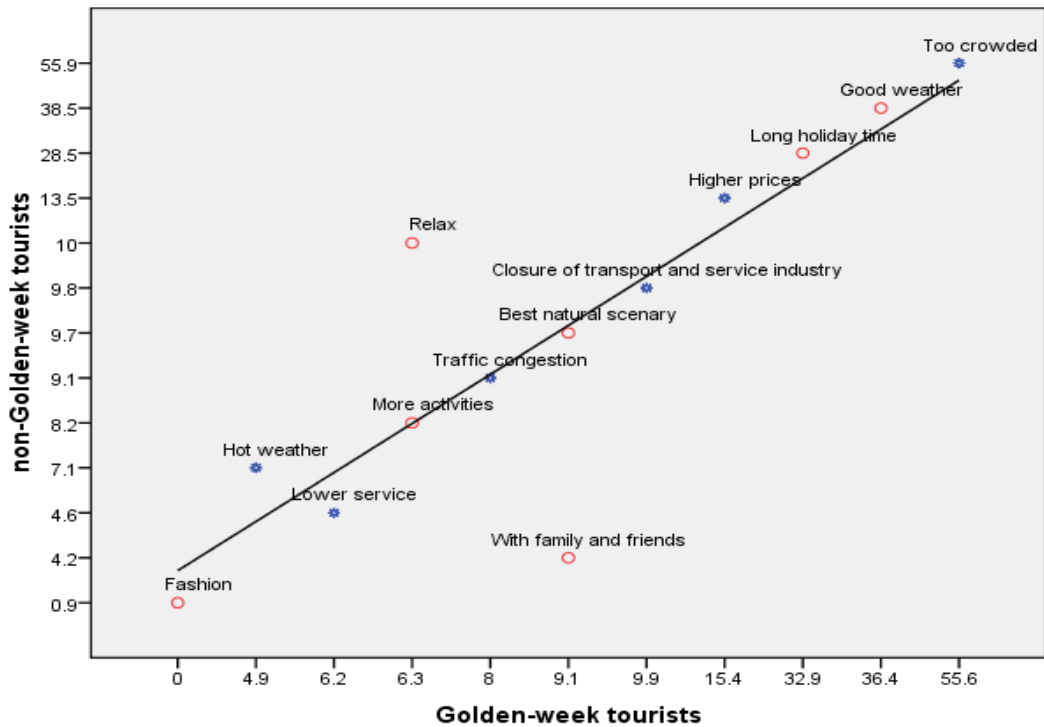


Figure 3. 12 – Perceptions of May Day Golden Week – % of variables mentioned

In Figure 3.12, the largest residuals show the greatest differences in the perceptions of May Day Golden Week occurring with “relax” and “with family and friends”. More of the non-Golden-week tourists believed that travelling in May Day Golden Week made them relax more than did the Golden-week tourists. And the Golden-week tourists valued more than the non-Golden-week tourists the chance to travel with family and friend provided by May Day Golden Week. Both of these two features were identified as benefits of May Day Golden Week. All the disadvantage variables of May Day Golden Week are on or close to the equal line. This indicates that both groups have the similar perceptions on the drawbacks of May Day Golden Week.

(3) National Day Golden Week

Again, the same procedure was applied to the perceptions of National Day Golden Week by two groups. Graph lines in Figure 3.13 and 3.14 show a similar tendency of frequencies on advantage/disadvantage variables by both groups. A plot (Figure 3.15) of the relative frequency for variables mentioned was employed to further identify the different perceptions of National Day Golden Week between the two groups.

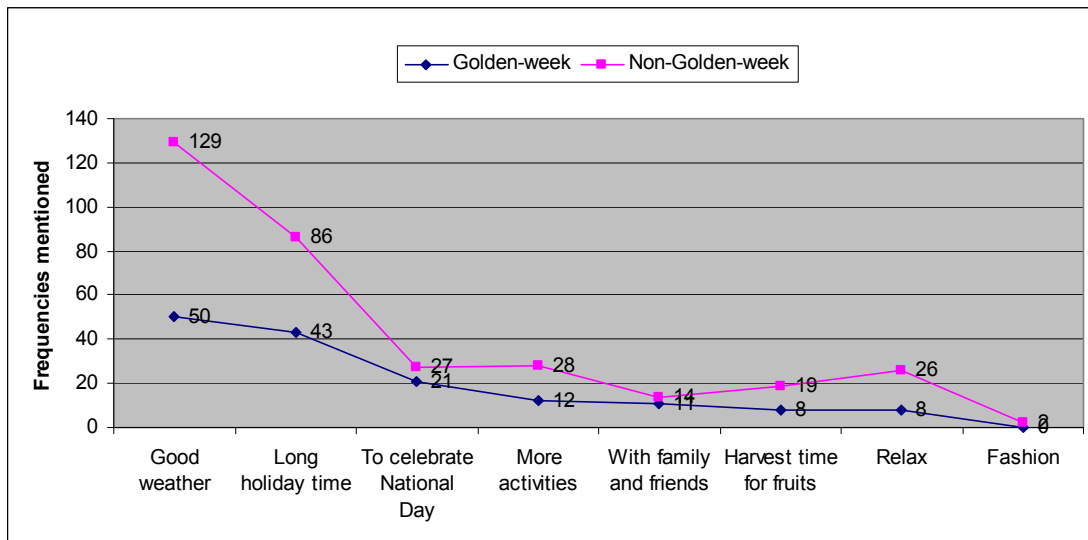


Figure 3. 13 – Frequencies of the advantages of National Day Golden Week by Golden-week tourists (N=125) and non-Golden-week tourists (N=325)

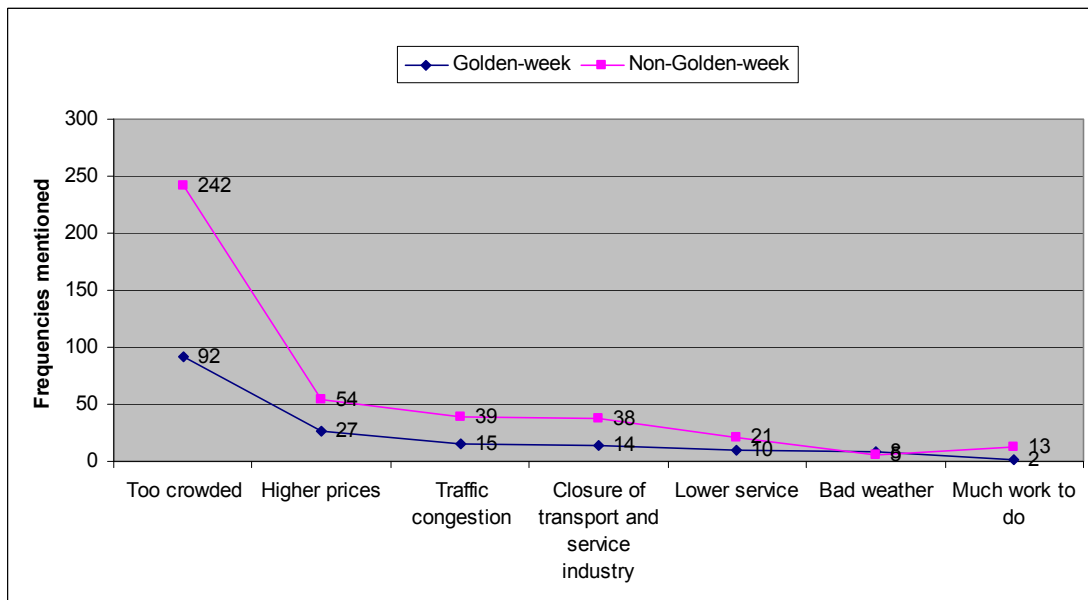


Figure 3. 14 – Frequencies of the disadvantages of National Day Golden Week by Golden-week tourists (N=125) and non-Golden-week tourists (N=325)

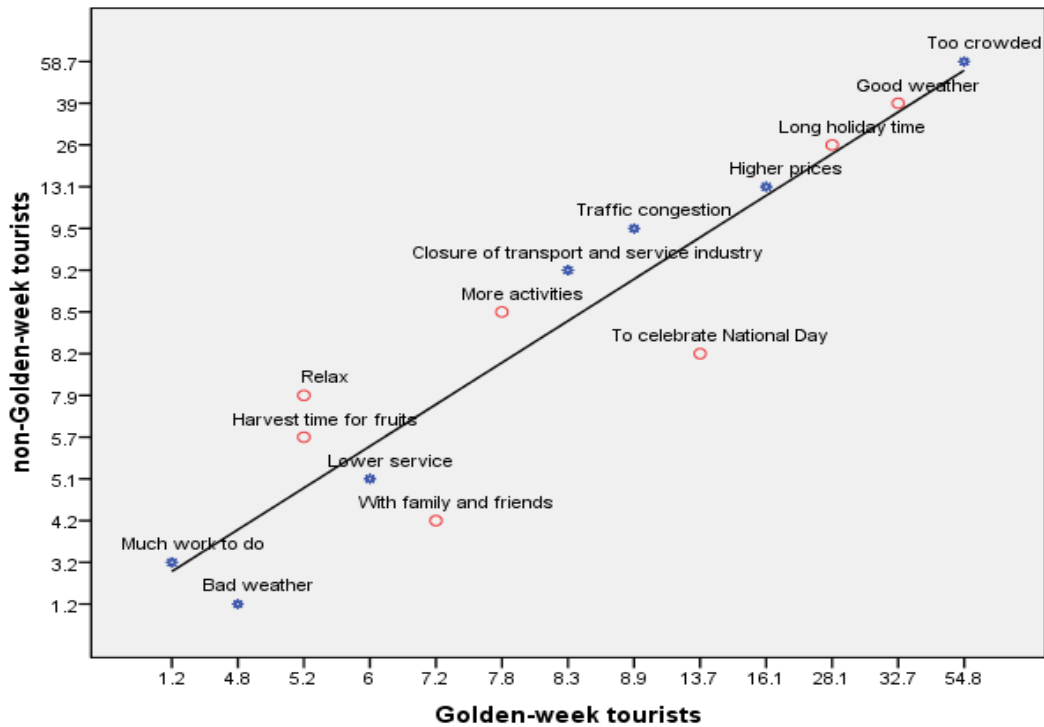


Figure 3. 15 – Perceptions of National Day Golden Week – % of variables mentioned

The plot result in Figure 3.15 show the greatest differences in the perceptions occurring with “relax”, “with family and friends” and “to celebrate National Day”. Among these three features, two of them are the same with the finding in the perceptions of May Day Golden Week, including their associations with the two groups. The additional feature showing differences between groups is “to celebrate National Day”. In China, the National Day is also named the Great Country Mother’s Birthday. It is more dominant in the perception of Golden-week tourists than non-Golden-week tourists. Again, these three features were identified as benefits of National Day Golden Week. All the disadvantage variables are relatively close to the central line, which indicates that both groups have similar perceptions of the drawbacks of National Day Golden Week.

(4) Summary of perceptions of the three Golden Weeks by Golden-week tourists and non-Golden-week tourists

The plots of the relative frequency of variables mentioned for three Golden Weeks by the two groups – Golden-week-tourist group and non-Golden-week-tourist group reveal that both groups have relatively few variations in their perceptions of the drawbacks of Golden Weeks. The differences only appeared for the perceptions of

CNY Golden Week. For the benefits of Golden Weeks, various differences occur in the perceptions of CNY Golden Week while there are only two features in May Day Golden Week and three in National Day Golden Week. CNY is a traditional festival in China and is regarded as the most important festival in China.

3.5 Conclusion and implications

This study examined the attitudes towards seasonality and Golden Week tourism from the Chinese travellers' perspective. It is found that different seasonality influences influence visitors' travel time choices. Among the four categories of seasonality influences identified – natural, institutional, personal and social, the personal influences were found to be the most influential. Personal influences included cost- and time-related constraints and the crowding issue which were suggested to be among the most widely and intensely experienced constraints (Jackson, 2000; Jackson, 2005; Walker & Virden, 2005).

Also, the crowding issue and the higher prices were identified by the Chinese travellers as the top two problems resulting from the Golden Weeks in this study. On the other hand, the long holiday time resulting from the Golden Week system was identified as the top benefit that this system provided for the Chinese citizens.

This study further explained the perceptions of seasonality from the perspective of travellers with two different travel histories – frequent tourists and non-frequent tourists. The findings again showed that travellers with different travel experiences had different perceptions of seasonality particularly with the crowding and cost issues.

A further perspective on seasonality and Golden Week tourism will be explored from the Chinese tourism managers' perspective in the final study in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 – The perspectives of tourism managers towards seasonality and the Golden Weeks tourism (Study 3)

Chapter structure

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- 4.1.2 Management of Golden Week tourism issues

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- 1) **Travel agency**
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- 4) **Transportation**

- **4.4.5.3 Expectations about tourists**

- 1) **Before travelling**
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- 4.4.6 Managers' business planning to attract Golden Week tourists

- 1) **Hotel and catering**
- 2) **Transportation**
- 3) **Travel agency**
- 4) **Attractions**

4.5 Conclusion and implications – summary of Study 3

4.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the phenomenon of seasonality and Golden Week travelling from the perspective of managers in different tourism areas. This study uses a qualitative approach where the technique of in-depth interviews with open-ended questions was applied. The interviewees are managers working in different tourism areas, including hotel and catering, tourism transportation, travel agencies and tourist attractions. There are three parts in the interview contents: (1) perception – what would they do to manage the six seasonality patterns identified in Study One; (2) reaction – how do they perceive the advantages and disadvantages of the Golden Week system for their business; (3) planning – what do they expect from tourism stakeholders, and what will they do in future Golden Weeks. The main objective of this study is to identify specific views of seasonality and the Golden Week from the managers' perspectives.

4.1.1 Management of seasonality issues

Considerable research on seasonality highlights numerous ways to even out the peaks and troughs (McEnnif, 1992; Owens, 1994; Wilton & Wirjanto, 1998; Yacoumis,

1980). The methods discussed include new product developments and new market segments which all focus on stretching the peak seasons. There are six basic supply / demand matching strategies identified by Weaver and Oppermann (2000): increase demand outside peak season, reduce demand in the peak season, redistribute demand, increase supply in the peak season, reduce supply and redistribute or restructure supply. These provide a categorisation for both academics and tourism related business to overview and overcome seasonality issues. However there is lack of studies to evaluate the impacts of those strategies (Baum & Hagen, 1999). A previous study carried out on this topic indicated that instead of relying upon visitation statistics or measures of tourist expenditure, policy decisions and managerial procedures need to consider how seasonality is conceptualised by tourism operations and businesses (Duval, 2004).

4.1.2 Management of Golden Week tourism issues

The Golden Week system is a policy issued by the Chinese government to stimulate consumption, expand domestic demand and improve the quality of people's life. As the policy maker, the government acted as a leader to regulate and direct the whole market. With the supervision and management from the government, the Golden Week market is maturing. Table 4.1 shows the main characteristics at each step during the development Golden Week system.

Table 4. 1 – Development of Golden Week system

	Characteristics in each step
National Day, 1999	Increased travel demand; tourism enterprises short of experience; limited variety of products
May Day, 2000	A spontaneous and disorderly state; considerable demand which made the tourism enterprises ill-prepared; forecasts had been conservative; prices up in both transportation and accommodation which resulted in a lot of transport problems and losses for travel enterprises
National Day, 2000	Improved set up of Tourism Information Forecast System, advanced notice of leave; travel agencies learnt from previous lessons and made early preparation; travel not so clustered to the hot destinations, unpopular destinations started to gain attention, more variety of products, more dispersed destinations; consumers chose self-assisted travelling; prices increasing
May Day, 2001	Early peak; more promotions before holiday, well prepared, quality better managed and looked forward to the long term interest; wider distribution of hot spots; self-driving tours increasing
National Day, 2001	Extension of time from both the beginning and the end of the holiday; formation of two markets – sightseeing market and holiday market; significant increase in self-driving tours and peri-urban travel
May Day, 2002	Early peak in hot spots, extension of peak period; received a substantial increase in hot spots, more travelling to the central and western regions; the two markets – sightseeing and holiday becoming mature

(Source: Li, et al., 2003)

4.2 Gaps and objectives

As identified in the first study, the seasonality phenomenon exists in Asian tourism, including China. It is important to consider whether tourism related business and operations themselves perceive seasonality as a problem and how their businesses react to seasonality. In this section the six seasonality patterns identified in Study One were presented to tourism managers to see whether their business conforms to these patterns. Further managers were asked how they manage seasonality problems in their business. The impacts of the Golden Week system in China is growing, therefore, the

advantages and disadvantages of Golden Week travelling have to be evaluated. Policy makers could potentially take into account the opinions of all tourism stakeholders. Earlier the views of tourists' travelling experiences during Golden Weeks were explored in Study Two, and this information can serve as a comparison to the perception of Golden Week travelling from the perspective of managers. Therefore, the objectives of this study are as follows:

- (1) To explore the perception of tourism seasonality from the managers' view and summarise their methods in coping with the problems resulting from seasonality;
- (2) To present both the benefits and problems that Golden Week system brings in tourism related business;
- (3) To summarise their successful marketing strategies involving the Golden Weeks;
- (4) To identify their expectations for the future of Golden Weeks; and
- (5) To identify managers' planning toward Golden Week in the future.

4.3 Data and methodology

An interview with open-ended questions was applied in this study. The qualitative approach of an interview is valuable to identify a range of views and attitudes. Such approaches help investigate the why and how of decision making. There is a wide range of qualitative research methods which include in-depth interviews, group interviews/focus groups, participant observation, ethnography and biographical research (Veal, 2005). In considering these approaches, the in-depth interview is a good instrument to explore tourism managers' views and planning strategies toward Golden Week, because of its flexibility and the detail it can generate in respondents' answers (Gomm, 2004).

4.3.1 In-depth interview

In-depth interviews usually refer both to semi-structured and unstructured interviews (Bryman, 2004). In an in-depth interview, a list of open-ended questions can be prepared in advance of the interview. In this study, a list of open questions covering both seasonality and Golden Week travelling was prepared by the researcher. The open questions provide more room for interviewees to talk about their views and ideas when compared to providing structured forced choice answers. During the interviews,

the managers were encouraged to talk about specific strategies applied in their business as examples to express their attitudes and perceptions of seasonality and Golden Week travelling. And as this is a one-on-one interview, unlike a focus group for example, the views from the interviewees would not influence each other (Gomm, 2004). Table 4.2 provides a list of open questions prepared for interviews.

Table 4.2 – Question list for interviews

Section	Questions
1. Perception	What would you do to manage these patterns of seasonality? (Graphs of six seasonality patterns identified in Study 1 attached.) a. Plateau b. Plain c. Basin d. Single-peak mountain e. Multi-peak mountain f. Rolling hills
2. Reaction	1) What do you think are the advantages for business of: a. Chinese New Year? b. May Day holiday? c. National Day holiday? 2) What do you think are the disadvantages for business of: a. Chinese New Year? b. May Day holiday? c. National Day holiday? 3) How much planning in terms of special products or services do you do for Golden Weeks?
3. Planning	1) What do you expect in the future for the Golden Weeks from: a. The government? b. The tourism industry? c. The tourists? 2) What will you do to better meet the challenge of Golden Weeks travelling?
4. Demographic questions	1) What does your business belong to? a. Hotel and catering b. Transportation c. Travel agency d. Attraction 2) How long have you managed business?

There are four sections for the interviews, and each of them seeks views about different topics. Questions in Section One are related to seasonality patterns, and the responses generated linked to Objective One. Section Two focuses on present reactions about the Golden Weeks and is applied to meet Objective Two and Three. The later section identified future issues and was directed at Objective Four and Five.

And the last section was simple general business information. These questions were guidelines only. According to the responses of interviewees, some questions may be added or taken out, and their sequence might change; however, the main topics remained unchanged.

Interviews, though, are costly in both time and money. The sampling method should therefore select interviewees with a high level of representativeness or who are particularly selected for their specialist knowledge. In this study, business information was initially obtained from tourism official websites. Then the potential interviewees were selected and approached by email or telephone. According to their responses, a time schedule was set up for further interviews.

4.3.2 Profiles of businesses interviewed

Interviews were conducted among tourism related business and operations in China and they were conducted in Mandarin. In all, 30 interviews were carried out in five leading tourist places in China. The researcher travelled to the business locations and conducted the interviews from 20th May 2007 to 20th September 2007. Table 4.3 – 4.6 present the demographic details of the interviewees’ business.

1) Beijing (Northern China):

Table 4.3 – Demographic details of the interviewees in Beijing

Business name	Business type	Year established
Beijing Tian’an International Travel Agency	Travel agency	1987
Beijing Ocean International Travel Agency	Travel agency	1996
Beijing Temple of Heaven	Attraction	1949
Beijing Xiangshan Park	Attraction	1956
Beijing Beihai Park	Attraction	1925

2) Xi'an (Central Western China):

Table 4. 4 – Demographic details of the interviewees in Xi'an

Business name	Business type	Year established
Shaanxi Overseas Tourist Co. Ltd	Travel agency	1998
Shaanxi Xi'an Hanguang Joy Hotel	Hotel and catering	2006
Shaanxi Xi'an Hyatt Hotel	Hotel and catering	1990
Shaanxi Xi'an China Travel Agency	Travel agency	2000
Shaanxi Xi'an Qujiang Huibinyuan Hotel	Hotel and catering	2002
Shaanxi Xi'an Beilin Museum (the Museum of Xi'an Forest of Stele)	Attraction	1944
Shaanxi Provincial Museum of History	Attraction	1991
Shaanxi Banpo Museum	Attraction	1953
Shaanxi Xianyang Museum	Attraction	1962

3) Shanghai area (Central Eastern China):

Table 4. 5 – Demographic details of the interviewees in Shanghai area

Business name	Business type	Year established
Shanghai Travel Agency	Travel agency	2000
Shanghai Hotel	Hotel and catering	1995
Shanghai Chatian International Travel Agency	Travel agency	1986
Shanghai Xinghua Hotel	Hotel and catering	2001
Shanghai Longhua Multiple-travel Town	Attraction	1997
Hangzhou Lingyin Temple	Attraction	1954
Hangzhou West Lake	Attraction	1997
Jiangsu Suzhou Zhuozheng Garden	Attraction	1951
Jiangsu Suzhou Tiger Hill	Attraction	1982

4) Guangzhou & Guangxi Province (Southern China):

Table 4. 6 – Demographic details of the interviewees in Guangzhou & Guangxi Province

Business name	Business type	Year established
Guilin Wuzhou Mother Dragon Temple	Attraction	1982
Guangxi Weizhou Island National Park	Attraction	2004
Guangxi Xin'ao Marine Transportation Ltd	Transportation	1989
Guangxi Guilin Sightseeing Shipping company	Transportation	1985
Guangxi Yangshuo Xi'jie Hotel	Hotel and catering	2000
Guangzhou Shangri-La Hotel	Hotel and catering	2007
Guangzhou Travel Agency	Travel agency	n/a

All together, there were seven businesses in the hotel and catering area, two in tourism transportation system, seven from travel agencies and 14 from tourist attractions. The resulted interviews thus covered diversity in business types from across the country.

4.3.3 Discourse analysis

The aim of discourse analysis is to provide a critical understanding of how language is deployed. It allows the analyst to consider the words, phrases and sentences in a discourse as evidence of an attempt to communicate the speaker's or the writer's message to the hearer or reader (Brown & Yule, 1983; Gomm, 2004; Xiao, 2006). There are many ways to interpret how particular kinds of communication are put together and how these formats convey the meanings inside the communication, such as analysis by interrogative insertion, membership category analysis and problem-solution discourses (Gomm, 2004). Different researchers use different ways to analyse discourses according to their specific research purposes.

Discourse analysis is regarded as most successful when used as a method to interpret rich qualitative texts and records, such as in-depth interviews (Keith, 2006). Basically the procedure of discourse analysis includes four sequential steps identified by Gibson

(2002): (1) editing; (2) identifying and summarizing key words or phrases; (3) making inferences; and (4) finally grouping inferences under a common theme(s) and sub-themes (categorization).

Before proceeding with such an analysis, editing the interviewing transcription is needed. This is due to the fact that many discourses are not presented in a perfectly useable form. As mentioned before, the interviews were conducted in Mandarin. Therefore, editing was done at the same time as the translation.

After editing, the transcript was summarised by identifying key words or phrases which were highlighted with different colours for further analysis. This process can be considered as a key step in discourse analysis (Gibson, 2002).

Then inferences were derived from the identified keywords and phrases. It is necessary to be careful when making inferences. The process of making inferences is to explore the ideas from the responses of the interviewees. Where the meaning of the key words was unclear, the surrounding text was examined to provide clues as to what the interviewees might have meant by using these words (Gibson, 2002).

Finally the inferences were grouped under common themes and sub-themes, and then discussion can be directed at these themes and sub-themes. Themes are common threads of meaning in the data. Thematic analysis is the usual way to analyse data from qualitative interviews (Gomm, 2004). The detail and thoroughness of the approach were the main reasons for employing this form of analysis in the present study.

4.4 Results and discussion

4.4.1 Views of the six seasonality patterns

In this section, the six seasonality patterns identified in Study One were presented to interviewees. They were asked about their perceptions of each pattern and how they managed or would manage such patterns in their business. After translating and minimal editing, and following the thematic grouping approach in discourse analysis, the first task was to decide what the themes were (Gomm, 2004). In the discourses concerning each seasonality pattern, the interviewees generally evaluated how well

they thought this pattern applied to their business. The next response was often an explanation of the reasons driving this pattern. And most of them also suggested some business strategies to deal with the patterns. Therefore, their responses for each pattern are grouped into three themes: (1) perception, (2) causes of this pattern, and (3) business solutions to this pattern.

4.4.1.1 Views of the plateau pattern

Table 4. 7 – The managers’ perceptions of the plateau pattern

Theme	Corresponding inferences	Number of inferences
Perception	fit our business(8), not a good model for business(4), never experienced(2), demand exceeds supply(1), not so bad(1)	16
	reasons for it not being an ideal business pattern – plants and facility(2), carrying capacity is limited(2), need time to protect and repair the heritage(1)	5
Reasons	extremely cold climate in December & January(6), holiday system(3), suitable weather for travelling(2), people’s travelling time preference(1)	12
Solutions	staff training(4), facility maintenance(3), staff leave arrangement(1), visit frequent customers(1)	9
	introduce some special travel products in winter(e.g. skiing & sightseeing the ice carving in Harbin, spa tourism and flower exhibition)(3), do more marketing(2), increase the diversity(1), price bundling(1)	7
	raise price to control the flow(1), arrange resources rationally(1), not any effective treatment to manage this phenomenon(1)	3

According to their responses concerning the plateau pattern, there is no strongly positive or negative perception from the respondents. Although this pattern shows that demand exceeds supply, it is not regarded as an ideal model for business. Some of the

respondents pointed out directly that this pattern was not the one their business wanted. There are many reasons for this response. For every business, particularly the attractions, their carrying capacity is limited making any peaks or overloads undesirable. Additionally, they need time to repair the facilities and protect heritage buildings and green areas. Referring to the interviews, it can be seen that those who said this pattern fits their business are mainly located in the northern part of China (Beijing and Xi'an); and those who "never" experience this pattern are from the southern part of China (Guangzhou City and Guangxi Province).

It seems that the plateau pattern is strongly related to the regional geography and climate, and this can be confirmed by looking at their responses on the causes of this pattern. The natural factors are the most frequently mentioned reasons for shaping this pattern. It is very cold at the beginning and at the end of a year in the north of China, while the weather is quite comfortable for travelling during the middle of a year. Further the institutional factor is also mentioned as a secondary influence shaping this pattern. Three Golden Weeks are the three major long public holidays, and two of them (May Day and National Day) are in the middle of the year. And the long school summer holiday is in July and August. There is therefore a coalition of environmental and institutional forces for the Northern and Western businesses.

Managers' responses to solutions about this pattern can be grouped into three categories. The first one is how to overcome the dead season at the beginning and at the end of the year. Holding special events plays an important role here. Successful examples were mentioned, such as skiing and sightseeing, notably the ice carving in Harbin, North China. Other effective methods include improving service and providing products with more diversity. As this pattern is not regarded as an ideal pattern, the second group of ideas focused on how to reduce the negative effects of the long peak season. Not many methods were suggested, but one approach was to increase the price to control the flow during the high season. Another recommendation was to redistribute supply. Others said there was not any one effective treatment to manage this phenomenon so far. The last category focuses on how to make use of the quiet season. Staff training and facility maintenance are two important tasks for the business. It was also suggested that the low season is a good time for staff to take a break and to visit important customers for feedback.

4.4.1.2 Views of the plain pattern

Table 4. 8 – The managers’ perceptions of the plain pattern

Theme	Corresponding inferences	Number of inferences
Perception	not ideal for business(9), detrimental to the sustainable development(1)	10
	stable(3), it’s great if it keeps at a high level(2), easy to run and manage for business(1), higher and stable income(1), avoid maintaining cost(1)	8
	suits our business(2), hardly experienced(1), not a common type(1), suits tourism in Guangdong and Hainan Island(1), has both pros and cons(1), the trend for business(1)	7
Reasons	at least one or two highlights in a year(2), limited time available for travelling(2), festival activities and holiday system(2), extremely cold weather in winter(1), dry seasons for shipping(1), travel time concentrated(1), choice of suitable weather(1)	10
	not much affected by climate(1), more rational to make travel decisions(1)	2
Solutions	special events(8), strengthen advertising and increasing popularity(1), be prepared at all time(1), staff leave arrangement(1), staff training(1), visit VIP customers(1), facility maintenance(1)	14

This pattern is regarded as an uncommon one and was hardly experienced by the managers interviewed. The pattern was described as suiting tourism in Guangdong and Hainan Island where there is not any extremely cold weather during the year. This pattern has both advantages and disadvantages for the conduct of business. If the business falling in this pattern keeps operating at a high level, it is good as it produces high and stable profits and avoids any maintenance cost. It is considered by many to

be a desirable trend for business income. Although this pattern looks stable and is likely to be most profitable, many of them did not think it is an ideal model for business as it can be detrimental to sustainable development due to high pressure on resources and staff.

This pattern was considered to be the result of stable and desirable climate factors and a mature market where the customers make their decisions more rationally. Many other factors, however, make this pattern uncommon in China. The climate is the most important factor as it changes all the time in most regions, and people prefer to travel with suitable weather. Another aspect is the institutional factor, particularly the holiday system. The public holiday system forces people to travel at a concentrated time. From this perspective it was suggested that if the government can distribute the holidays more evenly, it is possible to redistribute the peak season.

As it is considered a slightly problematic model for business due to sustained pressure and no “down time”, special events are highly recommended as an effective tool to vary the plain pattern. More marketing and advertising on targeted markets were considered to be helpful. Staff training and facility maintenance were seen as necessary, whether or not the business adhered to the plain pattern.

4.4.1.3 Views of the basin pattern

Table 4. 9 – The managers’ perceptions of the basin pattern

Theme	Corresponding inferences	Number of inferences
Perceptions	never experienced/not suits our business(13), only experienced in 2003 when SARS broke out(3), not ideal for business(2), suits Northeast China area(1), relatively short business time(1), in business cities(1)	21
Reasons	school summer holiday(5), middle of the year is best time for travelling(2), important events at middle year(2), wet season for shipping(1), people’s travel preference(1)	11
	climate(7)	7
Solutions	target on off-season tourists(1), cut down price(1), offer special products(1), advertising(1), look for new markets(1), government policy(1)	6

Perceptions of the basin pattern reveal that this is not a typical business pattern. And it is also not good for business as the business time is relatively short. This pattern suits tourism in northeast China where the weather is cool in the middle of the year, and in business cities. However, some businesses in other locations experienced this type of pattern in 2003 when SARS broke out in March.

The main reason shaping this pattern comes down to the climate. The climate situation in China makes this pattern one which Chinese businesses do not appreciate, as it tends to be associated with a slump in activity. Also the school summer holiday comes in the middle of the year which is a perfect time for people to travel. In addition, some important events take place during the middle of the year which bring a lot of tourists. Both of these stimuli to demand can boost the low period of lesser tourism activity represented by the basin pattern.

Some suggestions are provided on how to better run businesses which conform to this basin pattern. Price, products and people are three elements for improvements. Cutting down the price, introducing special products and targeting new markets are three possible ways to overcome the off-season problems resulting from this pattern. But when something unexpected happens, like the breakout of SARS in 2003, the first important thing for the business is to take corresponding actions in line with government policy.

4.4.1.4 Views of the single-peak mountain pattern

Table 4. 10 – The managers’ perceptions of the single-peak mountain pattern

Theme	Corresponding inferences	Number of inferences
Perceptions	July - August(10), not ideal for business(4), seldom experienced(2), resorts for summer(1), October(1), an extreme(1), suits destinations either very suitable or very unsuitable for travelling(1), family groups(1), student groups(1), suits our business(1), maintenance cost(1), staff payments(1)	25
Reasons	school summer holiday(6), climate(3), beautiful natural view(1)	10
Solutions	strengthen supervision(1), guarantee service quality(1), attentions to security issues(1), staff training(1), staff leave arrangement(1), visit customers for feedbacks(1), facility maintenance(1)	7
	raise reputation(2), more marketing strategies(1), create more peaks(1), offer special products(1), target new markets(1)	6

This is an extreme pattern in seasonality. In the views of many managers, July – August is absolutely the peak for tourism in China, particularly for some summer resorts. This pattern suits those destinations which are either very suitable or very unsuitable for travelling most time of year. It is not considered as an ideal model for some business, but others indicated that this pattern did suit their business. For those who were in this pattern, they found that the majority of their customers in the peak season were family groups and student groups; and also out of peak season, the issue of maintenance costs and staff payments can not be ignored.

The reasons for resulting in this pattern are mainly due to the school summer holiday. The latter holiday period has been seen as its own golden time for most tourism business. And some natural factors are added to shape this pattern.

As it is an extreme pattern, many suggestions were given on how to deal with the peak time. The safety issue is the most important thing for attention. Secondly the service quality should be maintained to meet with customers' satisfaction level. Finally incentives must be provided for staff. Additionally, there were suggestions about how to create more peaks for business as most of them were not satisfied with one peak for a year. Two most effective ways are introducing new products and targeting new markets. Most managers wanted to create multiple peaks for their business. The pattern of such multi-peak mountain form will be discussed in the next section.

4.4.1.5 Views of the multi-peak mountain pattern

Table 4. 11 – The managers' perceptions of the multi-peak mountain pattern

Theme	Corresponding inferences	Number of inferences
Perceptions	never experienced(2), not ideal for business(1), often happens in hotel business(1), suits our business(1), suits destinations where most of time is ideal for travelling(1), would be better if the peak time can be extended(1), slack in the week following the peaks(1)	8
Reasons	Golden Week holiday system(9), school summer holiday(4), climate(3), Chinese tradition – spring outing(2), environmental issues(1)	19
Solutions	offer special products(5), improve public image and reputation(2), promotions(2), more research on marketing(1), attract business groups(1), staff training(1), target special markets(1), staff leave arrangement(1), safety programme(1)	15

Perceptions of the multi-peak mountain pattern tend to be more positive compared to other patterns. Only one of the managers did not agree it was good for business. Many hotels fall in this pattern. It was expected that each of the peak time periods could be extended. And if a very slack time occurs in the week following the peaks, particularly in the hotel industry, there may even be close to zero occupancy for the following week.

The major reason to form the multi peaks is due to the holiday system, such as the three Golden Weeks and school summer holiday, which provides most with people time available and their travelling possible. Some of the multi peaks are the results of Chinese tradition. There is a long history for the Chinese to go out to get involved in nature in spring. This tradition is named seeking spring, which the Chinese believe can help them start with a good beginning for the year.

Many ideas were suggested for creating more peaks for business. A good reputation of the business is a necessary start. Traditional marketing methods, like offering a variety of products, as well as targeted markets are effective tools. The business groups are highlighted as an attractive market for the hotel industry. In addition, a well organized safety programme is strongly recommended. And staff training and facility maintenance are also important after every peak.

4.4.1.6 Views of the rolling hills pattern

Table 4. 12 – The managers’ perceptions of the rolling hills pattern

Theme	Corresponding inferences	Number of inferences
Perceptions	never experienced(10), good for environment and facility(2), not good for business(2), happens in hotel industry frequently(1), suits destinations in Southeast China area(1), good for business(1), sustainable tourism(1), affect business(1), short slack time is necessary(1), in some years(1), mature business(1), continuing tourist arrivals(1)	23
Reasons	climate(2), endless novelty and good ideas(1)	3
Solutions	staff relax(1), facility maintenance(1), extend the peak time(1), introduce wider ranges of products(1), staff training(1), staff leave arrangement(1)	6

This is another pattern which was perceived to happen frequently in the hotel industry. There is a very good perception of this pattern although some of the managers still hold different opinions. The rolling hills pattern provides a basis for business to

develop in a sustainable way. The continuing customers help business keep running, avoiding any unnecessary cost. Business in this pattern was regarded as mature.

Not many reasons were identified for this pattern. Good climate all the year round is the basic element. To attract continuing customers, there must be new and special products provided all the time, which means that the businesses need to be good at diversifying their offerings.

Recommendations relating to this pattern include introducing a greater variety of products to extend the peak time. Also, staff training and facility maintenance were mentioned as a continuing concern, so that the business can develop in a sustainable way.

4.4.1.7 Summary of perceptions of the six seasonality patterns

Perceptions of the six seasonality patterns varied among managers from different locations and different industry sectors. None of the six patterns was seen by all as an ideal model for their business although some of their businesses conformed to specific patterns. The rolling hills pattern was considered as a trend for mature businesses. For many managers, one of their main concerns was with the extreme seasonality and how to both overcome the off season and extend the peak season. According to their opinions, the natural factors play an important role in shaping most of these seasonality patterns. As a result, there is not much that the business can do to effect change. However, the institutional, social and personal factors are not trivial. For the institutional factors, the holiday system is the most important one. How the government distributes the national holidays will influence the country's tourism seasonality to a considerable extent. For social and personal factors, marketing methods can be adopted to help business overcome the off season. These approaches can be based on some Chinese traditions and people's travelling preference. An example would be to go to the temple fairs during the Lantern Festival. Special events are highly recommended by most managers as an effective way to attract customers in both the peak and off season. Another managers' concern was how to develop their business in a sustainable way. Staff training and facility maintenance are always necessary to be included in the business schedule. Although the aim of business is to pursue profit as much as possible, many of the managers agreed that all the business

should be responsible for environmental issues. Such stated awareness is a promising sign for sustainable tourism and development in China's future (Li, 2004).

As identified in the opinions about the six patterns, most tourism managers showed great interest in creating a peak time for business. The three Golden Weeks are now the major travelling time for Chinese. In the following section, the views of the managers when asked about the advantages and disadvantages that the Golden Weeks bring are recorded. In the corresponding inferences reported in Table 4.13, managers often provided more than one statement which supported the theme identified in the discourses.

4.4.2 Views of advantages that Golden Weeks bring to business

Table 4. 13 – Managers' views of advantages and trends for the Golden Weeks

Theme	Corresponding inferences	Number of inferences
Golden Week is really golden to our business.	more customers(22), higher price(10), more profits(9), higher level of satisfaction(4), more expenditure(4), participate in more activities(3), very welcome by our business(3), cover cost of off-season(2), many celebration events(2), good cooperation with other business(2), higher level of service(2), good weather(2), development for business(2), make bookings beforehand(1), increase business recognition(1), make full use of tourism resources(1)	70
No differences	not too many differences from usual(3), no benefits from inbound tours(1)	4
Trends	family groups(6), overseas travel(2), easy to form and organize tourist groups(1), self-drive travel(1)	10

As specified in Table 4.13, the responses to the advantages that Golden Weeks bring into business were grouped into three categories – two current attitudes and one more broadly based view concerning the future. One of the attitudes is that Golden Week is

really golden for businesses, which was supported by a lot of positive statements. The Golden Week system is welcomed very much by most of the managers. For one thing, it is obvious that there are more customers during the Golden Weeks. And according to the government policy, the tourism industries can carry out the peak-season price policy, which makes the price higher than usual. More customers and the higher prices result in more profits for business. Further, the Golden Week customers are seen as being in a positive mood which makes them participate in more activities for heightened satisfaction. Business benefits from this as there is more expenditure from customers with fewer complaints. Such outcomes in turn increase the business reputation. In addition, as all the businesses are very busy during the Golden Weeks, there is good cooperation with each other in order to improve regional efficiencies. Different business sectors share useful information which helps them to organize more activities and serve the customers with a higher level of service quality. Also, the profit made during Golden Week helps to cover the cost in the off-season. In all, this holiday system gives benefits to the development of business in diverse ways.

A second but minor theme was provided by managers who stated that the Golden Weeks made no difference to their business, compared to normal weeks. However, those who held this opinion only occupy a small portion of the respondents. By looking at their business profile, it is found that these business paid greater attention to inbound markets although they did have domestic business as well. One of the managers suggested that foreign tourists should avoid travelling to China during the Golden Weeks.

Many respondents pointed out trends in Golden Week travelling characteristics which are beneficial for their business. One of the most commonly agreed points was that the Golden Week tourists are mostly family groups. Another trend is that there are more and more Chinese travelling overseas during Golden Weeks. Although this is not a new market, there are still only a small number of people travelling overseas during Golden Week. So there is great potential in developing this market. There is also an emerging relatively newer, independent market in the domestic business. There are a growing number of Chinese people who prefer self-drive travelling. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (2000) has described the predominance of self-drive transport internationally. Particularly in Australia and

USA, the self-drive market is popular for domestic tourists (Prideaux & Carson, 2003). A study on self-drive tourism market indicated that self-drive tourism is more popular where there are multiple overnight destinations and opportunities for a longer length of stay (Prideaux & Carson, 2003). This provides the tourism industry with an opportunity to introduce new products with diversity to attract this market.

4.4.3 Views of the disadvantages that Golden Weeks bring to businesses

Table 4. 14 – Managers’ views of the disadvantages that Golden Weeks bring to business

Theme	Corresponding inferences	Number of inferences
Management	short of staff(11), safety issues(8), short of transport(4), too much pressure on staff(4), limited carrying capacity(3), overuse of facility(3) not enough parking area(2), not any problem(2), lower level of service(1), cut down the price(1), low(near zero) occupancy rate after Golden Weeks(1)	40
Tourists	lower level of satisfaction(4), more complaints(2), encounter bad experience and impression(1)	7
Environment	too crowded(9), a lot of rubbish left(8), damage to environment(4), affecting the plants’ growth(2), uncivilized tourist behaviour will do damage to the heritage(1)	24

Although the Golden Week holiday system does bring a lot of benefits to business, problems still arise due to the concentration of tourists in short time period. Based on a consideration of the responses by managers, the problems business encounters during Golden Weeks are categorized into three aspects – management, tourists and environmental issues.

One of the major problems for managers is that they can be short of staff. In the first ever Golden Week, all the tourism businesses were shocked by the huge tourist flow. Although they arranged more staff to work in the following Golden Weeks, the number of tourists kept growing every Golden Week which made the business short

of staff every time. The employment problem exists in all the places where seasonality is involved. Another major problem in management is the safety issue. The chance of incidents occurring rises during Golden Weeks. It is hard for business to control unexpected incidents. Emergency measures are necessary to avoid or reduce the occurrence of incidents and to ensure the safety of both customers and property. In addition, the use of facilities is another great concern by management. On the one hand most of the facilities were overloaded which made them much more vulnerable and thus increase maintenance costs. On the other hand, there were not enough infrastructures to accommodate the Golden Weeks tourists, such as car parks and the public transport. All of these problems are challenges to business management.

Although it was mentioned above that Golden Week tourists were happier than usual, some managers said that they had more customer complaints during Golden Weeks. They pointed out that it was hard to maintain customers' satisfaction, and some Golden Weeks customers left with bad experience and impressions. These problems impede business development.

Another substantial concern is related to the environment. Most managers agreed that everyone, including business and customers should be responsible for environmental issues. From the business aspect, more customers mean more business. However, substantial crowds add a burden to environment. For example, a lot of rubbish left by tourists and uncivilized tourist behaviour during Golden Weeks can spoil the environment and damage the heritage sites.

These are side effects caused by Golden Week system, and by balancing the positives and negatives, tourism businesses benefit more from this holiday system rather than suffer from it. New tourism businesses are eager to get to know about Golden Week market while the experienced tourism businesses are trying to expand this market. By looking back and summarising what has been done to manage effectively in past Golden Weeks, the whole tourism system can know more about this market and learn from those successful experiences. In the following section, some successful promotional efforts concerning Golden Weeks in previous years or at the present time being are discussed.

4.4.4 Previous or existing Golden Weeks promotions

Table 4. 15 – Previous or existing Golden Weeks promotions

Theme / business type	Corresponding inferences	Number of inferences
Hotel and catering	cooperate with travel agency(3), special preferential price system(3), provide extra services(3), price bundling(2), reduce the number of business groups and get in more provisional individuals(1), flexible time for checking in and out(1)	13
Transportation	special package(2) – e.g., special lunch, photography services, more flights(1), more staff(1)	4
Travel agency	new tour routes(3), marketing(2), introduce self-assist travel itinerary(2), family-base tour(1), price bundling(1), advertisements(1)	10
Attraction	special events(10), price bundling(5), price adjustment(2), more staff including volunteers(2), more activities(2), extend open hours(1), provide souvenirs(1), limit tourist number for protection purpose(1), free(1)	25

The responses from managers concerning what their business had done to successfully deal with Golden Weeks were grouped into four themes by their business types.

4.4.4.1 Hotel and catering

For the hotel businesses the aim is to ensure a high occupancy rate. During the Golden Weeks, cooperation with travel agencies can bring in several tourist groups and guarantee high occupancy figures. Discounts and special travel itineraries can be a boost to customers and ensure business. However, as a condition of cooperating with travel agents, the hotels have to reduce their prices to be attractive to travel agencies and their clients. Many hotels tend to carry out such strategies during Golden Weeks. On one hand, they have often contracted with a travel agency with a part of their accommodation to guarantee a base occupancy rate; yet again, they keep certain

rooms for walk-in customers since during the Golden Weeks, there are also more individual customers. Also, the hotels have introduced some special products to attract individual customers. As well as a special preferential price system, the hotels also provided customers with package accommodation, flexible time for checking in and out and extra services. The extra services included free breakfast, transfer between hotels and attractions, transport booking, free city tours, and so on. In summary, hotels are stimulated by the Golden Weeks period to develop and modify their products in a variety of ways.

4.4.4.2 Transportation

A shortage of transport was a common problem mentioned by both tourists and managers. Both the frequency of transport and providing more transport options were seen as important options. Managers from the transport sector who were interviewed confirmed these goals as the major tasks for their business during Golden Weeks. In addition, they also introduced special package for Golden Week customers. The packages included meals or packages with accommodation. Also, some additional services were available. For example, in one ship based sightseeing company, there were professional photographers on board who assisted tourists in taking quality photographs. Like the hotel sector, managers in the transport business had responded to Golden Weeks needs in a number of ways but most often with expanded and specialised services involving packaging.

4.4.4.3 Travel agency

Travel agencies act as an intermediary in tourism and are particularly powerful for organizing travel in China where independent self-organized travel is only just beginning (Chen, 2005; Zhang, 1995). There were many ways travel agencies promoted their Golden Week business. One traditional method used was simply to do more marketing research and introduce new tour itineraries. Special Golden Week products were advertised via various ways of media, such as newspaper, travel magazine, TV, or radio. Attractive flyers were considered by the respondents as economic and effective tools. As mentioned above, there were trends among Golden Week travellers – more family groups and more self-drive travelling. In line with the trends, many travel agencies offered some special packages to meet family needs and introduced self-assist travel itineraries. New tour itineraries were also created by

cooperating with other tourism sectors. One successful example was cooperation between a travel agency and an airline company. By cooperation, they introduced a stop-over programme – on the way to Australia from China, it was possible to choose one country (like the Philippines) to stop over for one or two nights so that customers can experience another different destination. This was reported as very attractive and welcomed by Golden Week customers. Again the themes of extra packaging and new opportunities were a feature of the overall efforts managers reported to deal with Golden Week opportunities.

4.4.4.4 Attractions

Most responses concerning promotion were from the attraction sector. Among these promotions by attractions, the use of a special event was the most commonly employed approach and seen to be the most effective. Combined with local culture and tradition, special events provided a chance for locals to be involved and for tourists to experience local life. Extra services provided for visitors were also another attractive point for tourists. There were a lot of extra services provided which were well received by Golden Week tourists. Some attractions provided electronic or audio guides for tourists which can assist tourists travelling around the attraction and also help reduce the need for more guiding staff. Some attractions offered an information desk, free tea, a recharger for mobile phones, and automatic shoe-cleaning machines. All of these additions were designed to make it more convenient for tourists during their visiting. Other convenient measures include providing tour buses, wheelchairs for the disabled as well as baby trolleys. Another widely adopted strategy was price adjustment. But there were two different price strategies applied in the Golden Weeks – double prices and preferential prices. Generally speaking, the big and well-known attractions increased prices to make more profits and control the flow while the small and new attractions preferred to offer a discount price to attract more customers.

The points noted demonstrate that different types of tourism businesses have their own different strategies and methods to promote Golden Weeks and manage Golden Week issues. There is a common agreement among all tourism businesses – their individual power is limited, and cooperation with other stakeholders can help improve their performance in the Golden Week market. It is appropriate therefore that the following section probes the topic of what the tourism businesses expected from

related stakeholders – government, the tourism business and even the tourists themselves.

4.4.5 Managers’ expectations of Golden Weeks from tourism stakeholders – government, the tourism businesses and tourists

Most managers and tourism personnel interviewed held a positive view towards Golden Weeks development. They tried their best to create a Golden Week market. Tourism is consistently seen an industry system, and it involves various stakeholders (Farrell & Twining-Ward, 2004; Gunn, 1994). This means that a single unit cannot achieve its aim by itself. Instead, the development in tourism necessitates cooperation among stakeholders. In this section of the research, managers were asked about what they expected other stakeholders could do for development in the Golden Weeks.

4.4.5.1 Managers’ expectations directed at government

Table 4. 16 – Managers’ expectations directed at the Chinese government

Theme / stakeholders	Corresponding inferences	Number of inferences
Government	strengthen supervision and management(10), strengthen protection of the ecological environment / cultural relic (7), work out and improve holiday system(7), develop sustainable tourism(4), strengthen law enforcement(2), cancel the Golden Week system(2), provide more public tour buses to attractions(2), policy support on special events(2), not helpful(2), policy support on promotion(1)	39

As the policy maker, the Chinese government acts as a supervisor and leader in Golden Week tourism. First of all, there is still a lot to be done to improve the holiday system. A more rational allocation of holiday time and more public transport were the prime concern of tourism business. During the course of this research in 2007 there was a small change in the holiday system. The second Golden Week – May Day holiday was reduced to one day, with two new public holidays – one on 5th April (Qingming Festival) and another one on lunar calendar 15th August (Mid-Autumn Day). These three single holidays were connected with a two-day weekend to form

three long weekend holidays. However, according to the newspaper comments, the performances of the new holiday system did not satisfy business (Wu, 2009). They called for the return of the May Day Golden Week while they two new holidays can still remain. The very fact that the Chinese government changed the holiday system once does indicate the potential for further modification based on business, community and research input.

Secondly, the government is expected to strength its supervision and management over the Golden Week market to ensure everything was undertaken in line with legal procedures. In the early phase of the Golden Week system, the market was completely new and certainly a mass market. The regulations set up by the government encouraged rapid market expansion. Although it is becoming mature, the government's leading role in this market is still important and necessary. The businesses expected the government to overview the whole market and make full use of its powers. Such efforts include micro management such as regulating tourism prices, attending to tourism quality and tourism activities as well as macro-issues such as providing infrastructure and marketing information.

Finally, the managers also expected some policy support from the government. As mentioned previously, some managers pointed out that the environmental issues should be considered while developing Golden Week travelling. Here they expected policy support from government to protect ecological environments and cultural relics. They believed that the regulations issued by government were powerful. Further special events were seen as one of the most effective marketing tools. In this case, many managers believed special events should be supported by government policy and if this occurs better promotion campaigns will be put in place.

Again, the discourses are not unanimous. A small number of managers interviewed did not think that the government was of any help to their business. Two of them expected the government to cancel the Golden Week system. When they were asked about the reasons, they stated that tourism was part of the market economy which should develop on its own and avoid interference from government.

4.4.5.2 Managers' expectations directed at the tourists

Table 4. 17 – Managers' expectations directed at the tourists

Theme / Stakeholders	Corresponding inferences	Number of inferences	
Tourist	be careful of safety issue(6), don't litter(5), behave well – don't do any damage(3), learn more about the culture(1), locals give way to outside tourists(1), have a good sense of timing(1)	17	35
	don't make a blindfold decision based on price or fashion(4), pre-book transport and accommodation(4), be sensible and be aware of crowding (2), regard Golden Week travelling as a way to enrich the spiritual life(2)	12	
	more understanding(4), higher level of satisfaction(1), suggestions and advices(1)	6	

Tourists are the targets that all the businesses are seeking to satisfy and from whom they draw their profits. However, as one of the stakeholders involved in tourism, tourists were also expected to contribute to making the system work. The expectations concerning tourists cover the whole process of travelling.

1) Before travelling

Customers were advised to make a careful decision. It was recommended that they should avoid making up their minds by judging the prices or following the fashion. Tourists were advised to think about what they really want, and choose the suitable product for themselves. Also, the customers should be aware that the huge tourist flow will result in crowding problems everywhere. They were also expected to undertake some preparations, such as book their accommodation and transport beforehand. Once well prepared, Golden Week travelling can be treated as a way to experience nature, get to know more people and enrich their spiritual life.

2) During travelling

The first important thing for tourists while travelling is to consider the issue of safety. Managers suggested that everyone should be expected to be more careful of their

personal and property safety. And when involved in any tourism activity, they were expected to be good tourists. It is very important to have a good sense of timing during the busy Golden Weeks. Doing everything on scheduled time helps to avoid any unnecessary trouble to the business or to the tourists themselves. Also, good tourists should be responsible for the environment. In particular they should not litter and also take good care of the heritage relics. In addition, in many famous places of interest, there need to be a tolerance between tourists and locals in visiting popular locations.

3) After travelling

All the businesses tried their best to serve customers and hoped they had a higher level of satisfaction. The businesses appreciated the understanding from the tourists. In order to improve their Golden Week travelling experience, the tourists were expected to give their constructive comments and suggestions after their Golden Week travelling. The feedbacks from tourists will help managers improve their service and make out better strategies to develop Golden Week travelling.

4.4.5.3 Sectors specific expectations, including business planning

Table 4. 18 – Managers’ expectations directed at the whole tourism industry

Theme / Stakeholders	Corresponding inferences	Number of inferences
Tourism industry	all sectors work together – with a reasonable price(2), provide more options for tourists(2), provide “all-in-one” service package(1), exchange information(1), share resources(1), set up an institution to investigate(1), pay more attention to environment(1)	9

Various expectations from the tourism industry were identified. According to their responses, there were general expectations applied to the tourism industry as a whole, and also there are some specific expectations directed to different business areas. Golden Week was seen as a “big cake” for tourism business, so every one wanted to have a generous portion of this market. Most of the businesses agreed that all the business sectors should work together. They suggested working out a programme

named an “all-in-one” service package which provided everything for customers. In this programme, all the different business types should work as linked sectors in an institution, where they cooperate with each other, exchange information and follow the same price system. They should be managed by the same rules and be more responsible to the environment. Following are the expectations and business planning directed towards individual business sectors.

1) Travel agency

Table 4. 19 – Managers’ expectations and planning directed at the travel agency sector

Theme / Travel agency	Corresponding inferences	Number of inferences
Expectation	cooperate with attractions and transport to develop and design various tour routes(7), organize the tour groups(5), confirm time and number for hotel booking(2), exchange experience with other travel agencies(1), design special tour routes(1)	16
Planning	create tour routes(4), DIY(Do-It-Yourself) tour – to meet the various demands from different levels of consumption(2), holiday vacation – focus on the high-standard products for the wealthy individuals(1), special events(1), improve quality of tour guides(1), pre-paid fees(1), low cost tours(1), cooperate with local agents(1), not any at the moment(1)	13

Acting as a medium of interchange, there are a lot of expectations on travel agencies. Other business types expected the travel agency to cooperate with them and organize their tour groups during the busy time. Attractions and transport were expected to work with them to create a variety of tour routes while the hotels want to guarantee their occupancy rate by confirmation group bookings from travel agencies. For the travel agencies, they were expected to share experiences with each other.

There were two major directions implicated for the planning of travel agencies. One was the traditional way – creating new tour routes. The other was to explore and target new markets. There were two new markets identified by travel agencies interviewed. One was the self-assist travelling market which was pointed out as one of the Golden Week travelling trends; and the other was the wealthy individuals who are seeking high-standard holidays. Additionally, the travel agencies realised that they needed self-improvement as well. Improving the quality of tour guides was an important part of their management planning. Also, they needed to enhance the relationship with local agents.

2) Attractions

Table 4. 20 – Managers’ expectations and planning directed at the attractions sector

Theme / Attractions	Corresponding inferences	Number of inferences
Expectation	learn from other attractions with successful Golden Week experience(2), tighten up on safety precautions(1), provide unique souvenirs(1), special events(1), “smile service”(1), improve service quality and facility(1), more activities(1), make use of resources(1), safety issue(1)	10
Planning	special events and activities(8), improve facility(4), promotion(2) – media, go to university, improve service quality – cooperate with police station and cleaning company to provide a more safe and comfortable place for tourist(2), more staff(2), strengthen management(2), cooperate with other tourism industries(1), create products(1), raise up the price(1), cooperate with locals – give way to outside tourists(1), limit tourists number(1), pay attention to the environment(1), better protection on cultural relics(1), survey for improvements(1)	28

Expectations directed at attractions focused on their management. For one thing, the attractions should guarantee their service, or even provide better service during Golden Week travelling. Good suggestions included special events, “smile service

based” and souvenirs. It is also helpful for attractions to learn from other successful experiences in dealing with Golden Week tourists. Additionally, it is important for attraction management to pay attention to safety issues. They were expected to work with related sectors, such as the hospital and fire departments, to devise countermeasures for safety issues.

The planning within the attraction field touches various areas. From the promotion aspect, many attractions will undoubtedly continue to hold special events and activities which have been recognized as an effective promotional method. Also, some attractions planned to undertake promotion via media or advertise directly at universities or in schools. Managers planned to strengthen their efforts in a number of ways. One technique was to employ more qualified staff and improve facilities. Another technique was to cooperate with other businesses, including other tourism industries and safety-related departments, such as the police station and the fire department. Beyond these actions, their planning efforts were also directed at environmental issues. By doing so, they will limit the tourist numbers at peak time and also provide more protection of key cultural relics. Some of the attractions also planned to assess tourists’ responses through questionnaires to help development of their business.

3) Hotel and catering

Table 4. 21 – Managers’ expectations and planning directed at the hotel and catering sector

Theme / Hotel and catering	Corresponding inferences	Number of inferences
Expectation	strengthen safety management(2), pay more attention to food safety(1), special menu(1), food culture(1), improve service standard(1)	6
Planning	accept more individual customers(3), increase price(2), use a deposit system(2), not any at the moment(2), cooperate with travel agency(1), incentives(1), expand the scale of hotel(1), strengthen the management(1), improve service quality(1), pay attention to all complaints(1), price bundling(1)	16

In the hotel and catering area, safety is again an important concern. Managers are expected to guarantee visitors' personal safety and food safety. The variety of products is another way they can do to contribute to the development of Golden Week business. By combining local culture, they can introduce unique menus and special accommodation packages to enrich customers' Golden Week travelling experience. At the same time, the service quality should be consistently positive.

The Golden Week planning within the hotel and catering area focused on management improvement. The first concern was to guarantee the occupancy rate. By doing so, they would maintain good links with travel agencies which bring in large numbers of tour groups. In conjunction with this cooperation, managers preferred to work out a booking system which would require certain deposits from any travel agency. The deposit depended on the cooperation history, the number of tour groups and so on. Another concern in the managers' planning was receiving more individual Golden Week tourists. Several measures were suggested to help attract more individual travellers. And these measures were about service improvement, incentives and special packages. In addition, some business managers highlighted an intention to use a price strategy – effectively price increases. Only one of the hotel businesses interviewed indicated that it would expand its business scale in the future.

4) Transportation

Table 4. 22 – Managers' expectations and planning directed at the transportation sector

Theme / Transportation	Corresponding inferences	Number of inferences
Expectation	Follow the requests from others(1), more frequencies and options for the Golden Weeks(1)	2
Planning	more ships(1), higher frequencies(1), cooperate with locals – give way to outside tourists(1), more staff(1), bigger boats in wet season(1), small ferry in dry season(1)	6

Greater transport availability and greater frequencies during Golden Weeks were two major tasks for the improvement of the tourism transport sector. However, the assumption of doing so was that they should obey the rules issued by government policy makers.

The planning for transportation area was also quite clear – more transport and more frequent services. However, the transport companies need to take consideration of maintaining cost in the off-season. One of their planning steps is to cooperate with local people, who will be advised to give precedence to tourists from other places during Golden Weeks.

The expectations from tourism businesses for all tourism stakeholders showed that the businesses were interested in the Golden Week market. And their planning strategies indicated that they were confident about the future development of Golden Week travelling.

4.5 Conclusion and implication – summary of Study Three

This chapter used the qualitative method of a detailed face to face interview to explore views and perceptions from tourism managers. Thematic discourse analysis was applied to present the results of the interviews with selected tourism stakeholders who represented different components of tourism. The managers were from the hotel and catering area, transportation, travel agencies and attractions. The objective of this study was to identify the specific views of managers on the tourism seasonality phenomenon and Golden Week travelling in China. This chapter presented the views from three aspects – perceptions on seasonality patterns, reactions to the Golden Week tourism and planning for future Golden Week tourism.

In summary, none of the six patterns identified in Study One was widely accepted as ideal by the business managers interviewed. The plateau pattern was experienced by more managers compared to the other patterns. Many suggestions were provided to create more peaks and overcome problems in the off-seasons. One of the most popular methods was to highlight a special event. Events and festivals have also been identified by previous studies as the most common strategy to combat seasonality (Baum, 1998; Getz, 1991; Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005).

The managers' reactions concerning Golden Week travelling were also analysed. Firstly, the advantages and disadvantages that the businesses encountered were identified. The advantages were obvious as more customers meant more business, and higher prices meant more profits. The Golden Week system provided managers with an opportunity to develop their businesses. However problems also arose due to the huge tourist flows. The main problems in management include not enough staff, overuse of facilities and the low visitation and occupancy rate in the following month. A previous study indicated that the total amount of consumption sold in the months with three Golden Weeks ranked at the top of sale amount while the sale amount in the following months was at the bottom (Ren, 2007). In the present study, the interviews with managers tended to confirm the variability between Golden Weeks and other time periods. By better balancing the advantages and disadvantages, the Golden Week system would be more welcome to tourism business.

Secondly, managers' promotional efforts during Golden Weeks were explored. Based on their different functions in the tourism market, diverse types of business have alternate ways to promote Golden Week products. But they all had a common idea which is that cooperation with other stakeholders made for better results. Additionally, price bundling was identified within all the different types of tourism businesses as a successful strategy promoting their Golden Week business by many managers. Previous research showed that the strategy of price bundling can reduce the cost of products and provide the suppliers with the opportunity to achieve more profits from the same products, while this strategy can also create demand-associated benefits (Bakos and Brynjolfsson, 1999; Garrow et al, 2006; Kim, et al, 2009; Stremersch & Tellis, 2002).

Finally, regarding their future planning for Golden Week business, managers identified their expectations concerning the role of other tourism stakeholders. They also explained their own planning in the near future. The government was still expected to guide and supervise the development of Golden Week market. However, as tourism is a market-led economy, the contradiction between supply and demand can only be solved by the market itself. All the different sectors of tourism business were expected to work together, share information and create products, with the

common aim to develop the whole market. Within their own business, many of them have determined specific planning strategies to meet the needs of Golden Week tourism. This indicates that most businesses are growing in confidence with the development of the Golden Week system. The connections between these views and those of the visitors will be discussed in the next chapter.

Discourse analysis was applied throughout the whole analysis of this study. This approach has great power to interpret the perspective or world-view of particular people or groups (Gomm, 2004; Keith, 2006). As stated in the research method for this study, the interviews were conducted in Mandarin. Due to cultural differences, there are problems resulting from conducting research in China and from transferring tourism concepts when considering the Chinese context (Roy et al., 2001; Ryan et al., 2009), such as the different ways to express the concept of tourism peak seasons in Mandarin. Here the use of discourse analysis helps to overcome those problems as specific focus on interview discourses can provide significant insights that are not always discernable when using other methods (Keith, 2006).

All the interviews were conducted in Mandarin and all the discourses were translated into English from Mandarin by the researcher. By doing so, it helped to keep the consistency in three steps: (1) information obtained from different interviewees; (2) processing of discourse analysis; and (3) translation from Mandarin to English.

Chapter 5 – Conclusions, discussions and implications

Chapter structure

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5.1 Introduction: review of the objectives of the thesis

This project examined the seasonality phenomenon in Asian tourism, with a particular focus on China's Golden Week travelling. Previous studies pointed out that considerable gaps still exist in tourism seasonality issues. There is lack of sound theoretical framework to measure seasonality problems. Furthermore, most of research has been done in the cultural context of Western countries and little is known about seasonality-related issues in other parts of the world. Chinese tourism, particularly the Golden Week travelling, was perceived to represent a particularly interesting area of research, considering the enormous growth rates already observed and forecast. An objective of this thesis is to enhance the body of knowledge by providing a comprehensive coding system for seasonality phenomenon in Asian

tourism. Further attention is given to exploring China's Golden Week travelling from the views of both tourists and managers. In the section dealing with tourists, the respondents were asked about how the seasonality influences influence their decision making of travelling time and their experiences in Golden Week travelling. In dealing with managerial perspectives, this project explored managers' attitudes toward seasonality by presenting them with six seasonality patterns derived from the earlier secondary analysis. Also, the managers were asked to share their previous / existing marketing promotions and future planning for Golden Week travelling.

This concluding chapter summarises all the studies presented in the previous chapters and reviews how the results meet with the aims of this project. It discusses the key attributions of this project to both academic and practical areas. Limitations of this thesis are pointed out for the attention of future researchers. Finally some recommendations are also highlighted.

5.2 Overview of results from the three studies

The three studies were conducted individually but they interacted with each other to some extent. Study One identified six seasonality patterns based on tourist arrivals to five key Asian countries and four top Chinese tourist areas. The six seasonality patterns are: the plateau pattern, the plain pattern, the basin pattern, the single-peak mountain pattern, the multi-peak mountain pattern and the rolling hills pattern. These findings were then utilized to create further questions for the subsequent study where the perceptions of seasonality were explored from the perspective of managers in different sectors of tourism business. Study Two and Study Three were carried out in China. Study Two was a self-administered questionnaire with structured questions and open-ended questions. Twenty seasonality concerns derived from literature review were presented to respondents to explore how these factors influence their decision making on travelling time. Study Three was in-depth interview with semi-structured questions. The six seasonality patterns identified from Study One were presented to tourism managers to explore their views on seasonality phenomenon. In both Study Two and Three, respondents were asked to illustrate their Golden Week experiences.

5.2.1 Results from Study One

The aim of Study One is set to examine the seasonality phenomenon in Asian tourism and provide a coding framework to measure seasonality. This study is based on secondary data analysis. Five key Asian countries – Japan, Korea, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, and four top Chinese tourist areas – Beijing, Hainan Island, Hong Kong and Macao were selected as the target markets, due to the available and accessible data. Secondary data of monthly tourist arrivals to the five Asian countries from the year 2000 to 2006, and monthly tourist arrivals to the four Chinese areas from the year 2002 to 2006 were chosen to provide a comprehensive data set and help to address the seasonality research gap in Asian tourism (Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005). The monthly data to five Asian countries include total visitor arrivals, Chinese visitor and the visitors from five continents – Asia, Europe, Americas, Oceania and Africa; and the monthly data to four Chinese areas were divided into domestic visitors and overseas visitors. Average monthly tourist arrivals were compared for every month for every year using Pivot Table and Pivot Chart report, and the seasonality patterns were derived from the variations between monthly tourist arrivals and average monthly tourist arrivals.

All together six patterns were identified from 285 charts and they were named after six basic types of landforms – the plateau, the plain, the basin, the single-peak mountain, the multi-peak mountain and the rolling hills. Based on Butler and Mao's (1997) three general seasonality patterns – one-peak seasonality, two-peak seasonality and non-peak seasonality, Lopez Bonilla et al. (2006) further improved this by adding a fourth pattern named multi-peak seasonality. This six-pattern coding system provides a simple and effective method to identify seasonality. This study not only examined how much seasonality existed in Asian area, but also evaluated what kinds of seasonality patterns existed.

More specifically, by applying the six-pattern coding system, it was found that the seasonality patterns vary within Asian areas and also differ within one country. One previous study found out that several seasonality patterns might exist within one area (Lopez Bonilla et al., 2006). However, most of the cases (60%) examined here fall into the rolling hills pattern, which indicated that extreme seasonality did not dominate Asian tourism. This is different to the view of previous research where it

was found that the most common pattern was single-peak pattern (Getz & Nilson, 2004; Higham & Hinch, 2002; Lopez Bonilla et al., 2006).

There were further interesting findings in Study One. One of them is that there is a shift of seasonality patterns for African visitors to Malaysia, from the single-peak mountain to the multi-peak mountain. This possibly indicates successful marketing promotions by Tourism Malaysia for the African market. Another finding is that major world events had influences on seasonality patterns. The most influential one was the outbreak of SARS in 2003. Statistical results from the cases examined showed a sharp decline of tourist arrivals from April to June when SARS broke out. This finding reinforces the fact that tourism is vulnerable and confirms the view that a downturn in tourism can often be attributed to the security and health concerns (Kim & Wong, 2006). On the other hand, special events, including sports, had a positive effect on seasonality patterns. During the FIFA 2002 World Cup, the number of tourist arrivals from Africa, Europe and China to Japan and Korea was significantly higher than in the same month in other years. This result was consistent with previous research (Kim & Wong, 2006; Kulendran & Wong, 2005). The last but not the least finding of interest is that CNY and school summer holiday are two important determinants of seasonality patterns for the performance of Chinese visitors.

5.2.2 Results from Study Two

This study was a questionnaire survey which was designed to address how seasonality influences affect tourist decision making on when to travel. The study also explored the travelling experience in Golden Weeks. The questionnaire was consisted of three parts. First of all the respondents were asked to provide some basic information about their demographic characteristics. Then 20 seasonality influences derived from literature review were structured into a table with seven-point likert type scale. The respondents were asked to rate how strongly the seasonality influences influenced their decision on when to travel. Finally a section with open-ended questions which allowed the respondents to describe the pros and cons of their Golden Week travelling was used.

The survey was administered in Mandarin to Chinese respondents in six Chinese tourist cities, which cover the south to the north, and the east to the west of China. 530

copies of questionnaires were distributed using a snowball sampling over the six places, resulting in 450 copies returned and valid. Their responses were analysed in terms of demographic characteristics. And there are some interesting findings in two key areas – seasonality concerns and Golden Week travelling experiences.

5.2.2.1 Findings relating to Chinese respondents' seasonality influences

The 20 seasonality influences can be grouped into four categories – natural influences, institutional influences, social influences and personal influences. The overall result showed that the personal influences influence the respondents' decision-making most about when to travel, followed by natural influences, institutional influences and social influences in a descending order. With regard to the individual influence, there is no previous research studying the all 20 influences as a whole, however, the personal issues have been studied as separate items. By combining the 20 influences together, this study found that the most powerful one to influence tourists' decision for the time to travel was crowding, followed by the amount of rain and the very high temperature. Previous research pointed out that crowding had a negative impact on tourist's satisfaction (Bonn et al., 2007; Eroglu & Machleit, 1990; Harrell et al., 1980; Perdue, 2002). And the extreme climate was also shown to influence the comfort level of tourists (Burton, 1995; Pearce & Vogt, 2005). On the other hand, the least powerful determinants are religious and cultural factors, special events and the amount of sunshine. Special event was considered as an attractive factor for tourists by many academics. This is contradicted by one of the findings in this section.

The seasonality influences were analysed further in terms of demographic groups. For respondents from different parts of China, their views varied on many of the influences. Generally people from Shanghai tended to rate seasonality influences more highly while people from Quanzhou rated them as of less importance. There was not much difference between gender groups. They only had different views on two items – females thought more about the “amount of rain” while “school commitment” was more influential for males. For the age groups, the younger people gave high ratings to most of the seasonality influences, except one – the amount of sunshine, which the more senior tourists thought about more when making their travelling time decisions. Concerning their education background, people with lower levels of education tended to focus more on the natural influences while those with higher

levels of education rated significantly higher on the institutional, social and personal influences. Occupation did not act as an influential factor on the respondents' views for natural influences, but the views on the other three categories varied a lot among different occupations. Generally the labourer/farmer group provided significantly lower ratings while the student group gave higher ratings on most influences in the three categories. Price is always considered as a sensitive factor for tourists; therefore, the income of the respondents will influence their decision making to some extent. In this study, people with lower level of income considered price more when making their travelling time decision compared to those with higher level of income.

5.2.2.2 Findings about the Golden Week travelling experiences

The open-ended questions describing the respondents' Golden Week travel experiences received mixed responses, both positive and negative. Overall, it can be concluded that Golden Week is generally welcomed by the public. By summarising their good experiences, it can be seen that the benefits they got from the Golden Week system mainly focused on four aspects:

(1) Time available. Time availability is an essential factor for travelling. The Golden Week system, like other holiday systems, first of all guarantees the time for travelling. And the time is not only available to individuals; the holiday system is applied to all Chinese. Therefore, the Golden Week system provides extra chances for them to travel with either friends or families. The special feature of the Golden Week system is its length. It lasts for seven days which allows tourists to make long-distance trips, or even go abroad for travelling. With the long holiday, they can have a more relaxed time, escaping from busy work and daily trifles.

(2) Great weather. As mentioned in the findings for their views on seasonality concerns, there were two aspects of weather – rain and temperature that play an important part when the tourists make a decision on when to travel. When discussing their Golden Week travelling experiences, many of them referred to the great weather during the Golden Week travelling. The climate is nice at the time of three Golden Weeks in most parts of China, which was an added benefit for the tourists to enjoy their Golden Week holiday.

(3) More activities. As there are special days in these three Golden Weeks for Chinese, various activities and celebratory opportunities are scheduled throughout the country. The festive atmosphere can definitely influence tourists' moods and result in higher level of tourists' satisfaction. Secondly, most attractions will open all their tourist resources to customers and even arrange more activities to accommodate the Golden Week tourists. Also the travel agencies tend to introduce more new travel itineraries for customers to choose. All of these help the tourists enjoy a more colourful trip.

(4) Others. There are a lot more advantages for each separate Golden Week. For example, during the CNY, travellers can visit novel settings and experience different local CNY customs. And the May Day Golden Week provides people with a chance to "touch nature" and gain the feeling of springtime. In the National Day Golden Week, everyone can be involved in celebrating the nation-wide event.

Although there are many good things in Golden Week travelling, travellers also encountered some problems as well. The most common and serious one was the crowding issue. Crowding did not only happen at the destinations, but also on the way to or back from travel. The crowding problem was often due to transport and accommodation limitations. Crowding was identified previously as a most powerful factor that influenced respondents' decision making on when to travel. All of these forces definitely reduced tourists' satisfaction level. Another headache for tourists was the higher price during Golden Weeks. The price for attractions or transport and accommodation was two or three times of that in the off-peak season. The high price is a burden for those tourists with low income and affects the satisfaction level for all tourists. Although the prices are higher than usual, the tourists did not receive exemplary service. A lower level of service was pointed out by respondents as a problem for all three Golden Weeks.

5.2.3 Results from Study Three

The final study used a qualitative research approach where an in-depth interview with semi-structured questions was applied. The objective of this study was to identify the specific views of seasonality and Golden Week travelling from the managers' perspective. In this case, the question list for interview covered the following topics: (1) Perceptions of seasonality. The six seasonality patterns identified in Study One

were presented to the interviewees and they were asked how their business manage those patterns; (2) Reaction to Golden Week travelling. The interviewees were asked to describe the advantages and disadvantages that Golden Week system brought into their business; (3) Future planning. The managers were asked to address their expectation from tourism stakeholders and expound their strategies toward better Golden Week business.

In all, there were 30 interviews conducted across China, and the businesses involved covered four basic types of tourism business: seven in the hotel and catering area, two in tourism transportation system, seven in travel agency industry and 14 from tourist attractions. Discourse analysis was adopted to process and consider the results. The following points are the key findings in this study.

5.2.3.1 Perceptions of seasonality patterns

The perceptions of the six seasonality patterns are different among managers from different locations and different business sectors. Generally there was not a pattern accepted by all as an ideal model for their business development. A relatively large portion of interviewees agreed that the rolling hills pattern was the trend for tourism. The plain pattern, the basin pattern and the rolling hills pattern were identified as an uncommon pattern encountered in their businesses, while the single-peak and multi-peak mountain patterns were most likely to occur in the hotel and catering industry. Irrespective of the type of the pattern, what concerned the managers most was the lack of income in the off season. Therefore, their solutions suggesting how to cope with seasonality focused on creating more peak seasons and extending peak periods. According to their responses, it seemed that the very peak time is not regarded as a problem for their business running. Golden Weeks were the three very peak times for tourism business, and they were very much welcomed by the managers.

5.2.3.2 Reaction to Golden Week travelling

The managers' reactions to Golden Week travelling were very positive. From the business aspect, they expect as many customers as possible. The advantages of Golden Week system brings into their business are not only more customers, but also a higher price system and more active customers, all of which result in high profit. However, there are also problems they encountered in Golden Weeks in the areas of

management, tourist behaviour and the environment. The main problems were shortages of staff, overuse of facilities, safety issues, complaints and damage to environment. Despite those various problems, most interviewees showed confidence in dealing with Golden Week business, and they reported some successful methods they had used. According to their successful experience, good cooperation between businesses is very important and effective, and can help solve such problems as staff numbers, overuse of facilities, and safety issues. In order to guarantee customers' satisfaction, they tried to provide extra services to customers. However, only one of the responses referred to the environment issue, limiting tourist number for protection purpose. Most of the businesses were looking forward to even better Golden Week business.

5.2.3.3 Planning for the future

Tourism businesses expected a bright future of Golden Week with hard work from tourism related stakeholders. The government was expected to keep its role of supervision and management, and to strengthen its policy support for special events. The tourism businesses were expected to cooperate with each other more closely and develop the Golden Week market in a sustainable way. And the tourists were expected to be more rational and mature either when they make decision of travelling time or during Golden Week travelling.

From their business aspect, managers have described a blueprint for Golden Week business in the future. First of all, with the development of Golden Week market, most of the tourist businesses, except for the hotel businesses, planned to expand their business scale. The expansion will include more staff, more and better facilities, and more varieties of products. Secondly, the businesses will enhance their marketing approach. Special events remain as the most important way to attract customers, while other methods will assist growth. The other methods include getting feedbacks from customers, targeting new markets, and offering special packages. Last but not the least is strengthening management. The ways to improve management include providing better education and training for staff, offering special services and adjusting price systems.

Most of the interviewees believed that by working hard and working well together with all tourism stakeholders, the Golden Week system would be golden for everyone.

5.2.4 Links between results from the three studies

This thesis has used a mixed-method approach to identify seasonality patterns in Asian tourism, particularly in China, with a focus on the perception of Golden Weeks' impact on tourism from both travellers' views and the managerial perspective. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods has helped to explore the seasonality phenomenon from different facets, and the findings from each stage acted as complementary and supplementary to each other, which all contributed to a better understanding of this complex social phenomenon. The relations of the key findings from different studies are summarised as follows:

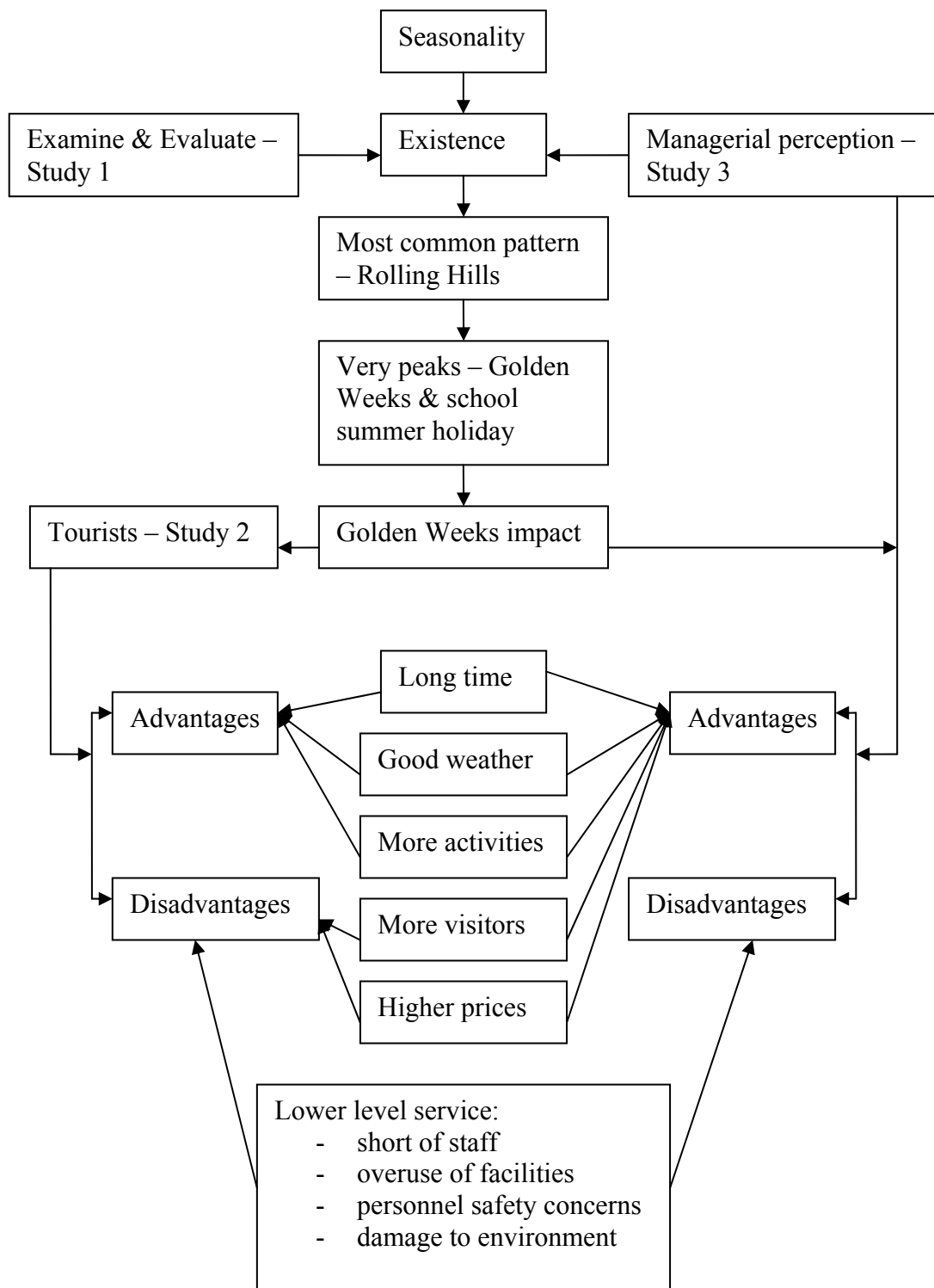


Figure 5. 1 – Relations between results from the three studies

5.3 Implications of the thesis

The aim of this project was to study the seasonality phenomenon in Asian tourism, with a particular focus on China's Golden Weeks. By carrying out three studies within the Asian area, especially in China, this project attempted to contribute knowledge to the seasonality field at both a conceptual level and at a managerial level.

5.3.1 Contributions at a conceptual level

As an important characteristic of tourism, seasonality has received a great deal of attention, especially in recent years. However, most of the previous research was done in the context of western countries (Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005). Study One in this project looked at the seasonality patterns in some key Asian countries. It is found that although extreme seasonality does not dominate Asian tourism, there are various seasonality patterns existing. By analysing Asian seasonality issues associated with specific countries examples, it is hoped that this study will add some understanding of tourism seasonality in the parts of world where seasonality-related issues had not been studied in detail.

Study Two in this project filled a different gap in extending the study of seasonality. Little research had been done about the forces influencing the desire to travel at certain times of the year (Lundtorp et al., 1999; Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005). In this study, 20 seasonality influences derived from seasonality literature were combined and the respondents were asked to rate on those 20 variables about how strongly they influenced their travelling time period. A new and diverse set of findings are provided by the study to understand Chinese travel choices and the role of seasonality.

Finally, the perspectives of the Chinese tourism managers were considered in detail in this research and provided a strong confirmation of the value of the Golden Week system from their perspective. Importantly for the future of the Golden Week system these positive views were reasonably well aligned with the advantages reported by Chinese citizens.

5.3.2 Contributions at a managerial level

From the managerial view, there are some interesting findings in these three studies which can prove beneficial to tourism managers and policy-makers.

The results found in Study One can be applied to management in Asian tourism and Chinese tourism market as well. Firstly, six seasonality patterns were identified in the five key Asian countries by arrivals from different continents. Tourists from different continents to the same destination appeared to be in the same seasonality pattern, but it was found out that the peak times for them were different from continent to continent. In this case, the destination managers do not need to carry out any programme to redistribute tourist arrivals from those continents to bring about a decrease in seasonality concentrations. Secondly, a shift of patterns was identified in some destinations, such as African visitors to Malaysia where a transition from the single-peak mountain to the multi-peak mountain was noted. This result suggests that it is possible to create more peaks through suitable marketing methods. One of the effective methods is to promote sports events, which are now often identified as effective tourist attractions (Higham, 2006). Finally, this study confirmed a statement by previous researcher that CNY market has potential development (Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005). It was found in this study that those months with CNY were peak time for Chinese visitors to those key Asian countries. Therefore, the tourism operators should be prepared for this growing market.

Findings in Study Two will benefit those tourism businesses dealing with Golden Week tourists. The good experiences pointed out by respondents indicated the good jobs the businesses had done and they should keep doing so. One of the examples is that many respondents were happy that there were more activities and they could go travelling with friends and families during Golden Weeks. In this case, the tourism operators should keep providing a good spectrum of activities which are family-friendly to satisfy Golden Week tourists. The negative experiences reported offer ways for the businesses to improve. The respondents complained a lot about the crowding issue, higher prices and lower level service, and creative management to address these issues approve to be a desirable step forward.

Study Three revealed findings related to tourism business. It was highly recommended that good cooperation among different businesses was necessary and important to deal with Golden Weeks. As the Chinese government is regarded as the supervisor and leader in the Golden Week market, it is expected that the government should continue to coordinate the cooperation among different business sectors. Special events were recommended as effective promotions by many tourism managers. Thus it is significant to organize special events to promote tourism.

5.3.3 Contributions to the Mandarin studies in tourism, particularly in China's Golden Week tourism

As mentioned in the literature review, travelling in Golden Weeks is becoming a pressing topic within China and its contribution to the development of China's economy is obvious. However, during the development of this project, it was hard to find information concerning China's Golden Week tourism in English. The limited information obtained for this research was mainly commentaries or reviews on newspapers, such as People's Daily (English version). From this perspective, the current research contributed to a better understanding of China's Golden Week tourism in the following ways. Firstly, this research collected information related to China's Golden Week tourism in both English and Mandarin, which presented a comprehensive and objective understanding of Golden Week tourism. Secondly, a large part of this research was conducted in the Chinese context but the findings were reported academically in English, which added new knowledge to the existing understanding of this phenomenon in a wider academic area. Finally, this research provided a new research orientation for exploring the phenomenon of Golden Week tourism in China.

Besides commentaries and reviews on Golden Week tourism from newspaper, other information sources for Golden Weeks utilised in this research were from 14 academic reports. All of them were written in Mandarin. Searching "Golden Week tourism" research in Mandarin resulted in 14 academic reports. The focuses and research methods of these 14 academic research papers are summarised as follows:

Table 5. 1 – The characteristics of the 14 academic research papers

		Number of papers
Research Focus	Existing problems & countermeasures	8
	Exploring future developing trends	4
	Impacts on tourist flow	2
Research Scope	General	10
	Specific destination	4
Research methodology	Theoretical (qualitative) approach	12
	Empirical (quantitative) approach	2

From Table 5.1, it can be seen that problems resulting from Golden Week system are the major concern for the Chinese scholars in this area. However, the problems they identified are similar to each other and the countermeasures they suggested lack supportive evidence. There is need for theoretical innovation and research diversity in the Asia Pacific research area (Pearce, 2004). The current study addressed the Golden Week problems in a novel way, from the experiences of both travellers and tourism businesses, which provided an intrinsic and objective view of this phenomenon in a different way. The two studies of impacts on tourist flow revealed that the Golden Week system did influence the distribution of tourist arrivals within a year (Zhang & Bao, 2007). However, there is little research exploring this relationship. The current research provided a platform to link seasonality issues with the Golden Week system. The six-seasonality-pattern identified in this study was treated as a model to measure the impacts of the Golden Week system on some Asian countries as well as China's domestic tourism. As revealed in the findings in Study 1 and Study 3, Chinese New Year holiday is an important time for Chinese travelling abroad, and the three Golden Weeks were the very peak times for most of the tourism businesses in China.

By reviewing these 14 research papers on Golden Week tourism, it is found that only four of them focused on specific destinations. And among these four papers, there are only two destinations involved – Wulingyuan and Fuzhou city, as three of them are about Wulingyuan. The research scope related to Golden Week tourism is therefore relatively limited. This thesis was designed to reach a wider scope to explore this complex phenomenon, by employing secondary data analysis involving Beijing, Hainan Island, Hong Kong and Macau, and collecting fresh data including Beijing,

Shanghai, Xi'an, Guangzhou & Guangxi Province, and Quanzhou, which helped to cover research within China from north to south, and from east to the west. As a result, it provided a more comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon.

Most of the previous research papers are theoretical (qualitative) approaches, with a small amount of empirical (quantitative) approaches (only two of them). And even for the two empirical papers, they are about the same destination (Wulingyuan) on the same topic (impacts on tourist flow). This thesis utilised a mixed-method approach to study the phenomena of seasonality and Golden Week in China's tourism, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. As discussed in Chapter 1, mixed-method approach helps to provide a more comprehensive and objective way to better understand the complex social phenomena.

This research project tries to contribute additional knowledge and innovative research approach to extending the Mandarin studies in tourism.

5.4 Limitations of the thesis

There are several research methods applied into this project, including secondary data analysis, quantitative questionnaires and qualitative approach. As stated in the methodology section in each study, every method has its strengths and weaknesses. Their strengths are the reasons that those methods were adopted in this project, however, the inherent weaknesses resulted in some inevitable limitations in this project. The following section will identify such limitations.

First of all, the six seasonality patterns were derived from secondary data analysis in Study One (Chapter Two). As mentioned in Chapter Two, the data set was selected due to the accessibility of quality data. At the first stage of Study One, according to the aims the destinations were chosen by the need to select a mix of tropical and cold water settings; however, there were not data of monthly tourist arrivals available for some chosen destinations. Particularly in China, few destinations have provided data of monthly tourist arrivals. In the study on seasonality patterns in Spain by Lopez Bonilla et al. (2006), they looked at the data from all regions of Spain and they found out various patterns across the regions. It was suggested not to generalize the seasonality patterns for a wide area (Lopez Bonilla et al., 2006). If there were more

data available on other regions of China, like Northeast of China and Southwest of China, more seasonality patterns or further findings could be derived from a richer data set.

Secondly, snow ball sampling was employed in Study Two (Chapter Three) due to time, cost constrains and anticipated response rate. Therefore, the representation of respondents to the whole population can not be guaranteed. By analysing respondents' demographic profiles, it showed that the respondents tended to be young and a relatively small portion of them were famers / labourers, which is a segment which still occupies a large population within China. As a result, some of the findings in this study might not be applied to the general population with wide competence. Also open-ended questions were used in the questionnaire for this study. Although open-ended questions are suitable for respondents to describe the experiences using their own words (Gomm, 2004), sometimes what their words mean were not clear to the researcher. The uncertainty of words might result in reducing the diverse responses to a much smaller number of categories (Gomm, 2004). The researcher tried to minimise this problem by discussing those words with other Chinese colleagues with the same cultural and language backgrounds as the respondents. It is hoped that such efforts have reduced this problem but undoubtedly some interpretations in the open-ended data may not be perfect.

Finally, the last study employed in-depth interviews with semi-structured questions. As mentioned in Study Three (Chapter Four), interviews are costly in both time and money. At first the potential interviewees selected covered all areas of tourism industries with an equal portion on each business sector. However their willingness to assist resulted in a biased distribution of interviewees in different business sectors. The researcher had tried to approach more interviewees from the sector with relatively low response rate but failed due to unknown reason (not reply at all). The time and financial issue did not allow the research keep trying to approach more interviewees. The data would have been more reliable had they been collected from interviewees with a more equal distribution in different business sectors.

5.5 Areas for future research

Seasonality is an important phenomenon in tourism. It has been given attention from both academic and managerial perspectives, and it deserves more research from all the aspects of tourism. Based on gaps existing in the literature and limitations identified in this project, several areas for future research in the tourism seasonality field are discussed as follows.

5.5.1 Applications of the seasonality patterns to other parts of the world

As identified in the literature review, most seasonality related research has been carried out in the context of Western Countries thus little is known in other parts of the world. Chapter Two of this thesis studied the seasonality phenomenon in Asian area and identified six seasonality patterns. The coding system of six seasonality patterns therefore can be applied to the Middle East, Africa and Central and South America.

First of all, data of monthly tourist arrivals to key countries in Middle East, Africa and Central and South America could be obtained from their national tourism official database. The length of time period for analysis will depend on the data availability. The monthly tourist arrivals should include domestic tourists and international tourists. And the international tourists could be further divided into groups according to which continents they came from. Then the coding system in Chapter Two will be applied to identify seasonality patterns in these areas. Such a study would not only investigate the seasonality phenomenon in these areas but also classify which seasonality patterns apply. The seasonality patterns identified could be analysed with examples of tourist arrivals from different continents in specific years. Such studies could help understand the causes and effects of seasonality in tourism of further areas of the world.

5.5.2 Identifying the influential factors on seasonality patterns in terms of visitor demographic characteristics

Chapter Two of this thesis identified six seasonality patterns by analysing data of visitors from different generating areas. It was found out that visitors from different continents to the same destination appeared in different seasonality patterns. Chapter Three further identified visitors' views of 20 seasonality influences in terms of demographic characteristics. The results revealed that the seasonality influences influenced visitors' decision making of travelling time period to different extents

among different demographic groups. Previous research also indicated that there was lack of knowledge about which factor is the more important among the various causes of seasonality (Hinch et al., 2001; Lundtorp et al., 1999). A future study is suggested to examine Asian seasonality patterns associated with visitors' demographic profiles.

First of all, data of monthly tourist arrivals to selected key Asian countries could be obtained from official tourism databases, and the tourists could be grouped by demography – gender, age and education, and by some tourist behaviour characteristics – purposes of visit and expenditure. The selection of grouping factors is based on the key findings of Chapter Three in this thesis and the basic tourist information would be available in most destinations. Different demographic groups were found out to have different views of seasonality influences in Chapter Three. The investigation could pursue the issue of the seasonality patterns for tourists from different gender, age, education and income groups.

Further, tourist behaviour is an important concern in tourism research. Some previous research has pointed out that seasonality patterns can be influenced by some tourist behaviours. Koc and Altinay (2007) analysed the seasonality patterns in Turkish inbound tourism and found that the seasonality pattern in per person tourist spending is considerably dependent on the seasonality pattern in tourist arrivals. A previous study of seasonality variation for a coastal resort found that shoulder-season visitors differed significantly from peak-season visitors in terms of benefits they sought during travelling (Bonn et al., 1992). Therefore, in another future study, seasonality patterns in Asian tourism could be explored combining the variables of visitors' expenditure and their purposes of visits. In such a study, different ranges of expenditure and different purposes could be the grouping factors, and the coding system of six seasonality patterns could be applied to identify the seasonality patterns for tourist arrivals with different expenditure ranges and different purposes. Such work could identify whether these two variables of tourist behaviour will influence seasonality patterns.

5.5.3 Studying the behaviours of Golden Week tourists

As mentioned in Chapter Four, Golden Week market is newly emerging and the focus from both academic and political sources is on whether or not to cancel the Golden

Week system. According to findings in Chapter Three and Chapter Four, the Golden Week system is welcome both by visitors and tourism businesses. Therefore the Golden Week market deserves attention from all aspects. Tourist behaviour is “a link and a force in understanding tourism” (Pearce, 2005, p9). There are several variables to describe groups of tourists and their behaviour, including demographic factors, travelling style distinctions and product and activity classifications (Pearce, 2005). Some of the demographic characteristics of Golden Week tourists have been identified in Chapter Three, but future study could further explore this market by studying the travelling styles of the Golden Week tourists. Also as mentioned in literature in Chapter One, Japanese Golden Week tourists spent more than tourists in other time period (Rosenbaum & Spears, 2006). Thus tourist expenditures should be included in this research. According to the interviews in Chapter Four, the managers pointed out several trends of Golden Week market. Future studies could be designed to explore this claim and if it is established then further weight would be added to the case to continue the Golden Weeks.

5.5.4 Exploring tourism authority’s views of seasonality and Golden Weeks from the aspect of the Chinese government

Chapter Four explored the views of seasonality and Golden Weeks travelling by interviewing a variety of tourism operators in China. The important role of the Chinese government in developing Golden Week market was emphasized by most of the tourism managers. The Chinese government is not only a policy-maker, but also a supervisor and leader in the tourism market. The development of Chinese market largely depends on how the government thinks of this market and what they will do with this market. Therefore it could be interesting to look at the views of seasonality and Golden Weeks travelling from the government aspect.

Interviews with semi-structured question list could be applied in such a study. And the interviewees could be tourism related officers from the municipal level, the provincial level and the national level. Although there is a unified policy for tourism offices at all different levels, seasonality varies from area to area and the development levels of Golden Week markets differ from each other in different places. The regional tourism offices will have their own specific strategies to cope with their regional seasonality and Golden Weeks problems. The municipal level and provincial level will cover vast

areas as mentioned above in the future study on Golden Week tourist behaviour. Research in this area could aim to collect as much information as possible to help identify different views of all possible seasonality patterns and Golden Weeks problems. The semi-structured question list will cover the topics followed in the managers' interviews in this study. These topics were:

1) Perception – What do you think of the performance of six seasonality patterns (identified in Study 1)? Which pattern does your regional/national tourism appear?

2) Reaction – What do you think of the performance of Golden Weeks market in your region / in the whole China? What are the major problems existing in this market?

3) Planning – What concerns the government most regarding seasonality issues and development of Golden Weeks market? How will the government make an effort to mitigate seasonality problems and improve Golden Weeks market? What does the government expect from tourism business operators and tourists themselves?

5.6 Final remarks

Seasonality exists everywhere and is unavoidable. The complex causes of this phenomenon in tourism make it difficult to deal with all the resulting issues. To be successful, one should face the problem and solve it, instead of escaping from it. The approach to deal with seasonality problems is to understand more about this phenomenon, including its nature, causes, resulting effects, and trends. Seasonality patterns in the Asian area were identified and associated studies considered to specify the causes and effects. As a result, the seasonality findings identified might be helpful in both expanding potential peak seasons and mitigating ill-effects of seasonality.

Golden Weeks are extreme peak seasons. They are really a golden time for tourism businesses as they maximize their profit during those weeks. However the Golden Week system is also designed as a right for the Chinese citizens to enjoy their life. It is important whether or not the Chinese people enjoy their Golden Weeks. As China has a large population, crowding is inevitable. There are many techniques that the tourism operators can employ to overcome the crowding issues during peak time, such as good cooperation with other sectors, better quality of service and enhanced security.

The Golden Week system makes it possible for the ordinary people in China to travel in terms of available time and money. All of the tourism industry should work together to develop this market and provide a quality experience for the Golden Week tourists.

I want to go to Guilin; I want to go to Guilin.

But when I have available time, I don't have money.

I want to go to Guilin; I want to go to Guilin.

But When I have available money, I don't have time.

- A Chinese song "I want to go to Guilin", by Xiao Han

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Appendices

I. Questionnaire targeting Chinese residents for Study Two (English version)

Hello, my name is Tingzhen, and I am a PhD student from James Cook University. I am studying visitors' reaction to tourism seasonality, Golden Weeks travel in particular. Thanks for participating in this survey, and it will take you 15 minutes to complete this questionnaire. I won't need your name, so your responses will be completely confidential. If you want to find out any more about this study, or the results of my research, please call the number: +61 7 4781 6780, or email me: Tingzhen.Chen@jcu.edu.au.

1. Demographic questions:

1) Age

- A. Under 18 B. 18 ~ 30 C. 31 ~ 45 D. 46 ~ 60 E. More than 60

2) Gender

- A. Male B. Female

3) Education level: Highest level of education obtained. If you are currently undertaking studying, please indicate only the highest level of education completed to date

- A. High school degree or under
B. Technical/vocational
C. Current university student
D. University graduate
E. Post-graduate (Master/Doctorate)
F. Other (Please specify)

4) Occupation: What is your current occupation?

- A. Executive
B. Professional
C. Tradesperson
D. Retail/marketing
E. Skilled worker
F. Labour/farmer
G. Student
H. Office/clerical
I. Retired
J. Other (Please specify)

5) Income: Please indicate your current monthly income level

- A. No income
B. Less than AU\$500
C. AU\$501 ~ AU\$2,000
D. AU\$2,001 ~ AU\$3,500
E. AU\$3,501 ~ AU\$5,000
F. AU\$5,001 ~ AU\$6,500
G. AU\$6,501 or above
H. Other (Please specify)

6) Previous travel experience:

- How many Chinese cities have ever travelled to?

- A. 0
 - B. 1
 - C. 2
 - D. 3
 - E. 4
 - F. 5 or more
- When did you normally make your travel within China?
- A. Weekends
 - B. Chinese New Year holiday
 - C. May Day holiday
 - D. National Day holiday
 - E. School holiday
 - F. Working leave
 - G. Other (Please specify) _____
- How many foreign countries have ever travelled to?
- A. 0
 - B. 1
 - C. 2
 - D. 3
 - E. 4
 - F. 5 or more
- When did you normally make your travel overseas?
- A. Weekends
 - B. Chinese New Year holiday
 - C. May Day holiday
 - D. National Day holiday
 - E. School holiday
 - F. Working leave
 - G. Other (Please specify) _____

2. Structured questions:

1) How strongly do the following factors influence you when you make your decision on when to travel: (please rate on a 7 point scale)

(7=very strongly; 6=strongly; 5=somewhat strongly; 4=neutral; 3=not very strongly; 2=not strongly; 1=not at all)

	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Amount of rain							
Very high temperature							
Very low temperature							
High humidity							
Amount of sunshine							
School commitments							
Work commitments							
Long weekends/Public holidays							
Your favourite time to travel							
Time available							
Travel companions							
Overall cost (accommodation & transport)							
Standard of service at the time of year							
Crowding							
Fashion							
Religious or cultural factors							
Special events							
Celebrating Chinese New Year							
Celebrating May Day							
Celebrating National Day							

3. Open-ended questions:

1) What do you think are the advantages of travelling during the time around:

- Chinese New Year?

- May Day holiday?

- National Day holiday?

2) What do you think are the disadvantages of travelling during the time around:

- Chinese New Year?

- May Day holiday?

- National Day holiday?

II. Questionnaire targeting Chinese residents for Study Two (Mandarin version)

您好，我叫陈亭真，是詹姆斯库克大学的一名在读博士生。我的专业是旅游管理，方向是研究游客对旅游季节性现象的反应，特别是中国游客对黄金周出行旅游的看法和感受。感谢您参与我的问卷调查，本问卷将花您 15 分钟的时间完成所有的问题。您的答卷不必署名，因此您所给的所有讯息也将是完全保密的。如果您想了解更多关于我的问卷调查，或者是关于我的研究项目的结果，请拨打电话: +61 7 4781 6780, 或者发电子邮件给我: Tingzhen.Chen@jcu.edu.au.

第一部分:

1) 年龄

- A. 小于 18 岁 B. 18~30 C. 31~45 D. 46~60 E. 大于 60 岁

2) 性别

- A. 男 B. 女

3) 学历: 您所取得的最高学历。如果您目前仍在学习，请给出您所取得的最高学历。

- A. 高中毕业及其以下
B. 专科毕业
C. 大学本科在读
D. 大学本科毕业
E. 研究生毕业
F. 博士毕业
G. 其他 _____

4) 职业: 您目前的职业是 _____ (请写出)。

5) 收入: 请指出您目前的月收入状况。

- A. 没有收入
B. < ¥1500
C. ¥1500~¥2999
D. ¥3000~¥4499
E. ¥4500~¥5999
F. ¥6000~¥7499
G. ≥ ¥7500
H. 其他 _____

6) 以往旅游经历:

- 您曾到过多少个中国城市旅游 (不含香港和澳门)?

- A. 0
B. 1
C. 2
D. 3
E. 4
F. ≥5

- 您以往的国内游一般选择何时出游?

- A. 周末
B. 春节假期
C. 五一节假期
D. 国庆节假期

- E. 学校假期
 - F. 工作假期
 - G. 其他 _____
- 您曾到过多少个国家和地区旅游（包括香港和澳门）？
- A. 0
 - B. 1
 - C. 2
 - D. 3
 - E. 4
 - F. ≥ 5
- 您以往的海外游或港澳游一般选择何时出游？
- A. 周末
 - B. 春节假期
 - C. 五一节假期
 - D. 国庆节假期
 - E. 学校假期
 - F. 工作假期
 - G. 其他 _____

第二部分:

1) 如下因素多大程度上影响您出游时间的选择:

(7=影响非常大; 6=影响大; 5=影响有点大; 4=一般; 3=影响不是非常大; 2=影响不大; 1=没有影响)

	7= 影响 非常大	6= 影响 大	5= 影响 有点大	4= 一 般	3= 影 响 不 是 非 常 大	2= 影 响 不 大	1= 没 有 影 响
多雨							
非常高的温度(热)							
非常低的温度(冷)							
非常潮湿							
阳光充足							
学校的寒假、暑假等假期							
工作假期							
双休日/公共假日							
您个人偏爱的出游季节							
空闲时间							
出行同伴							
费用(包括住宿和交通)							
该季节的旅游服务水平							
拥挤							
热点/精品旅游线路							
宗教或文化因素							
特殊活动(如网球公开赛, 博览会等)							
欢度春节							
欢度五一假期							
欢度国庆假期							

第三部分:

1) 您觉得在下列各黄金周出行旅游好在哪:

- 春节假期?

- 五一节假期?

- 国庆节假期?

2) 您觉得在下列各黄金周出行旅游有什么不好的:

- 春节假期?

- 五一节假期?

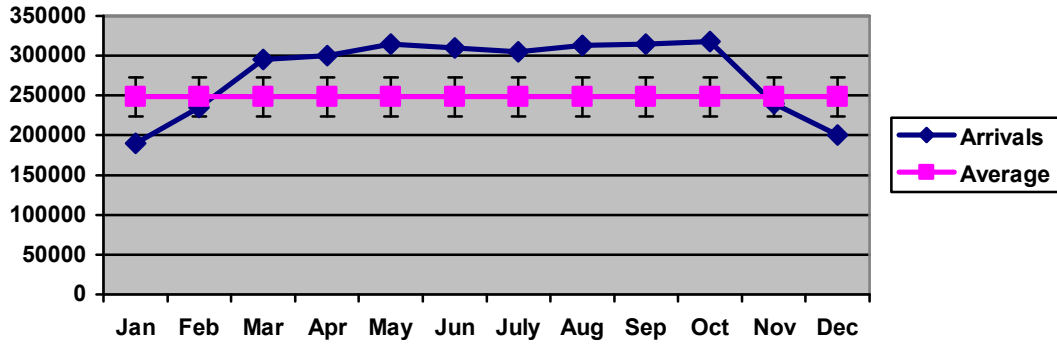
- 国庆节假期?

III. Question list interviewing Chinese tourism managers for Study Three (English version)

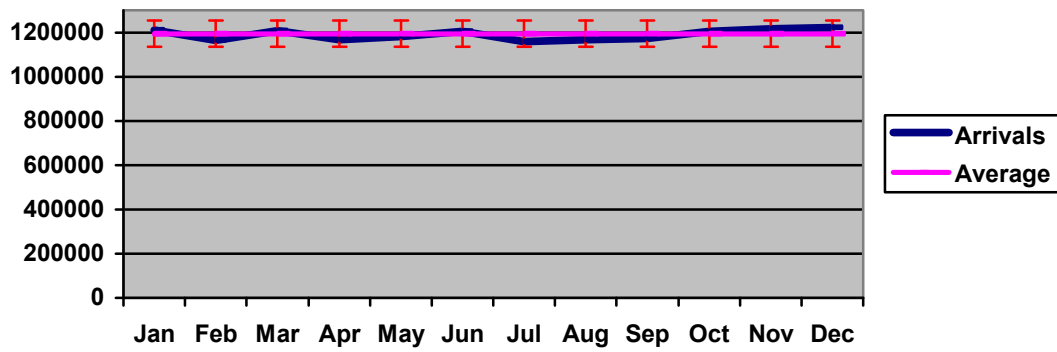
1. Perceptions

What would you do to manage these patterns of seasonality?

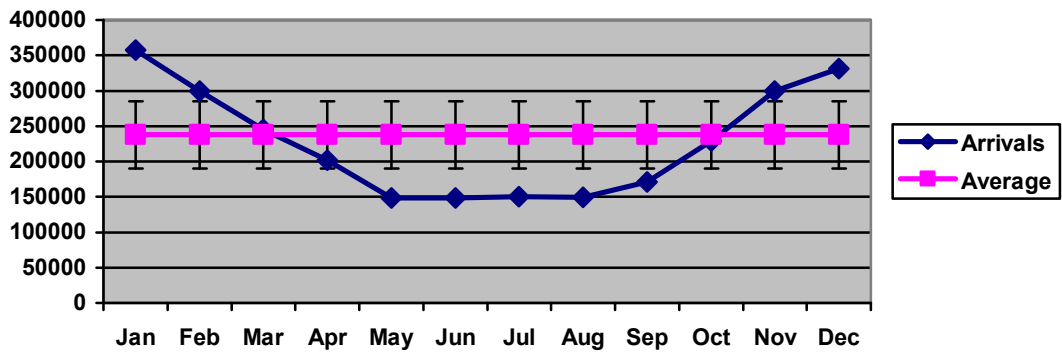
a) The plateau



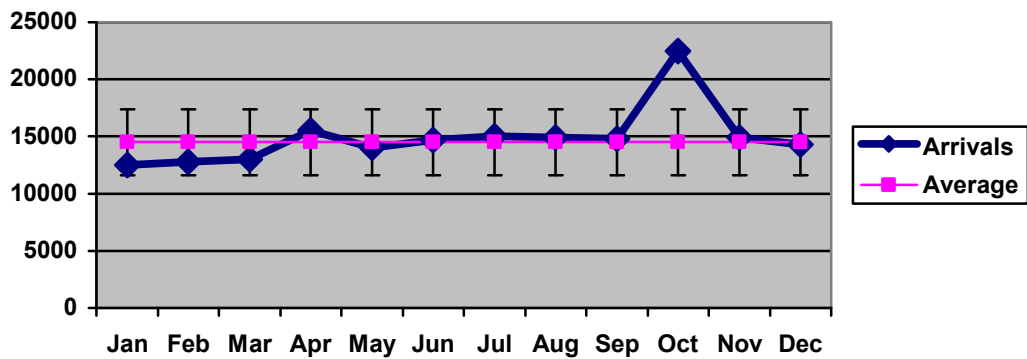
b) The plain



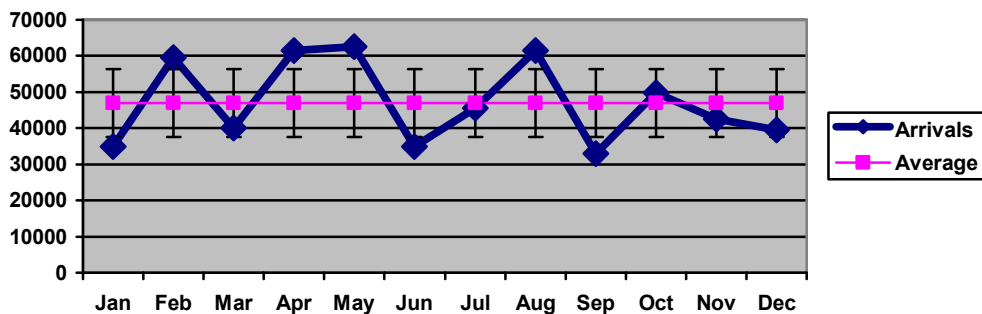
c) The basin



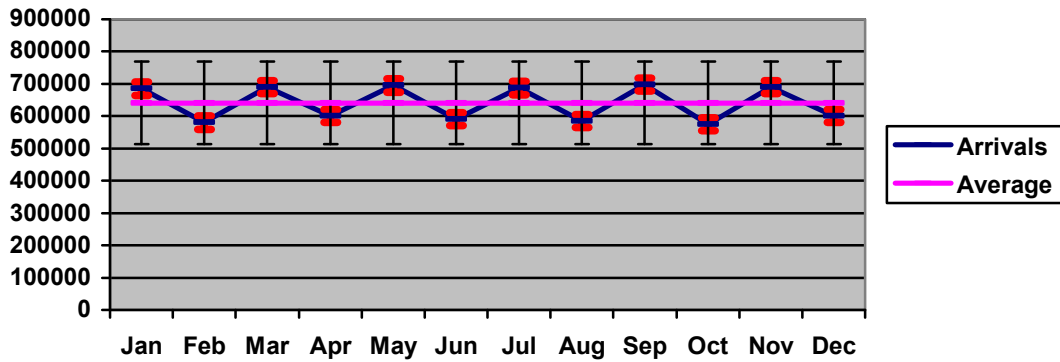
d) The single-peak mountain



e) The multi-peak mountain



f) The rolling hills



2. Reactions

1) What do you think the advantages for business of:

- Chinese New Year?

- May Day holiday?

- National Day holiday?

2) What do you think the disadvantages for business of:

- Chinese New Year?

- May Day holiday?

- National Day holiday?

3) How much planning in terms of special products or services do you do for Golden Weeks?

3. Planning for the future

1) What do you expect in the future for the Golden Weeks From the government? From the customers? From the tourism industry?

2) What will you do to better meet the challenge of Golden Weeks travelling?

4. Demographic questions

1) What does your business belong to?

A. Hotel B. Transport C. Travel agency D. Attraction

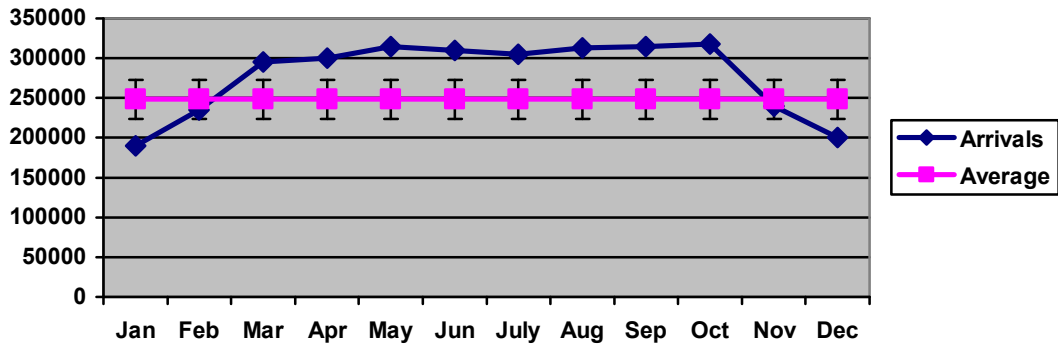
2) How long have you managed business?

IV. Question list interviewing Chinese tourism managers for Study Three (Mandarin version)

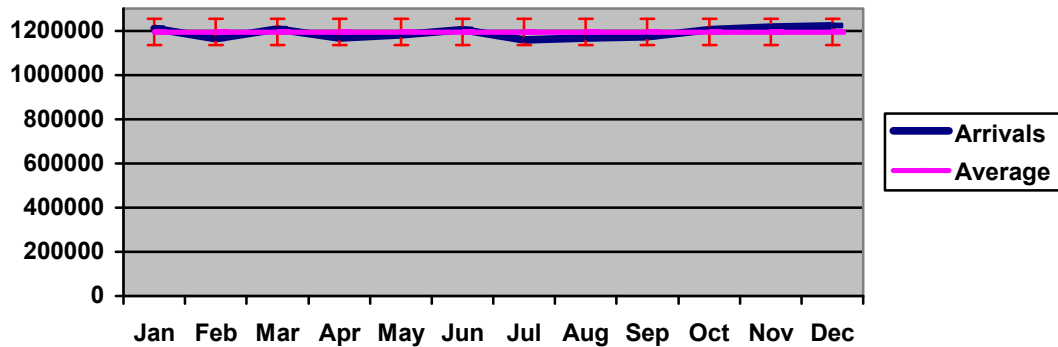
1. 对旅游季节性现象的看法

您如何看待下列各种不同模型旅游季节性现象？您的公司是否处于或经历过类似的模型？您是如何面对和处理的？您曾采取过何种有效的措施吗？

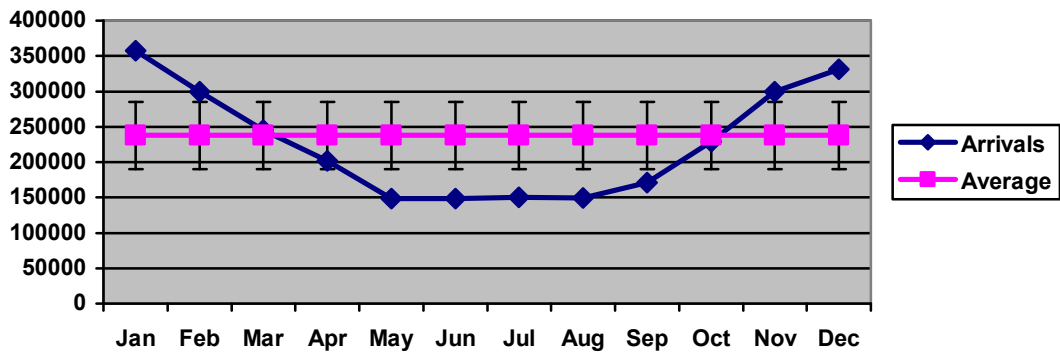
a) 高原型



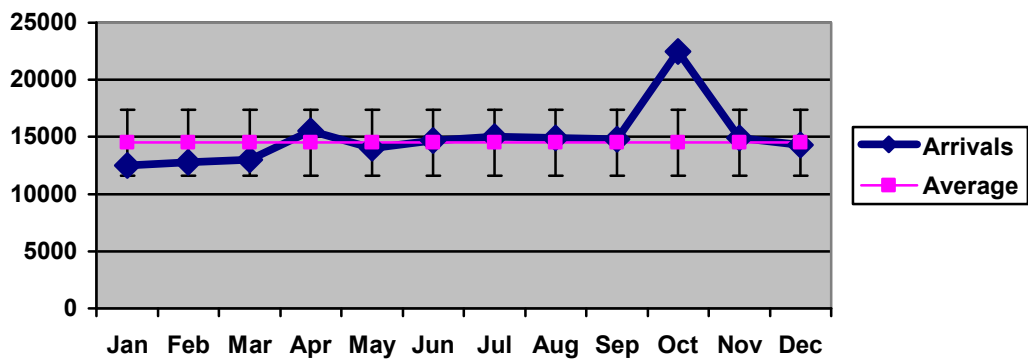
b) 平原型



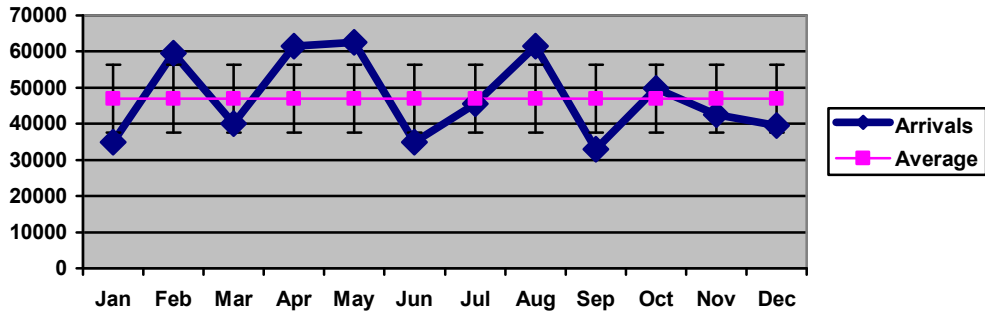
c) 盆地型



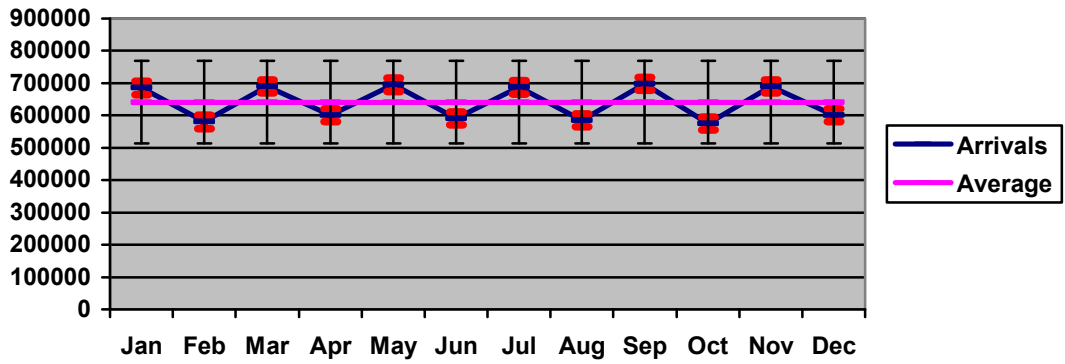
d) 单峰型



e) 多峰型



f) 连绵型



2. 对黄金周的反应

1) 您觉得您的公司在下列各黄金周的受益有哪些:

- 春节假期?

- 五一节假期?

- 国庆节假期?

2) 您觉得下列各黄金周给您的公司带来哪些不便?

- 春节假期?

- 五一节假期?

- 国庆节假期?

3) 您的公司曾针对黄金周推出何种特别策划, 特殊旅游线路和服务吗? 可以简单举例说明吗?

3. 对黄金周旅游的期许

1) 您觉得在今后的黄金周里, 各旅游相关部门应该如何努力来不断地提高和完善我们的黄金周旅游体制? 您希望政府部门怎么做? 旅游相关行业怎么做? 对游客们的期许呢?

2) 您的公司有何策划来更好地应对黄金周?

4. 关于您的公司

1) 您的公司属于旅游行业中的哪个部门?

A. 酒店, 旅店 B. 旅游交通 C. 旅行社 D. 旅游景点

2) 您的公司成立于哪一年?

V. Public presentations of this research

A modified and condensed version of one part of Chapter Two of this thesis was presented at the 14th Asia Pacific Tourism Association Annual Conference, Bangkok, Thailand, 2008.

Chen, T. & Pearce, P.L. (2008). A comprehensive approach to Asian seasonality patterns in tourism. In Y. Hwang (Ed.), *Tourism proceeding 14th Asian Pacific Tourism Association Annual Conference: Tourism & Hospitality in Asia Pacific*, Bangkok, Thailand, July 9 – 12, 2008, 465-474.

The conference paper received a Best Paper Award at the conference.