

CHINESE TOURISTS – ARE THEY AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE SLOVENE AND CROATIAN TOURIST INDUSTRY?

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to determine the opportunities related to increase in the number of Chinese tourists travelling abroad, particularly for Slovenia and Croatia. Research was conducted by studying the current publications, gathering and researching empirical statistical data and examination of case studies. Article presents the results of one of the first systematic scientific researches on this topic in the region. The appeal of Slovenia as a desirable destination has intensified after becoming a member of the Schengen Zone. Croatia, however, will become even more attractive after joining the EU. However, it is necessary to introduce certain improvements to the public administration procedures and logistics. Within their region, both Slovenia and Croatia have (1) rich and distinctive cultural heritage, (2) well-developed gaming and shopping tourism, (3) good logistical links with China and other Central European countries. Cooperation between these two countries in entering the Chinese market would increase the impact and reduce the marketing and transport costs.

Keywords tourism, Slovenia, Croatia, China

INTRODUCTION

In 2010, China had the second most developed economy in the world, with the United States of America in first place, securing China's title as one of the world's superpowers. It has also become one of the world's most popular destinations (Lim and Pan, 2003). The predictions that the Chinese economy could soon become the leading one in the world are now being actualized (Purushothaman and Wilson, 2003: 3). Chinese traditional values are changing together with the economic development; they are making way to the spirit of modern cooperation and globalisation. Due to changes in political relations, China's role in the world is also changing. The intercultural communication skills are therefore now needed more than ever as only through communication can we cooperate successfully.

Medieval Europe first learnt about China from the book *Journeys of Marco Polo*, which was published in the late 13th century (Baković, 2006: 176), although there is no evidence that he really visited China (Wood, 1995 in Baković 2006: 176).

The first contacts between Chinese and European salesmen in the 18th century were very reserved. The Chinese tried to keep the Europeans in foreigner-accessible territories.

Tourism is a cultural and economic export product, meant to bring profit (Kobal, 2010: 1). Modern tourism is becoming more and more important and consequently new practices are emerging in China, which show a more open-minded thinking and lifestyle of people. How people spend their free time, is also becoming more important.

Because of the increasing purchasing power and opening up of China more and more Chinese people are now deciding to travel. Our main interests are the purchasing power of Chinese tourists, their number and habits and how it is possible to apply the findings from other gaming destinations to the examples of Slovenia and Croatia.

1. METHODOLOGY AND HYPOTHESES

The research question originates from the title itself: Are Chinese tourists an opportunity for the Slovene and Croatian tourist industry? We set the following hypotheses:

- H1: “Chinese tourists represent a large market potential for Slovenian and Croatian tourism”.
- H2: “Croatia has better conditions for the construction of tourist cooperation.”
- H3: “When travelling, Chinese tourists usually visit more than three countries.”
- H4: “Chinese tourists focus on key tourist attractions.”

To reach the defined aims of the research and to test the above-mentioned hypotheses the following methods of scientific research were used: (1) studying the theory, (2) gathering and researching empirical statistical data and (3) of case study survey research. The main method of the theoretical part is the analytical comparison of literature. This section includes an overview of scientific and technical literature, outcomes of previous research and publicly available official statistics. The Internet sources are taken into account as well as the printed ones. Here we ran into a methodological problem, since there is no material in China linked to gaming. That gives the impression that it does not exist. Everything published about Macao are the tourist guides and a mention of Macao in The Green book of China’s tourism. Unfortunately there is not enough data in there to enable objective research. Most of the literature on this topic comes from cooperation between international authors and the Tourist institute in Macao, which is a consequence of the international capital’s interest.¹ The visit to Macao was also an important factor, the direct contact with the gaming business as well as analysing case studies from America and Italy.

¹ i.e. American investments in the gaming industry in Macao.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Chinese economy

The projections (Purushothaman and Wilson, 2003: 3) from the year 2003 predicted that the Chinese economy will reach the range of the economy of the United States of America around the year 2041. More recent projections (e.g. Goldman Sachs) from 2009, show that the Chinese economy could catch up with the American economy by the year 2027. The reasons for this shorter time span lie in the fact that the Chinese economy reacted quicker and better to the global economic crisis than other states. Since 2007, China has contributed most to the rise of the economic upturn (O'Neill and Stupnytska, 2009: 23).

2.2. World tourism

The development of tourism increased extremely in the 20th century. Once it was considered a luxury, available only to a small group of people, but today it is almost a necessity for the mass market. There are two concepts. According to the first, guests should behave according to the expected patterns. According to the second, every individual should strive for his own individualisation. The same applies to the tourist industry; it used to help develop particular regions or individuals in the local surroundings, however, today this is a business, which significantly helps develop the whole state economy. It contributes to indirect consumption (table 1), as well as helping increase direct revenue from tourism (table 2).

In the last eleven years the number of tourists travelling outside their countries has increased by 300 million or 44% (UNWTO, 2012). At the projected pace of growth, international tourist arrivals worldwide are to surpass 1 billion by 2012. By 2020 the number is expected to reach close to 1.4 billion. The 1.5 billion mark will be in sight by 2023 and 1.8 billion by 2030 (UNWTO, 2011). Furthermore, tourism is one of the most important components of international trade. According to analytical records of earnings from international tourism, the tourism industry ranks third in the world, behind petroleum and chemical industries. According to Mathieson and Wall (1982); Seward et al. (1982), Duffield (1982) (all in Gržinić, 2006: 10) reasons for the economy to seek to develop tourism as an export industry are the following:

- creation of new industries and activities;
- impact on employment;
- the increase in urbanization;
- increased income of the country in balance of payments and accelerating the development of national economy;
- the redistribution of power through redistribution of capital in developed and developing countries;
- tourism multiplier effects.

Table 1: Ten most visited tourist destinations (in millions of tourists)

Country	2000	2005	2009	2010	2011
France	77.2	75.0	76.8	77.1	
USA	51.2	49.2	55.0	59.8	62.3
China	31.2	46.8	50.9	55.7	57.6
Spain	46.4	55.9	52.2	52.7	56.7
Italy	41.2	36.5	43.2	43.6	46.1
Turkey	9.6	20.3	25.5	27.0	29.3
United Kingdom	23.2	28.0	28.2	28.3	
Germany	19.0	21.5	24.2	26.9	28.4
Malaysia	10.2	16.4	23.6	24.6	24.7
Austria	18.0	20.0	21.4	22.0	23.0
Slovenia	1.1	1.6	1.8	1.9	2.0
Croatia	6.2	8.5	9.3	9.8	9.9
The world	674.0	797.0	881.0	939.0	980.0
Slovenia's share	0.16%	0.20%	0.20%	0.20%	0.21%
Base index Slovenia	1.00	1.45	1.64	1.73	1.85
Croatia's share	0.92%	1.06%	1.06%	1.04%	1.01%
Base index Croatia	1.00	1.37	1.50	1.58	1.60
China's share	4.63%	5.84%	5.78%	6.03%	5.88%
Base index China	1.00	1.50	1.63	1.79	1.85

Source: World Tourism Organization

In the last years of the 20th century, tourists' needs became increasingly more important because of a quick social-economic development in the world. According to Ambrož (2005: 18), a crucial factor in tourism is recreation, which is increasing and is becoming a part of the economic sector. The manufacturing sector is decentralising and the service sector, part of which is also tourism, is developing quickly. Present times are marked by mobility. Post-modern tourism's feature is the consumption of signs, symbols, logos, and brands, which are presented to tourists in theme parks, where they can enjoy exotic products, music and food. These parks are becoming new shopping centres. Another feature of post-modern tourism is the range of services and goods that tourists can choose between. (Ambrož, 2005: 18). The logical consequence is the development of big tourist destinations, which can be visited by tens of millions of visitors a year. Šuligoj (2009) emphasises the significance of quality coordination between tourist infrastructure, tourist superstructure and natural, cultural, historic, business, religious, sports and other factors or motivators for the visit.

2.3. The tourism industry in China

The development of tourism began after 1986, when the Chinese government included the tourism industry in the national plan for social and economic development (Lim and Pan, 2003). In recent years, China has made fast progress. Since 1999², the number of visitors (table 1) and the income from tourism (table 2) has been increasing. The key factor was the return of Macao to China and the decision for liberalisation of the gaming industry in Macao (McCarney and Nadkarni, 2003: 3-17).

² Particularly since 2002.

Table 2: **Income from tourism (in billion USD)**

Country	2000	2005	2009	2010	2011
USA	82.9	82.2	94.2	103.5	116.3
Spain	30.0	48.0	53.2	52.5	59.9
France	30.0	44.0	49.5	46.6	
China	16.2	29.3	39.7	45.8	48.5
Italy	27.5	35.4	40.2	38.8	42.9
Germany	18.7	29.2	34.6	34.7	38.8
United Kingdom	21.9	30.7	30.1	32.4	
Australia	9.3	16.8	25.4	29.6	30.4
Macao (China)	3.2	7.6	18.1	27.8	
Hong Kong (China)	5.9	10.3	16.4	22.2	27.2
Slovenia	1.0	1.8	2.5	2.6	
Croatia	2.8	7.5	8.9	7.6	
The world	475.0	679.0	853.0	927.0	
Slovenia's share	0.21%	0.27%	0.29%	0.28%	
Base index Slovenia	1.00	1.80	2.50	2.60	
Croatia's share	0.59%	1.10%	1.04%	0.82%	
Base index Croatia	1.00	2.68	3.18	2.71	
China's share	3.41%	4.32%	4.65%	4.94%	
Base index China	1.00	1.81	2.45	2.83	2.99

Source: World Tourism Organization

By China, we mean the continental People's Republic of China (PRC) including the economic zones and the territory of Macao.

One of the most evident consequences of the economic and social reform in PR China after the year 1978 is the growing number of citizens migrating to the urban centres of China or abroad to improve their living standards and ensure a better life for themselves and their families (Bofulin, 2006; 2010). In 1952, 84% of the population lived in the countryside. By 1999 this share had decreased to 44%. The tourism industry has been positively influenced in recent years by the government's directive to increase the purchasing power of the population and the consumption of secondary and first-rate products³. Part of this directive is also increasing the number of work-free days and holidays. The influence of tourism on other sectors is not insignificant (Fan and Oosterhaven, 2005).

In 1993, there were only 24 tourist agencies. By 2007 their number had increased to 17,882 agencies for the domestic market and 1,838 for the international market (Xi, 2010: 4). In 2006, China had 97 international airports, but planned to build another 142 by the year 2010. The organisation of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing naturally played a role in that, and helped promote Chinese tourism (Xola Consulting, 2008).

In 2001, only 12 million Chinese people had travelled outside of their home country. In 2009, the number was 47.6 million. The majority (88.6%) were private trips (Zhang and Liu, 2009: 3-6). China is bound to become the No. 1 international tourism source market in 2012. After 70,250,000 travellers crossed the border from Mainland China in 2011, for the current year the total number may well top the numbers of Germany and

³ These are our own observations from the time of living and studying in China.

USA, which have been the two top source markets for many years. COTRI predicts that “unless there are major natural disasters or a new contagious disease scare, in 2012 COTRI expects the number of border crossings from mainland China to surpass 80 million and the average spending per trip to surpass US\$1,000” (COTRI, 2012).

The number of Chinese tourists will increase in the future because of ageing and their population distribution. The rural population is decreasing and moving to cities. They have more free time and a need for goods such as travelling (Xola Consulting, 2008). This is a big opportunity for the world tourism industry.

According to the WTO, in 2010 Chinese tourists spent 53.4 billion USD overall (Table 3) and in 2011 the spending increased to 69 billion USD (COTRI 2012). This calculation includes destinations in the Chinese economic zones (Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan). The most popular foreign destinations are: Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam etc, so the Asian territory (China National Convention Center, 2010). The Chinese decide to travel on the basis of a destination’s status, the possibility of discovering a new culture, business needs and the possibility of shopping. They are wealthy and are interested in exclusive brands as well as in the offer of gaming, especially in recent years (Xola Consulting, 2008). An overview of Chinese tourist agencies websites shows (eg. Cits, Lavago, Lulu trip, Sctc, Tongcheng, Tuniu, Usitrip, Yododo) that many agencies promote gaming destinations (e.g. Las Vegas, Sun City, Niagara Falls). We did not notice any European gaming packages. 89% travel to Asia, 6% to Europe, 3% to the USA, and 1% to Africa and Oceania (Xola Consulting, 2008). A Chinese tourist spends on average 987 USD per trip (People's daily Online, 2010).

Table 3: Consumption of tourists (in billion USD)

Country	2000	2005	2009	2010	2011
Germany	53.0	74.4	81.2	78.1	84.3
USA	65.4	69.9	74.1	75.5	79.1
China	13.1	21.8	43.7	54.9	69.0
United Kingdom	38.4	59.6	50.1	50.0	52.0
France	22.6	31.8	38.4	38.5	43.7
Italy	12.4	18.0	24.2	29.6	33.0
Japan	15.7	22.4	27.9	27.1	28.7
Russia	31.9	27.3	25.1	27.9	27.6
Canada	6.4	11.3	17.6	22.2	27.3
the Netherlands	8.8	17.3	20.9	26.5	27.1
The world	475.0	679.0	853.0	927.0	
China's share	2.76%	3.21%	5.12%	5.92%	
Base index China	1.00	1.66	3.34	4.19	5.27

Source: World Tourism Organization

The number of Chinese tourists travelling to Europe has been increasing in recent years. 6% of Chinese tourists (or two million) visit Europe. On one trip they usually visit several countries and spend an average of 1,781 USD per trip (People's daily Online, 2010). An important obstacle for their travels to Europe is getting a visa for the Schengen zone. Due to visas, permits, language and finances they would rather travel to closer destinations.

A typical Chinese tourist usually travels in an organised group, which simplifies getting the travel permits and visas. The trip lasts ten to twenty days and they are willing to spend up to 2,000 dollars for brands, because they are much more expensive in China (People's daily Online, 2010).

However, according to COTRI (2012), a new type of Chinese tourists is emerging. These “New Chinese Tourists” are increasingly travel-savvy and globally connected, younger than 45, travel to more diverse locations and stay longer. They often speak some English or another foreign language, however they are happy to see signage and other information in Chinese, as a sign of respect for their country. For longer trips they prefer slower travel forms and are more likely to add smaller destinations and special-interest sights and activities to their itinerary. They are willing to spend money on sophisticated branded goods. It should not be forgotten that more than 1.1 million households in China have over one million USD in cash assets, while the average age of those millionaires is only 39 years (COTRI, 2012).

Knowing the cultural features of Chinese guests allows for unique offers that guests will appreciate. When organising business for a new market segment of guests (especially Chinese). Karoul (2007) advises to be careful about: (1) history and culture, (2) which games are closest to one culture, (3) special features of the season, religious holidays, habits and traditions, (4) eating, (5) entertainment, (6) where to advertise, (7) what are the expected special offers, (8) when to organise celebrations, (9) how to communicate with them, (10) how to train the staff and (11) how to get and stay ahead of the competition.

The main airport lines connect Beijing with all the major European cities, e.g. Athens, Istanbul, Barcelona, Lisbon, Madrid, Paris, London, Amsterdam, Brussels, Zurich, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Salzburg, and Rome. Airports close to Slovenia and Croatia are: Rijeka, Zagreb, Zadar, Dubrovnik, Trieste, Udine, Venice, Milan, and Florence.

When travelling to Europe, the Chinese usually visit France, Switzerland, Great Britain, Germany, and Italy (Xola Consulting, 2008). They usually see the capitals (London, Vienna, and Paris) or the world famous destinations (Venice, Salzburg). Getting married in Paris is a dream-come-true for many Chinese people. Newlyweds, travelling on a nine-day honeymoon to Paris, Switzerland, or Italy, enjoy shopping and visiting vineyards or one of many castles in the region. The Chinese tourists wish to see as many capitals, places and sights in as little time as possible. Holiday packages including more than one country are not interesting for other nationalities, but for the Chinese tourists it is something usual (UNWTO, 2003). An overview of the Chinese travel agencies websites shows that the usual number of countries is between three and seven. The number depends on the size of the country and the number of sights in it.

In order to stimulate the tourist development, PR China and the EU signed a memorandum in 2004 to increase the number of trips made by organised groups from China to the EU. This should strengthen tourism in China as well as in the EU. It should also assist the controlling of illegal immigration and promote travel and economic exchange.

Another important factor is that the Chinese living in Europe are starting to travel as well. The number of Chinese living in Italy has increased from 111,712 in 2005 to 181,000 in 2010 or by 62% (Wikipedia 2011). In 2008, 800,000 Chinese visited Italy and in the year 2009 there were as many as two million Chinese tourists in Italy (Cmsbooking, 2010). A part of the tourism offer for the Chinese visitors that deserves special attention is gambling and gaming.

2.4. Where do Chinese players go and what kind of games do they play?

Why is gaming so popular among the Chinese? Chong (Chong, 2006) says there are several factors: (1) it is a form of social activity, (2) they wish to win money, (3) they play, because they are bored, (4) they relieve stress this way, and (5) the activity brings excitement and challenge. Gaming in general is a niche market in Asia. On the Asian or Chinese market there is a big demand for this kind of entertainment. China wants to direct all the gaming industry to the Macao peninsula. There are officially only two lotteries (Eimer, 2010). Gaming is illegal in other regions of China and players are even prosecuted.

As much as 90% of all Macao visitors come from China, including Hong Kong and Taiwan (Lam, 2007). In the eight hour flight radius from Macao there are 279 million people (MacCharles and Oaten, 2007), which represents a big business potential. The Sands Macao casino accepts around 40,000 visitors every day, the majority of them are Chinese. They leave on average 11,560 EUR there (Mellor, Stanley and Lin, 2007: 84-88). Reasons for longer visits by the Chinese players are food, shopping, and shows. This package is suitable for all kind of guests, however gaming plays an important role.

The next popular destination of Chinese players is Las Vegas, with as many as 85% of the strongest (VIP) players coming from China, Taiwan, and Japan. The majority of Las Vegas companies have their representatives on the Chinese market (Galletti, 2002: 1). Some stakes of these guests are as high as 50,000 USD. They spend a few million dollars per visit (Matt, 2010). The older statistics from 2000 show that Las Vegas was visited by 45,000 guests who flew directly from Hong Kong, by 2008, the number had increased to 112,000, which is 30% more than in 2006. The predictions say that the number of visitors will increase to 250,000 by 2015 (Sodoma, 2010). Estimates show that the visitors in Las Vegas from China represent 10% (3 million) of all visitors, i.e. 30 million visitors per year (Las Vegas Sun, 2009). A lot of casinos employ Chinese speaking staff. Only a few have a communication department, which provides translation services for international guests (Nazarechuk, 2000). The information on the hotel, food, city etc needs to be given in wide variety of languages.

2.5. The Chinese in Croatia and Slovenia and the logistic placement of Croatia and Slovenia in Europe

According to statistical data from the Slovene tourist organisation (Statistični urad RS, 2012), 11,050 Chinese tourists visited Slovenia in 2011 (table 4). This is 3.15 times as much as in 2007. Among all the Chinese tourists travelling abroad in 2011 this only represents 0.016%. This means 2,8 million EUR of direct (accommodation and food) and indirect (souvenirs and purchases) tourist consumption (table 5). The consumption

of gambling in 2011, which amounted to an additional 5 million EUR, must also be added to this number.

Table 4: Arrivals and overnight accommodation of the Chinese in Slovenia,

		Foreign tourist arrivals – total	Chinese	China's share	Base index	Tourist nights
2007	Arrivals	1,751,332	3,503	0.200%	1.00	2.43
	Accommodations	4,867,900	8,514	0.175%	1.00	
2008	Arrivals	1,957,691	4,887	0.250%	1.40	2.06
	Accommodations	5,351,282	10,090	0.189%	1.19	
2009	Arrivals	1,823,931	5,627	0.309%	1.61	2.00
	Accommodations	4,936,293	11,230	0.227%	1.32	
2010	Arrivals	1,869,106	8,205	0.439%	2.34	1.87
	Accommodations	4,997,031	15,348	0.307%	1.80	
2011	Arrivals	2,036,652	11,050	0.543%	3.15	1.97
	Accommodations	5,463,931	21,785	0.399%	2.56	

Source: Statistični urad RS, 2012.

According to statistical data from Croatia (Republika Hrvatska - Državni zavod za statistiku, 2012), 22,459 Chinese tourists visited Croatia in 2011 (table 5). This is 3.74 times as much as in 2007. Among all the Chinese tourists travelling abroad in 2011 this only represents 0.032%. This means 4.5 million EUR of direct (accommodation and food) and indirect (souvenirs and purchases) tourist consumption (table 6). The consumption of gambling in 2011, which amounted to an additional 3 million EUR, must also be added to this number.

Table 5: Arrivals and overnight accommodation of the Chinese in Croatia

		Foreign tourist arrivals – total	Chinese	China's share	Base index	Tourist nights
2007	Arrivals	9,306,000	6,000	0.064%	1.00	2.50
	Accommodations	49,574,000	15,000	0.030%	1.00	
2008	Arrivals	9,415,000	6,375	0.068%	1.06	1.89
	Accommodations	50,625,522	12,018	0.024%	0.80	
2009	Arrivals	9,335,000	7,586	0.081%	1.26	2.05
	Accommodations	49,229,508	15,572	0.032%	1.04	
2010	Arrivals	9,110,742	15,479	0.170%	2.58	1.50
	Accommodations	50,992,321	23,143	0.045%	1.54	
2011	Arrivals	9,926,674	22,459	0.226%	3.74	1.54
	Accommodations	54,751,305	34,578	0.063%	2.31	

Source: Državni zavod za statistiku Republike Hrvatske, 2012

Logistically speaking we have – apart from the road and railway corridor north-south and east-west – in the 230 km radius from Ljubljana and Zagreb 15 international airports and seven ports. This means that we have the appropriate infrastructure to bring visitors. The majority of Chinese tourists travel to Slovenia and Croatia via the four biggest Chinese airports: Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Macao. The majority of flights between Europe and China come from the first two. The Chinese need a Schengen visa to enter Slovenia, in order to simplify their entrance and allows them to visit the neighboring countries. Before Slovenia entered the Schengen zone, the visit was especially complicated, as the tourists needed a special visa for Slovenia. Entering

the country is now easier and this enables easier people and capital movement. On the whole, Slovenia is strengthening its relations with China, mainly with the Slovene government visits to China and vice versa. Both countries have established diplomatic delegations.

The starting point in analyzing the Croatian-Chinese relations is the signing of the Joint Statement of the Republic of Croatia and the People's Republic of China on the establishment of the Comprehensive Cooperation Partnership, which was signed in Beijing by Prime Ministers Ivo Sanader and Wen Jiabao on the 26th May 2005. Croatia has simplified immigration procedures for Chinese nationals that already have a Schengen visa in 2010, likely in a wish to attract Chinese tourists. Due to the need of the control of Chinese tourists abroad, this area is regulated by intergovernmental agreements that allow only authorized travel agencies to organize group visits to overseas. In 2003, Croatia, along with Germany, was among the first European countries that concluded such an agreement (memorandum) but after several incidents (non-return of Chinese tourists), Croatia's tourism industry was not eager to resume cooperation. In the meantime, in 2005, the EU signed an agreement with China, which with the proper preparation, led to a very profitable tourist exchange (Uradni list Evropske Unije, 2004). With Croatia joining the EU, all the necessary conditions for strengthening the cooperation will be completed. Also Baković (2006, 183) agrees that both Slovenia and Croatia could build a strategic partnership with China, which will become even more appealing when Croatia joins the EU.

The primary motive of Chinese tourists for visiting Slovenia and Croatia is not gaming. It is a part of their European tour. There are a lot of tourist attractions in Croatia (eg. Dubrovnik, Zadar, Plitvice lakes national park, capital Zagreb) and Slovenia (eg. Bled, Postojna Caves, capital Ljubljana). However, Slovene casinos have experience with Chinese players; they come from Italy for the day (from Mestre and Padova) or for the weekend (Prato, Rome, and Milan). Officially in the 100 km radius from Nova Gorica there are 21,000 Chinese residents. HIT Casinos were quickly aware of the new market possibility and have prepared training for the employees to prepare them for a new niche market. Chinese guests already represents an important share – from 40 to 200 visitors per day or between 3% and 6% of the visitors. Their income share amounts to more than 15%.

One significant fact is also that Slovenia and Croatia still have to establish a system that will help the tourism industry workers gain appropriate knowledge of Chinese language and their culture, which is a basic condition when trying to attract Chinese visitors. Currently there are few marketing oriented agencies that invite Chinese tourists and players to Slovenia and Croatia.

3. DISCUSSION

On the basis of the research we can establish that all hypotheses were confirmed. The motives for Chinese tourists are casino's additional offers, gaming, and shopping tourism. According to the examined sources, Chinese tourists usually visit more than three countries per trip.

Table 6: Assessment of arrivals, overnight stays and consumption of Chinese tourists in Slovenia and Croatia in 2020

Year	The number of Chinese who travel abroad	The number of Chinese visitors	The proportion of Chinese visitors among all the Chinese who travel abroad	Average stay	Number of nights	Direct consumption per day	Total direct consumption	Indirect consumption per day	Total indirect consumption	Total direct and indirect consumption	Gambling	Total
Slovenia												
2005	31,000,000	1,754	0.006%	2.20	3,859	70	270,116	40	154,352	424,468	314,704	739,172
2011	70,250,000	11,050	0.016%	1.97	21,785	80	1,742,800	50	1,111,035	2,853,835	4,742,800	7,574,850
2020	137,000,000	26,764	0.020%	1.87	50,049	100	5,004,855	70	3,503,398	8,508,253	7,603,884	16,112,137
2020	137,000,000	26,764	0.020%	2.20	58,881	100	5,888,064	70	4,121,645	10,009,709	8,550,451	18,560,161
2020	137,000,000	41,100	0.030%	1.87	76,857	100	7,685,700	70	5,379,990	13,065,690	10,228,560	23,294,250
2020	137,000,000	41,100	0.030%	2.20	90,420	100	9,042,000	70	6,329,400	15,371,400	11,553,600	26,925,000
2020	137,000,000	54,800	0.040%	1.87	102,476	100	10,247,600	70	7,173,320	17,420,920	12,758,080	30,179,000
2020	137,000,000	54,800	0.040%	2.20	120,560	100	12,056,000	70	8,439,200	20,495,200	14,444,800	34,940,000
2020	137,000,000	54,800	0.040%	2.70	147,960	100	14,796,000	70	10,357,200	25,153,200	16,876,800	42,030,000
Croatia												
2007	31,000,000	6,000	0.019%	2.50	15,000	70	1,050,000	40	600,000	1,650,000	1,250,000	2,900,000
2011	70,250,000	22,459	0.032%	1.54	34,578	80	2,766,240	50	1,763,478	4,529,718	2,966,240	7,461,380
2020	137,000,000	50,491	0.037%	1.50	75,737	100	7,573,654	70	5,301,558	12,875,211	6,258,923	19,134,134
2020	137,000,000	50,491	0.037%	2.50	126,228	100	12,622,756	70	8,835,929	21,458,685	10,298,205	31,756,890
2020	137,000,000	61,650	0.045%	1.50	92,475	100	9,247,500	70	6,473,250	15,720,750	7,598,000	23,318,750
2020	137,000,000	61,650	0.045%	2.50	154,125	100	15,412,500	70	10,788,750	26,201,250	12,530,000	38,731,250
2020	137,000,000	75,350	0.055%	1.50	113,025	100	11,302,500	70	7,911,750	19,214,250	9,242,000	28,456,250
2020	137,000,000	75,350	0.055%	2.50	188,375	100	18,837,500	70	13,186,250	32,023,750	15,270,000	47,293,750
2020	137,000,000	75,350	0.055%	3.00	226,050	100	22,605,000	70	15,823,500	38,428,500	18,284,000	56,712,500

The research question was: Are Chinese tourists an opportunity for the Slovene and Croatian tourism industry? The answer is yes. Slovenia and Croatia can offer (1) a distinct tourist package including accommodation, gaming and shopping tourism and (2) good logistic connections to other Central European countries.

The Chinese themselves (China National Convention Center, 2010) think that Asia, Africa, Northern America and Central Europe, a part of which are Slovenia and Croatia have the biggest potential for tourist development.

How Slovenia and Croatia will take advantage of this growth is now up to them. Assuming that by the year 2020 there will be 137 million Chinese tourists travelling abroad and that their consumption will reach between 210 and 300 billion USD (Zhang and Liu, 2009, 3-6) there is a large opportunity for growth.

Slovenia can, while maintaining existing shares in the normal distribution, expect around 25,000 tourists (max. 54,000) from China (table 6). If in 2011 the consumption of Chinese guests reached 2.8 million EUR (daily consumption of food service 80 EUR, the consumption of indirect consumption 50 EUR) then we can expect 8.5 million EUR in 2020. There are also quite a few reservations about the average stay as it does not last more than 2 days. If we managed to attract a greater share of Chinese guests and extend their stay we could collect up to 25 million EUR. The revenue from gambling which could amount to an additional 10 million EUR must also be considered. Croatia can expect around 50,000 tourists (max. 75,000) from China and corresponding potential earnings. The advantage of Slovenia and Croatia lies in the fact that these two countries have developed their own tourism industry. Apart from that we have the knowledge to satisfy the gaming customer and offer games, which are closest to Chinese guests. Travelling in Slovenia and Croatia gives tourists a rich shopping experience. Another significant fact is that we have a part of history in common, since both countries had similar socio-political order and strong leader figures, with similarities to the Chinese recent history. There are special tourist packages available under the names "Following the footsteps of Josip Broz Tito" in the region of Slovenia and Croatia and those can be included into the package when the other ex-Yugoslavian countries enter the EU. The figure of Tito is widely known particularly to the Chinese generation which has the biggest share of tourists. And last but not least, several Yugoslavian films were translated to Chinese e.g. "The battle of Neretva, Valter brani Sarajevo and Ne joči Kekec" and were very popular in China. Baković (2006, 178) also points to a very good relationship between the former SFR of Yugoslavia and China. Slovenia and Croatia can also present the starting point for Chinese tourists. They can visit at least three countries from Slovenia. In a 10 hour car travel radius from Ljubljana and Zagreb they can visit Italy, Switzerland, Lichtenstein, Austria, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

4. SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE AND PRACTICAL USE

There were no scientific articles published in Slovenia and Croatia on the topic of Chinese tourists with the exception of a few thesis papers. So this theme represents an important and completely un-researched field. The motivation for the research of this

theme comes from working with Chinese tourists and players that grew into the interest to study the population's movement. This is the first systematic scientific work on this topic in Slovenia. It is one of the rare articles that deal with the field of gaming of Chinese tourists.

The practical use means that we wanted to inform the professional and general public about the need of wholesome research of habits of Chinese tourists. Only by that will we be able to prepare proper tourist packages. On the other hand the findings are meant for catering and tourism businesses, which can find ideas for new niche markets.

CONCLUSION

China as the world's largest economy represents a big market potential due to the size of its population as well as its economic growth. More and more often, Chinese are deciding to travel abroad because of their bigger purchasing power and increased freedom to travel. They are well-appreciated guests also because of their attitude towards gaming. Due to cultural differences, they need tailored offers and specific treatment during their stay, including adjusted menus with Chinese food and Chinese speaking hosts. Through these findings we can see the opportunities for Slovenia and Croatia and their tourism potentials. These two countries can become a starting point for Chinese tourist's travels to Central Europe, as many countries are within short reach, which can satisfy the main motive of many Chinese tourists. They want to see as many countries and sights in as little time as possible. Most of the journeys could be done within a day, while being accommodated in Slovenia or Croatia. It depends on our business sense if we will seize this opportunity. The institutions in charge should establish the conditions for strengthening the economic cooperation between the countries. Common projects and investments into tourism and logistics are of vital importance. A regular air shuttle service to China should be established as soon as possible. Only good logistic connections and simplifying the procedures for getting a visa for the Schengen zone (within a legal framework) are means that can give Slovenia and Croatia an advantage over the competition. Geographical position and the proper niche markets have already been given to us, we just have to properly introduce them to our business partners in China.

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