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Defining “Face” In Order To Improve Chinese Tourists’ Service Satisfaction With Respect To Visiting Norway

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Abstract

Chinese face is an important cultural concept deeply rooted in Chinese society. Face plays a significant role in Chinese peoples' social interactions. As the Chinese economy grows, there is much opportunity arising from a related growing Chinese outbound tourism market. Subsequently, there is also opportunity for Norwegian tourism personals to explore the Chinese outbound tourism market.

By analyzing Chinese face, this thesis aims to promote Norwegian tourism to Chinese tourists and improve service satisfaction. Twenty-six Chinese tourists traveling to Norway in groups were interviewed. Content analysis was used to code collected data into three themes: face-driven motivation and face earning, factors influencing face loss, and effective face saving strategies.

Research findings in this thesis identified a changing trend in motivations for visiting Norway; factors that make Chinese tourists sensitive to face loss during an outbound trip; and main points that can effectively save Chinese tourists' face.

This study is conducive to understanding Chinese tourists better with the purpose of attracting more Chinese tourists.

Keywords: Chinese face, Norwegian tourism, service satisfaction, consumer behavior, motivation.

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Chapter I Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1 Background for the study

Tourism has developed well in Norway because of its rich tourism resources. According to the Innovation Norway's report (2015), in 2014, the Norwegian tourism industry output value accounts for 4.3% of Gross Domestic Product, GDP. It also reports that one in fifteen Norwegian people go into the tourism industry. Although the tourism industry has been developed, there is still space for further development. For instance, it is possible for its proportion of GDP to be increased.

It is meaningful to promote Norwegian tourism to Chinese people so as to develop the Norwegian tourism industry. The reason is because there is much potential in the Chinese tourism market. Specifically, China has developed fast and the life standard in China is also improved, which is linked to for the Chinese authority's publication of reform and opening policies (Law et al. 2012). As a result of these reforms, Chinese citizens shift their focus from necessities, like food and clothing, to pursuing a relaxing life or entertainment, such as travel. As Xie and Li argue (2009), the new reform and policy had a good influence on Chinese outbound tourism. Moreover, some policies were enacted so that traveling abroad became more available for Chinese (Xie and Li, 2009). Consequently, the number of Chinese tourists traveling abroad has increased. Based on Xie and Li's research in 2009, some statistics relating to trips to Europe are provided: 67.81% of travel groups go to Western Europe, 20.8% of them visit Central and Eastern Europe, and 2.67% of them travel to Northern Europe (Norway, Finland, Sweden, etc.). It is obvious that less Chinese tourists choose to visit Northern Europe including Norway. Although a small proportion of Chinese people decide to come to Northern Europe compared with other European areas, it cannot be denied that there is a potential for Norwegian tourism to develop a larger Chinese market. Hence, it is important to seize every chance to develop Norwegian tourism with regard to the Chinese

market and satisfy tourists in order to earn a good reputation from word-of-mouth recommendations.

Talking about satisfying Chinese customers, one main factor cannot be ignored, which is a unique feature of Chinese unique culture—face. The concept of “face” has a long history in China since it has been deeply rooted in Chinese culture for thousands years and is consequently deeply implanted in Chinese peoples’ minds (Kádár and Pan, 2012). The concept of “face” is very important for Chinese people. What is more, it continues to play an important role even when Chinese tourists travel abroad. During outbound travel, there can be numerous interactions between tourists and local tourism workers. Within these interactions, people may earn face, and they may also lose face. Earning face endows a Chinese person with a feeling of being respected and honored, while losing face shames a Chinese person. Thus, in order to earn face in interactions, Chinese people must be satisfied with the service that they receive from local employees.

Furthermore, another important element “Li” (禮) is closely linked with face, which means politeness. “Li” is one part of Confucianism. It presupposes that social hierarchy and harmonious society are two core elements in Chinese culture (Gao, 1997). To reach the standard of harmony, people in lower social classes should give 100% respect, be polite and be humble to those in higher social classes. Actually, being polite to people is the same as giving them face and showing respect in order to maintain healthy and harmonious interpersonal relationships (Gao, 1997).

However, because of culture differences, foreigners, such as Norwegian people, may not understand Chinese cultural concepts of face and “Li”. Moreover, they may not realize how important “face” is to Chinese tourists, or understand it at all. Perhaps, native tourism employees’ discourses and behavior could unconsciously make Chinese tourists lose face. Besides, under different cultural contexts, the way people show politeness may differ between Norway and China. Therefore, misunderstandings are possible. Such misunderstandings and unhappy experiences could lead to customers’ dissatisfaction. Thus, it is important to minimize misunderstandings that are generated by cultural differences.

1.2 Aim of the study

This study aims to enable the Norwegian tourism industry and its workers to gain a better understanding of the Chinese cultural concept of face in order to minimize cultural misunderstandings between Norway and China people. By minimizing unhappy experience and customer dissatisfaction, the study aims to improve service satisfaction of Chinese visitors who visit Norway. Additionally, the study essays to attract more Chinese people to visit Norway by analyzing face-driven motivations.

1.3 Significance of the study

Despite a wealth of research carried out respectively into Norwegian tourism and Chinese culture, there is a shortage of studies focusing on Chinese culture in Norwegian tourism. According to a report by Oxford Economics, China is being the largest market for outbound tourism. In order to capture and attract more Chinese tourists to Northern Europe, Chinavia programs have been carried out to promote Scandinavia to Chinese tourists. A survey by Chinavia (2013) revealed that Chinese tourists visiting Scandinavia were not satisfied with the service level. Chinavia programs undertook research aiming to improve Chinese visitors' satisfaction. Chinavia programs provide tourism-related business, such as hotel, restaurant and attractions, as well as helpful suggestions to satisfy Chinese travelers. However, there is a little information about Chinese face issues. Face plays an important role for Chinese people in interactions. This research about face attempts to offer advice for employees in Norwegian tourism industry in order to satisfy Chinese customers. Also, it provides suggestions on how to attract more Chinese visitors from the angle of "face". This research is beneficial to both Norwegian tourism and Chinese tourists.

This study focused on three aspects. Shopping is a basic and important activity for Chinese tourists. They are willing to spend more than half of their tourism fund to shop (market.cnta, 2015). Therefore, shopping was first examined in relationship to face and consumer behavior. Second, this study identified factors resulting in earning face and losing face. Third, the study identified strategies to saving face.

1.4 Structure of dissertation

In this chapter, background information is introduced regarding the current status of the Chinese tourism market, and what ‘face’ is. Why the theme of this thesis is assumed important as well as its study goals are presented.

Chapter two presents the literature review related to the concept of “Chinese face”. The review is separated into four sections. In the first section, a definition of “face” is presented as well as why it is significance in Chinese society. This section also sets out the development of the concept within western and Chinese academic circles. Different understandings between western and Chinese scholars are compared. This section also focuses on various types of face, their functions and their features. In the second section, how the relationship between face and consumer behavior manifests is discussed, which includes how face drives people to travel for the sake of earning face; consumer behavior’s characteristics with regard to the cultural concept of face and how face influences consumer behavior. In the third section, acts that would threaten face and factors that make Chinese become sensitive about face are identified. In addition, this section indicates the relationship between politeness and face. The forth section addresses face saving strategies. It overviews five strategies to avoid face threatening acts and some remedies associated with losing face.

Chapter three presents the methodology and starts with research questions. There are followed by the research design with an explanation of why this thesis is based on qualitative research. After that reasons why why specific methods were chosen for sampling and collecting data are provided. To analyze collected data, content analysis was utilized. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the role of the researcher and an explanation of the ethical approval process.

Chapter four provides findings from all the interviews. It presents some basic background information on interviewees. Based on the research questions, results from interviews were classified into three categories, namely face and consumer behavior and motivations for visiting Norway; face earning and losing; and effective strategies for saving face for the Norwegian tourism industry.

Chapter five presents interpretations from some of the interesting findings. This chapter interprets the results of the data analysis based on the literature review so as to answer the research questions and also provides suggestions for future related studies.

Chapter six is the conclusion and sums up the main points of this research, highlighting key findings and simply demonstrating the analysis. It also offers recommendations for future study.

Chapter II Face Theories, Consumer Behavior and Tourism

2.1 Chinese face

2.1.1 Western face and Chinese face

Based on a research on “face”, 83.33% of Chinese feel that face is very important in social communication (Zhang and Si, 2010). It is obvious that face plays a special and significant role in Chinese people’s daily life and Chinese culture. Thus, it is regarded as a Chinese national character owing to its popularity. Besides, it not only reflects Chinese value, but also influences people’s value and behavior intention (Guo and Lin, 2015).

The importance of face drives scholars to conduct researches on it. Therefore, a wide variety of studies on face have been carried out for many years. In English language, the concept of face was put forward by Hu in 1944 and was subsequently introduced to the west. She argued that face has two meanings. One is “lien”, while the other one is “mien”. “Mien” also equals ‘mianzi’ in Chinese, which means ‘honor’ or ‘prestige’. “Mien” represents a good social reputation earned by success, praise and achievement etc., while “lien” (also “lian”) is known as having a good moral reputation (Hu, 1944).

Other countries with different culture may have another interpretations of face. For instance, Goffman come up with a new perspectives that differs from Hu’s statical and stable face conception (Du and Fan, 2012). Goffman (1955:213) defines face as “positive social value a person effectively claims for himself [sic] by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact”. In his research (1955), he points out that face comes into play in a certain social interactions. In addition, face is also an image that people want to show to others, and an expectation that they ask from others (Goffman, 1955). Comparing Goffman’s understanding with Hu’s, Goffman emphasizes a dynamic association—contact between an individual and other people. Following Goffman, Brown and Levinson (1978) supplemented that face is also a way of expressing emotion, which is always attached to a social interaction and could be lost, maintained or strengthened. The two researchers expanded that face is a

‘public self-image’ that everyone in society tries to claim for himself or herself. Afterwards, Stover, an anthropologist, stated that face is a formal and formalized product, and emphasized that face reflects a person’s status and position in a social system (Du and Fan, 2012). Stover strengthened the connection between an individual and the whole society. Gradually, face is becoming an attribute of a society.

In addition to western scholars, Chinese academics have also been interested in face research. Differing from Hu’s definition of face, Ho (1976) declared that face is not a standard of behavior, status, dignity, honor or prestige. However, “it is meaningful only when his [sic] face is considered in relation to that of others in the social network” (Ho, 1976:882). In other words, a single concept such as a standard of behavior, status, dignity, honor and prestige, does not make any sense unless it occurs as part of a social interaction. The concept, face, becomes meaningful when a person gains respect and expectations from contact objects in a social encounter. Similarly to Ho’s ideas, Chen defined face as a socialized and interpersonal self-image created when people realize the judgments other people have made upon them (Zhang and Si, 2010). Self-image comes into being during a social communication. To be more specific, Qu argued that face is an impression aiming to please a social group and win their approval (Du and Fan, 2012). The impression, to some degree, is what people want to deliver to others. It shows their value and self-identity, or a good image that they create and want to share with others. Taking outbound tourism as an example, the main motivation for Chinese females for traveling abroad is to get knowledge and prestige from others (Li et al., 2011). Specifically, traveling abroad impresses people with an image of erudition and uniqueness, which earns them a sense of prestige or honor. This is what they attempt to claim for themselves.

Differences exist between western and Chinese perceptions. Western researchers pay more attention to the individual and personal characteristics. People are self-focused and responsible unto themselves only if their behavior would not influence other people. For example, although Goffman mentions that face only works in an interaction, face is an image that a person wants to perform to others. It is the encounter of himself or herself who should take responsibilities for his or her face performance rather than others. Stover also pointed out

that face equals an individual's social status and position. According to his perspective, face is a personal social attribute. Furthermore, Brown and Levinson regarded face as a way to express emotion. Based on individualism-based western philosophy, face is clarified from an individual level (Tse and Hobson, 2008).

Face theory is developing, to understand face in a certain culture is to know its culture and society first. It is much more significant to explain Chinese social structure from an angle of Chinese national character, and then to deconstruct face (Wu, 2008). In a collectivism society, people are more concerned with opinions and judgments of a group of people instead of an individual. Hence, Chinese people care about other people's impression of themselves. They are eager to maintain a harmonious relationship with their friends, family and even strangers because they care too much for other people's feelings. As Mao (1994) points out, Chinese "face" differs from western face because of cultural differences. Thus, Western face interpretations cannot be totally applied to Chinese culture.

2.1.2 Face classification and function

According to different needs and requirements, Chinese face can be considered from various angles. The primary classification of face was put forward by Goffman (Zhao, 2012). "One's own face and the face of others are constructs of the same order" (Goffman, 1955:213). It means that face is divided into self-face and other-face. Correspondingly, there are two behaviors: defensive face behavior and protective face behavior. Defensive face behavior means to save one's own face preventing from losing face, while protective face behavior indicates face giving to others (Goffman, 1955). It indicates that the reactive behavior protects the encounter's face from losing and gives the contact object face to maintain harmony. Yan et al. (2007) proposed a similar but different classification. They also divided face into two types: self-perceived face and other-perceived face. However, its meaning is distinct from Goffman's. Self-perceived face is also called subjective face or self-evaluated face, which refers to one's recognition of his or her own value of dignity. Goffman's self-face has features in common with self-perceived face. For instance, it is the encounterer who evaluates his or her own face and tends to save face as a defensive reaction. As for other-perceived face, it equals the objective face or other-evaluated face. This means that other people, rather than the

encounter, evaluate their own face by the encounterer's behavior. Self-perceived face can coexist with other-perceived face. Specifically, one person may think that he earns a face whilst others may feel receiving face or losing face and vice versa. Certainly, they may fail to coexist. For example, a customer may feel she or he has earned face or lost face when she or he shops, but the employee may not have any feeling and vice versa.

From another perspective, Yan et al. (2007) pointed out that there are four types of face: moral face, status face, knowledge face and personal relationship face. To be specific, moral face refers to face's evaluation by one's or a group's morality. For instance, one tour member returns money he picks up on street. This behavior displays one's good morality, which wins appreciation (also face) from other members. Status face indicates that the higher social status one person has, the more face one could win. A member who has higher social status in a group tour is more likely to give voice to his/her ideas. To some degree, it earns face for him or her. Knowledge face shows that people gain face for their knowledge and ability. Traveling abroad probably gives chances for Chinese tourists to learn more knowledge about culture s, etc., which is good for their face if they share the knowledge with others. As for interpersonal relationship face, people earn more face when they have close relationship with their members. If two Chinese people have a good relationship, they could take care of each other's face trying not to harm the other's face. Chinese philosophy is presented through this division.

The western scholars, Brown and Levinson (1978) advanced that face is comprised of positive face and negative face. Positive face is relevant to the desire to get others' appreciation and approval, while negative face refers to the desire that one's actions are unimpeded by others (Brown and Levinson, 1978). All points of focus are around personal cognition—one of western style.

Face can be distinguished from a further different angle. Face types are changeable. Unlike its classifications, face functions according to certain face behavior. Yan et al. (2007) claimed that there are several face behaviors: do face work, give face, borrow face, owe face, earn face, save face, maintain face, lose face, exchange face and present face and so on. Among these, earning face, losing face, and saving face are the cores. They provide explanations for

these concepts. Chinese people are willing to compete to earn face because of the importance of face and their awareness of competition. People gain face when others think that they deserve this honor, by being an exemplary model, performing superiorly (e.g. being capable, reliable, humble and knowledgeable) or enhancing social status (Ho, 1976). To apply this to tourism, Guo (2015) declared that Chinese earn face through four tourism types: cultural type, high consumption type, harmonious relationship-building type and special activities type. In particular, the cultural capital type aims to experience different culture, for instance, outbound traveling. New knowledge learned in trips earns these tourists face. The high consumption type refers to tourists, who pay a great deal of money on consumption with the wish to gain face during a trip. As for the harmonious relationship-building type, this type attempts to keep a stable and harmonious relationship with friends or family members etc. when traveling. To keep a harmonious relationship is to maintain face or earn face. The last type is to achieve good face by special and unique tourism activities. The unique activities, such as dog sledding, reflect one's good taste. Tourists would receive admiration, and so earn face from these activities.

Goffman (1955:215) provided a broad definition of losing face—that is, “to be in wrong face, to be out of face, or to be shamefaced”. In light of Goffman's understanding, losing face is equivalent to being ashamed. Ho (1976:871) elaborated on this: “face may be lost when conduct or performance falls below the minimum level considered acceptable or when certain vital or essential requirements, as functions of one's social position, are not satisfactorily met”. Some subjective reasons, such as failing to meet expectations, would lead to loss of dignity, or loss of face. Nevertheless, Hu (1944) interpreted this differently as she declared that lose “lien” is a criticism made by the group for immoral or unacceptable behavior. Her focus was on judgments of the group not only on self judgments. An individual belongs to a closely related group that shares the same glory or shame with every member—that is, one's shameful behavior could have an effect on those who have relationships with him or her such as family members, and friends (Hu, 1944). Face is not only one man or woman's face, but also the whole group's face. This is Chinese face, which varies from western face perception. Moreover, in addition to unethical behavior and bad habit, exposed privacy and incapable behavior would lead to loss of face (Zhang and Si, 2010). For instance, if a tourist speaks

loudly in a foreign restaurant, locals may be annoyed. In this case, local residents' disaffection could make the tourist as well as fellow tourists lose face.

When face is lost, Chinese people would make great efforts to save their face. For Goffman (1955), to save face is to create an impression for others that face is not lost. There is another way to fix it up. That is to earn face next time in a similar occasion (Yan et al., 2007). To some extent, earning face may cover the loss of face behavior one has already done.

2.1.3 Aspects of face

Face concept not only exists in Chinese culture, but also the rest of the world. It is generated in the base of society and culture. In other words, it is a product of society with a characteristic of sociality (Zhang & Si, 2010; Du & Fan, 2012; Yan et al., 2007). Furthermore, face is gained through social interaction with other social members on behalf of a social association. Earning and losing face cannot merely rely on an encounter. As a basic element, social members play a significant role in earning and losing face. Interaction is also treated as a place for making face earning or losing possible. Thus, face is closely connected with social interaction and activity. Although face is a part of culture all over the world, cultural differences between the east and the west lead to diverse perceptions towards face. Therefore, its value or evaluation varies from country to country. This means that understandings of this concept may differ in different societies. Consequently, face is a social construct rooted in a culture.

Second feature of face is symbolization of social resources (Zhang and Si, 2010). Symbolization represents the process that social resources turn into a symbol. Specifically, face can be maintained, gained, lost and also exchanged. To earn or maintain face, people could swap what they possess, such as money, power and knowledge etc., for face. If a person owns more power or more money, he or she may earn more face or maintain face better. Besides, face is also an intangible social resource, which can be exchanged. To put it simply, if person A asks B for help (borrow face), A needs to help B when B needs help to pay back B's face. This process is face exchange. Social resources, both tangible (e.g. money) and intangible (e.g. social status and one's face), are symbols in a society. These resources can

shame people or honor them. It can be explained by an example related to Chinese tourists traveling to Norway. For Chinese people, Norway, a Northern European country, symbolizes a wealthy and developed country. Traveling to Norway demands an amount of money (tangible resource) and time (intangible resource). Hence, such travel not only shows the tourist's consume ability (richness), but also earns face. Here, money and time are exchanged for intangible social resource including face and the flaunting of purchasing power.

Showing off is also face's unique property, whose nature is to present wealth, fame and social status etc. to others (Zhang and Si, 2010). To flaunt is a way to maintain one's face, win face and avoid the possibility to lose face. It appears in every social hierarchy. Showing consumer ability is one prevailing way to show off and to gain face.

Since displaying purchasing power is one of face's main characteristics, Lee et al. (2013) conclude another three traits of face based on a consumption context: conformity, other-orientation and distinctiveness (Shi and Cao, 2013). These features represent the want of consumer face to be enhanced, maintained and saved. Conformity uncovers that purchase is a tool to maintain face. Specifically, a man or woman gives up his or her favorite to follow other members blindly. This emphasizes the importance of maintaining consistency within the group. For example, a person would choose the same tourist destination as most family members even if he or she is not interested in it at all. The conformity feature also manifests the hope to keep harmonious relationship with others. Other-Orientation indicates that Chinese people not only care about their own face but also the face of other people. People hesitate if their consumer behavior makes others lose face. Distinctiveness means that people buy some unique but expensive product to flaunt. The nature of being distinct is not only to show consume power but also to present their special taste. The final goal is to get appreciation and achieve good face. Traveling to Norway costs more money than traveling to domestic cities. Besides, the activity, such as, hunting for northern light is so special that it cannot be offered in China. Thus, traveling to Norway is unique and also shows one's wealth. As a result, it earns face by traveling to Norway.

Face is also the embodiment of self-esteem (Zhang & Si, 2010; Yan et al., 2007). Face is a feedback mechanism on one's capability and achievement in society. Thus, a sense of self-respect is achieved by other's praise. Chinese people are eager to pursue face because they want to be respected. Traditional Chinese strive to earn face in social life with the aim to win respects from others.

The next trait is that face is situational and changeable (Yan et al., 2007). With time passing away, people may update their understanding of face so that face is changeable. Taking consumer behavior as an example, showing one's purchasing power was regarded as evil in the Chinese Cultural Revolution-era, yet it can earn people face nowadays. How much face people win varies from situation to situation. For instance, a person earns more face in front of familiar people rather than strangers (Yan et al., 2007).

2.2 Face and consumer behavior

Chinese face has a great influence on Chinese people's daily life including consumer behavior. Although Chinese tour type is in the transition from sightseeing tours to leisure tourism, sharing traveling experience with others and shopping is still the main purpose for trips (Wang and Huang, 2010). It is obvious that traveling is a manifestation of the cultural concept of face because traveling seems like a way to earn face. Hence, face is one reason that encourages people to travel. During outbound trips, Chinese tourists allocate a great amount of money to shop. According to Hong's (2011) research about shopping abroad in 2005, it found that on average every Chinese outbound tourist spends 987 dollars on purchasing. The amount of money that Chinese consumers spend ranks the highest in the world. Since face culture is a fundamental rule for Chinese to socialize, it runs through Chinese people's behavior. That is to say face is an influencing factor to consumer behavior for Chinese, especially when others accompany them.

2.2.1 Influence of Chinese face on consumer behavior

A customer's purchasing behavior is a process that puts both purchasing motivation and decision-making into practice. Face is the main driving factor that pushes Chinese people to make determinations about buying. The consciousness of "save face" is conducive to making

decisions to buy (Shi and Cao, 2013). That is to say, the want of saving face has a positive impact on purchase intention. Furthermore, the higher face consciousness one has, the stronger one's buying inclination one gets (Shi and Cao, 2013).

The face-want consciousness has an effect on consumer ability in three aspects: brand consume, consume space and consumer emotion (Guo and Lin, 2015). At first, Chinese buyers with high face consciousness put external characteristics into first place rather than internal features. The awareness of earning face and avoiding losing face is the core motivation for shopping behavior. Moreover, consumers are activated by the fear of losing face, followed by the want of earning face (Yang, 2013, cited by Guo & Lin, 2015). In order to earn face, for these consumers, brand as an external feature is much more important than its quality. Further, brand consumption also embodies a feature of consumer behavior—affection for buying expensive commodities. Branded products cost more money than common ones. However more faces are gained by spending more money on costly branded commodities. In recent years, luxury-shopping tourism is becoming more prevalent. In 2015, luxuries bought by Chinese people accounted for 46% of the world purchases, and 78% of these products were shopped for abroad (Phoenix Info News, 2016). As can be seen from this, Chinese have become super fans of luxurious brands. Luxury shopping activates them to take outbound trips.

Different consumption spaces give rise to distinct consumer behavior. Lin et al. (2013) point out that people prefer to spend more money in public spaces to earn face, which is also a main characteristic of consumer behavior. In public, it is unavoidable for others to know how much goods cost. Thus they would like to consume in spite of the price when the importance of face overweighs price. Nevertheless, Chinese people are not willing to spend a lot of money in private because thrift is a good moral standard in China. Therefore their purchasing behavior differs in private and public spaces. According Sina News (2013), Chinese tourists economize on accommodation when traveling but would like to spend more time and money on shopping. For such Chinese tourists, where to live lies is in the range of private space and strangers will not know it. But people shop in a public space and others would notice their

consumer behavior. Therefore, Chinese tourists would rather save money on accommodation even when they travel abroad.

Consumer emotion is an influential factor to both motivation and decision-making. The passion for building one's positive image such as averting the loss of face and embarrassment, winning respect and improving social status and so on, determines purchasing behavior. For example, to show off is also a kind of emotion that pushes people to purchase because showing purchasing power is a way to build one's image of wealth. On one hand, Chinese people spend a great amount of money on shopping to gain good face. On the other hand, they control themselves not to over consume to embarrass their companions who can not afford costly products. The goal is to protect their companions' face. In addition, service failure would upset consumers resulting in complaints (Du and Fan, 2012). Losing face causes dissatisfaction towards service providers and even their firms. Consequently, such unpleasant experiences make purchasers complain. Furthermore, they would spread it by word of mouth. Resulting in a negatively reported image of the company, which would influence other buyers' decisions to shop.

In addition to these three factors, the face-want wish leads to impulse buying (Zhang and Zhuang, 2008). When people are accompanied, they may buy something that they do not need at all to impress others. What is more, they would purchase something that is not on the shopping list to accord with others, which also reflects a face feature—conformity.

2.2.2 Characteristics of Chinese consumer behavior and face

Chinese consumer behavior and consumer psychology is closely linked to the cultural concept of face. In this situation, they are more concerned with other people's impression of them so that their consumer behavior is vested with Chinese characteristic. First, Chinese people pay more attention to the satisfaction of psychological feelings (Hong, 2011; Wang &Huang, 2010). Simply speaking, in the shopping process, tourists achieve both material value and additional spiritual value, which satisfies them. Material value also equals use value while additional spiritual value refers to the pleasant sensation of earning face. Thus, psychological satisfaction drives them to buy. For example, it leads to a loss of face if a Chinese tourist does

not follow his or her companions to purchase a product. They decide to buy it as others have even if it is valueless to them. They, therefore, not only purchase the commodity for its use value but also to maintain face or gain spiritual value amongst their companions. It is worth mentioning that an intangible product also has “material value”. Taking a package tour to Norway as an example, Chinese tourists buy the intangible product—the trip. They receive an experience, which is a “material value”. In addition, they also acquire a spiritual value as they obtain more knowledge of a different culture. The learning process satisfies them and identifies them as prestigious people, which earns them face.

Second, similar to one of the aspects of face, consumer behavior is regarded as a resource exchange—that is, face can be bought by money (Hong, 2011). Money is exchanged for products, which demonstrates a consumer's fortune and ability. During the purchasing process, they get approval and admiration from other social members. As a result, they experience psychological satisfaction and ensure their social status is fixed. These feelings help them maintain and win face. When a tourist buys souvenirs for friends, he or she exchanges money for souvenirs. Friends appreciate gifts, which pleases the tourist, and consequently earns her or him face.

Thirdly, Chinese purchasers pay more attention to a package instead of its use value (Hong, 2011; Wang & Huang, 2010). Well-designed packaging easily attracts them. The purpose of this consumer behavior is to show off and be praised. Specifically, beautiful and unique packaging easily draws a consumer's attention, despite the truth that the commodity is the same and cheaper in conventional packaging. Thus, purchasing goods with special and attractive packaging for most Chinese consumers makes them think that it represents their great taste and social status as well as winning them face. Similarly, if a hotel has unique buildings (e.g. ice hotel) and decoration, it might draw Chinese tourists' attention.

Fourth, some Chinese people take pride in buying more costly products compared to others (Hong, 2011; Wang & Huang, 2010). Richness is a symbol that demonstrates one's status and identity, which in turn contributes to gaining face. The desire to earn face results in ignorance of prices. It creates a feeling that their consumer power is higher than other people when they

buy something expensive. As a result, they are proud of earning good face. According to Xie and Li (2009), a growing number of Chinese high-income tourists prefer high quality and serviced tour packages. They flock to buy these packages even though they are not cheap because these tourists identify themselves as high-class people, and believe that they earn face by doing so.

Finally, in order to earn face Chinese people usually spend more money in public but are thrifty in private (Lin et al., 2013). Thrift is a virtue in China so that Chinese people obey this good moral rule. However, excessive thrift can also damage people's image. Some people show their contempt to those who demonstrate thrift in public. This causes them a loss of face. Therefore, Chinese people are disposed to earn face at the expense of spending a significant amount of money in public. Instead they save money as much as they can in private.

Among the five traits discussed above, three points are the most important features and are closely connected. These points are to show off, buy costly products and spend large amount of money in public while using thrift in private. Being able to flaunt is one of the reasons why Chinese people like to spend a great deal of money on branded products. However it is interesting that Chinese people are reluctant to waste money in private. These three characteristics also have a significant impact on consumer behavior.

2.2.3 Face-driven consumption in tourism

With improving life standards, Chinese people are no longer seeking physical use value any more. The reason for shopping is not only for use, but also for a diversity of purposes. To some degree, these motivations reflect peoples' desire for face.

The first motivation is to show off. Face consciousness is associated with an eagerness to flaunt, which has a positive impact on consumer behavior (Wu & Tao, 2010; Guo & Lin, 2015; Yuan et al., 2009). Chinese tourists regard showing off as an appropriate approach to earn face. The power of this desire is too strong to ignore. It is common for Chinese people buy something luxurious even when the high-priced product is beyond their purchasing

ability (Wu and Tao, 2010). In their eyes, more expensive commodities can demonstrate their wealth, which earns admiration and respect from others. To achieve face, Chinese consumers buy a lot or alternatively chase expensive products in order to flaunt their wealth. For example, although traveling to Europe costs much more money than traveling to nearby countries or domestic cities; according to a report by Oxford Economics, the number of Chinese tourists traveling abroad has been growing. The reason why they spend more money is because the greater expense earns them face (Lin et al., 2013).

The second motivation is to follow a trend (Wu and Tao, 2010). This type of consumer behavior follows prevalent choices and trends in order to seek common ground. Chinese tourists would rather sacrifice their favor than being different from others because they do not want to be looked down upon or lose face. For instance, they prefer to follow most people's decision to the most popular tourist attractions bearing with traffic jams even if these places are not their number one choice.

The third kind of motivation is to be unique and fashionable (Wu & Tao, 2010; Guo & Lin, 2015). As traveling is gradually becoming part of a normal life style, some tourists choose special trips to highlight their uniqueness and good taste. Such unconventional choices enhance their face as it easily catches others' eyes and generates praise. As an example, some people have decided to become backpackers and try adventure tourism instead of buying a package tour.

The next motivation is to consume blindly (Wu and Tao, 2010). Blind tourism consumption indicates that some tourists make the irrational decisions to buy something that is useless, unfamiliar to them or unaffordable. In exploring this reason, it is easy to find out that maintaining or gaining face pushes tourists to shop unwisely. For example, face would be lost if someone refused a request to book a room in an expensive hotel when traveling with friend. Therefore, he or she would compromise even if the cost was too high to afford.

2.3 Face earning and face losing

It is vital to conduct research into earning face and losing face since both are deeply rooted in Chinese people's daily life. Hence it is necessary to understand the cultural concept of face in

order to satisfy Chinese customers as much as possible. In this section, three perspectives regarding earning and losing face are reviewed. In the discussion chapter, literature about earning and losing face in relation to this Master's study findings will be revisited.

2.3.1 Face Threatening Acts (FTAs)

FTAs come from Brown and Levinson (1978), and they claim that there are some acts that inherently threaten face, namely those behaviors that violate the want of face of the listener or of the speaker. Yao (2012) explained this concept as the base on their theory. Yao (2012:31) noted that "Some of the speech acts are opposite to the face of speakers or hearers. They may both threaten people's positive face and negative face. These are called Face Threatening Acts". That is to say, some acts threaten both speakers' and listeners' positive face as well as negative face. Although everyone has a desire for face-wants, the verbal interaction always comes with face-threatening acts (FTAs), i.e. acts that threaten one's self-esteem or freedom of action (Zhao, 2010). FTAs seems hard to avoid. In responding to Brown and Levinson's theory, Zhu (2012) found that the majority of verbal acts in daily communications are virtually face threatening.

According to Brown and Levinson (1978), FTAs can be divided into four groups: acts threatening the listener's negative face, acts threatening the listener's positive face, acts threatening the speaker's negative face and acts threatening the speaker's positive face. Acts threatening the listener's negative face include several aspects. First, putting some pressure on the listener to do something, such as orders and requests, suggestions and advice, reminding, threats, warnings and dares. Secondly, forcing listeners to accept or reject speakers, such as offers and promises. Third, giving the listener reason to think that he or she may have to take action to protect the object of the speaker's desire, such as compliments, expressions of envy or admiration and expressions of strong (negative) emotions toward the listener.

Brown and Levinson (1978) also found out that those that acts that threaten the listener's positive face contain: acts that show that the speaker has a negative evaluation of some aspect of the listener's positive face, such as expressions of disapproval, criticism, contempt or ridicule, complaints and reprimands, accusations, insults; behaviors that reflect that the

speaker does not care about the listener's positive face, such as expressions of violent(out-of-control) emotions, irreverence, mention of taboo topics, bringing of bad news about the listener, or good news(boasting) about the speaker, raising dangerously emotional or divisive topics, blatant non-cooperation in an activity and use of address terms and other status-marked identifications in initial encounters. In addition to the behavior mentioned above, Chen (2009) added that it also offends listeners' positive face if speakers purposely or incautiously use address terms or other status-marked identifications in insulting or awkward ways.

Speaker's negative face can be damaged by expressing their gratefulness, accepting listeners' thanks, apology, excuses and offers, and also responding to impoliteness, reluctant promises and offers (Brown and Levinson, 1978).

Speaker's positive face is hurt if they apologize, accept a compliment, can not control over their physical body, self humiliate, act stupid, self contradict, confess and admit their guilt and so on (Brown and Levinson, 1978).

Although these four behavior types threaten both speaker and listener's face, it does not mean that all acts result in losing face. It can not be denied that the first two types—acts that threaten a listener' negative or positive face, somehow causes the loss of face. However, some acts associated with the other two types would not shame the speaker, and some even would help the speaker to earn face. For instance, accepting listener's compliment would not humiliate a speaker's face rather the speaker would earn face.

2.3.2 Factors influence face sensitive Chinese

Chinese people are sensitive to face. Moreover, Chinese people are sensitive towards face due to individual factors, relational factors and group factors (He and Zhang, 2011). Individual factors refer to an individual earning a good reputation and respect by building self-image (Wang et al., 2012). It is possible to be extended these factors to social symbols, such as one's education background, and property. These factors also include untouchable features such as one's character and morals and competence, etc.

Relational factors are related to those who have close relationships with family members or friends. People regard family as core in traditional Chinese society, which in turn determines that a family member's honor and humiliation is closely connected to the rest family members (Zhang and Si, 2010). A person's face is united with all family members. The importance of relationship with friends ranks second to family relationships (Wang et al., 2012). Friends share the same glory and shame as the subject person. Nevertheless, a man or women may lose face or earn face if his other friend is superior to him or her or worse than him or her, and vice versa. To sum up, the subject person's face is closely bound up with other relevant people.

Group factors are equivalent to collective honor. Collective honor means an emotion that is shared among a community (baike.baidu, n.d.). Members do not need to be familiar with each other in a group to take pride in becoming one with them. Members strive to gain praise and respect for the whole community—that is collective honor. Collective honor is not just about honor. It is every member's responsibility not to bring shame to their companions. People need to be careful, for it is not necessary for members to be close or know each other in a group.

2.3.3 Politeness and face

The modern Chinese expression “limao” (礼貌) means manner, courtesy and politeness (Song, 2000) originating from the ancient Chinese word “li” (礼) (Gao, 1997). In ancient China, social hierarchy is rigid. Every social members should follow “li” to maintain a harmonious society. China is a family-based country and family harmony is principal for every Chinese (Song, 2000). Politeness is a standard norm of observance in order to create a harmonious society. Although Chinese social structure has changed, this basic standard still stands (Song, 2000). Therefore, in modern China, politeness still plays a vital role in instructing people in how to behave in public and even in private (Song, 2000). Appropriate behavior includes the avoidance of awkward moments and the maintenance of face. For Zhang (2009), politeness contributes to the progress of human civilization, which is a momentous social norm for human beings and also stipulates their acts.

Face is closely interrelated to politeness in social interaction (Gao, 1997). “Face in Chinese culture plays a very vital role in the established social code” (Song, 2000:21). To circumstantiate, Chinese coming from a lower social class need to show their respect, stay humble and courteous to those belonging to a higher class. Showing politeness to someone actually implies an attempt to take care of someone’s face, while showing respect signifies the goal of enhancing and maintaining one’s face (Gao, 1997). Hence to some degree, face is a part of politeness.

Owing to disparate cultures, the understanding of politeness differs between China and the Western world (Song, 2000). Thus attentions need to be paid to cultural differences and distinct interpretation of politeness as some acts may be easily misunderstood. Employees in the tourism industry are required to show their care for Chinese cultural values and their politeness, as misunderstandings and negative attitudes towards Chinese tourists could make them lose face (Tsang, 2011). Language and culture supplement each other, and for this reason, the words that people use are distinct from culture to culture (Yu, 2013). Politeness as a non-detachable part of social interaction is a manifestation of discourse. Since most Chinese people are sensitive towards face, workers in the tourism industry/service industry should pay attention to the words they use (Liu, 2008). Especially, there is a need to stress the significance of diverse ways to present politeness between China and Western countries.

Leech proposed six politeness principals (Tact Maxim, Generosity Maxim, Approbation Maxim, Modesty Maxim, Agreement Maxim and Sympathy Maxim), which became a cornerstone in the West world (Li, 2015). The Tact Maxim refers to reducing the loss of others and enhancing their profit. The Generosity Maxim means to avoid despising others as much as possible and decreasing one’s own profit. The Approbation Maxim relates to averting to look down on others and seizing every chance to praise others. The Modesty Maxim aims to commend ourselves as less as possible and degrade ourselves. The Agreement Maxim instructs people to decrease the possibility of disagreeing with others but to reach an agreement with others. The Sympathy Maxim is associated with lessening dislike of others and conveying sympathy to others. Nevertheless in China, Gu’s politeness meet Chinese culture better, and he brings forth five norms: to respect others but belittle ourselves; to greet

someone with the in right title; to speak in a euphemistic way; to minimize harm to others and benefit them; and to try hard to achieve agreement (Zhang, 2012). Leech and Gu's principals look similar, whereas differences exist in some points. For example, the nature of modesty differs between Gu's and Leech's. In the west, being humble is to minimize praise to oneself. Yet in China, it is to praise others. Also social language varies between China and the west. For instance, when leave a host's house after dinner, western people would say: "Thanks for a great evening", however Chinese would say: "I am sorry that I have given you so much trouble" (Zhang, 2012). People from the west world would express their appreciation to be polite, while Chinese people would "apologize" to convey their politeness. In addition, when inviting someone, western people would say "come if you want to" (Zhang, 2012). But for Chinese people, such an invitation does not seem wholehearted enough since in an exaggerated way it is not hospitable enough.

In order to avoid misunderstanding and dissatisfaction caused by culture difference, people who work in tourism and the service industry should follow Chinese politeness principals. Among Gu's five politeness principals, three of them should be emphasized when providing service to Chinese tourists. The first one is to respect them and belittle ourselves. This principal is a modesty norm, whose core is to praise others. The appreciation would earn Chinese tourists face. The second one is to minimize harm to others and benefit them. According to this principal, when communicating with Chinese tourists, it is best for service providers to speak in a hospitable and exaggerated way. The last one is to achieve agreement. This aims to reach a harmonious relationship. Before expressing disagreement, employees working in the tourism industry should praise Chinese tourists first.

2.4 Saving face strategies towards face losing

Losing face is inescapable in interactions. And it is more or less subsistent when customers interact with service providers. Therefore how to save face is consequential for those who engage in the tourism industry. In this section, two facets are explored. These strategies are later linked with the data collected from interviews in discussion chapter.

2.4.1 Strategies regarding FTAs

FTAs occur frequently so that strategies have to be worked out. Brown and Levinson (1978) provided five ways for people to handle FTAs: bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record, do not do the FTA. The researchers (1978) mention that face is vulnerable for bilateral communicators so that finding out these five strategies would reduce face damage.

A. Bald on-record strategy

When a speaker takes bald on-record strategies, one directly brings forward his request or demand to the listener and shows his or her intention without any redress (Zhu, 2012). For Brown and Levinson (1978), by bald on-record they mean that behaving daringly and expressing in a straight, explicit and simple way without any ambiguity. For instance, saying ‘bring it to me’ as a request. Although the listener may be shocked by the speaker or feel uncomfortable by using this strategy, it can be understood in some situations. For example, for the purpose of being efficient, it is understandable to set the demand of face aside temporarily in such situations when the proportion of damaging a listener’s face is small, and when a speaker has superior power over the listener (Brown and Levinson, 1978). After exploration Liu (2007) supplements two situations: 1. when it is in an urgent situation or there is limited time, and 2. in restricted ways of communication.

This type of strategy is commonly found with people who know each other very well, and are very comfortable in their environment, such as close friends and family (Cao, 2004). Otherwise bald conversation may result in an embarrassing moment.

B. Positive politeness strategy

Positive politeness is beneficial for the listener’s positive face, which is the impression they want to give to others (Brown and Levinson, 1978). Besides, positive politeness strategies are communicative ways of building solidarity, emphasizing closeness between the speaker and the listener. (Shang, 2010). In order to employ this strategy, some methods could be used. For example, the speaker tries to satisfy the listener’s positive face by emphasizing the common interests and desires shared with the listener in one way or another (Zhu, 2012). Similarly,

Brown and Levinson (1978) hold the view that positive politeness is conducted in two major ways: claiming common ground between speaker and listener, for example, to seek agreement, to presuppose common ground or to avoid disagreement; the second, conveying that the speaker and listener are co-operators, for instance, to assert or presuppose the speaker's knowledge of and concern for the listener's wants, to make a promise or offer, to be optimistic, to include both speaker and listener in the activity, to give reasons and assume or assert reciprocity.

This is usually seen occurring in groups of friends, or where people in a given social situation know each other fairly well. It usually tries to minimize the distance between them by expressing friendliness and solid interest in the listener's need to be respected (Cao, 2004).

C. Negative politeness strategy

Negative politeness benefits a listener's negative face, which shows her or his want for self-determination (Brown and Levinson, 1978). Zhu (2012) stated that a speaker shows respect to a listener's freedom of action and right not to be imposed on, by trying to satisfy the listener's negative face. This redress shuns the inconvenience that would bring to listener, and its feature is humility by carefully listening to others. Furthermore, this strategy also includes being conventionally indirect, using hedges, being pessimistic, minimizing the imposition, giving deference, apologizing etc. (Brown and Levinson, 1978).

The main focus for using this strategy is to assume that speakers may be imposing on listeners, and intruding their space. Therefore, these automatically assume that there may be some social distance or awkwardness in a situation. (Cao, 2004).

D. Off record strategy

Off-record politeness refers to indirect strategies, which avoid making any explicit imposition on the listener (Brown and Levinson, cited by Shang, 2010). Brown and Levinson (1978) noted that this strategy includes metaphor and irony, rhetorical questions, understatement and so on. Apart from it, Liu (2007) concluded there were fifteen kinds of strategies: give hints, give associations, presuppose, understate, overstate, use tautologies, use contradictions, be

ironic, use metaphor, use rhetorical questions, be ambiguous, be vague, over-generalize, displace the listener and be incomplete.

This strategy averts the threat caused by language and also represents care to others. It is used when the risk of loss of face is great but not too great as to absolutely prohibit the face-threatening act (Cao, 2004).

E. Do not do FTA

It is the most polite strategy because it totally avoids the FTA. In some cases, the speaker may realize that there is a probability of offending another's face once the speech act is made. Thus, keeping from speaking anything can ensure that maximum politeness can be maintained. Service providers should say nothing if they have different opinions.

It is impossible to avert some acts or words that could potentially lose face for tourists during their trips. Hence, it demonstrates the importance of tourism employees' behaviors and words when they interact with Chinese. There are two strategies that can directly demonstrate local employees' care for Chinese tourists' face during their interactions. A positive politeness approach focuses on saving Chinese tourists' positive face in order to build a harmonious relationship. The desire for friendly communication not only saves Chinese tourists' face but also earns them face. A Negative politeness method emphasizes avoiding conflicts between locals and Chinese visitors, which allows these travelers to enjoy their freedom. This can deliver native workers' respect so that it does not lead to a loss of face.

2.4.2 Recovery of service failure in terms of losing face

Services are intangible activities involving customers' participation (Grönroos, 1994). Service is not a touchable product but the convenience or a series of activities that people offer. Failing to meet customers' expectation would lead to service failure (Grönroos, 1994). Furthermore Keaveney (1995) noted that service failure comes into being when customers are not satisfied with a service a company provides, and consequently this would make dissatisfied purchasers switch to another firm. It is apparent that improvement of satisfaction is conducive to retaining customers, whereas unhappy service experiences would result in

losing customers. In the field of tourism, losing face disappoints tourists. It is a service failure if tourism workers' words and deeds dissatisfy tourists. The loss of face belongs to service failure.

Service's intangibility causes uncertainty, which makes it hard to control. Besides it is possible to disappoint customers in any moment or any segment during the service procedure. As Bitner et al. (1990) also argued, service failure is a lower service quality in the service contact process. Service failure is brought about only if customers regard the service as in lower quality. One's perceptions and feelings are difficult to tell or define so that service quality is uncontrolled. It is hard to manage acts that cause losing face. To explain this further, Brinter and Mohr (1995) clarified two kinds of service failure—namely, the service outcome and the process of service delivery. Generally speaking, service outcome failure means that customers are dissatisfied with the outcome, or the outcome does not meet their needs. This result is unacceptable for them. The process of service delivery failure indicates that there is a flaw during the service process. The attitude or manner of employees may frustrate customers when delivering a service. Losing face is probably produced in these two service failure because tourists' self-esteem is hurt or ends up with in embarrassment. Moreover, Lee et al. (2013:389) carried out research and found out that “the fairness of the service outcome, the interpersonal treatment during the encounter and the setting of the service encounter—whether in private or in public—will influence consumer face”. Since “face-work is front-stage behavior” (Lee et al., 2013:390), a positive image presented in public could earn people face, while an unexpected negative outcome would shame them especially in public as everyone knows the result. However, positive results satisfy the service receiver. A friendly interpersonal relationship between tourists and service providers means good quality service, which also may earn consumers respect.

It is crucial to regain consumers' trust and satisfaction. Remedies for failed service are of great important to fix a failure, which saves customers' face as well. Therefore scholars dedicate themselves to research to work out strategies to remedy and to prevent these occurrences. Service failure is a double-edged sword. According to Miller et al. (2000:388), “it is a service failure that provides the opportunity to recover from the mistake and a second

change to provide a positive service experience”. Although service failure is a weakness for any company, it also could be a strength if good strategies are employed. It also makes sense that good redress not merely saves tourists’ face but also earns them face.

About recovery, Smith et al. (1999) came up with two approaches to redress: proactive recovery and reactive recovery. The former intends to prevent and react to employees’ own initiatives when they realize failure. The other aims at consumer’s complaints as an unsuccessful outcome. This tactic is discussed from the angle of positivity. It guides service personnel to repair the mistake in due course. By doing this, face has been lost but could be remedied in time. Miller et al. (2000) proposed to find apt and specific ways to solve problems, by which they mean to figure out the failure first, analyze it and finally apply the appropriate solutions to redress it. Responding to their proposal, Du and Fan (2012) released recoveries to regain face aimed at tourism/service industry. At first, analyze the reason that causes losing face. Make good use of face to give tourists face by praising, showing respect and presenting admiration of them. Afterwards, avoid service failure, to the greatest extent, that could result in the loss of face by improving service procedures, complementing service quality by training and inspecting workers. Finally, if service has already failed, it is best way to compensate, and simultaneously take care of tourists’ emotion and face damage. Comfort them and earn forgiveness to lower the inclination to complain. In addition to the two angles mentioned above, Miller et al. put forward three ways. They (2000) stated that strategies are able to be divided into two levels: psychological recovery and tangible recovery. To make up from a psychological aspect, it is useful to empathize and apologize in order to comfort the service recipient. Tangible recovery includes compensation or discount. Lee et al. (2013) also agreed with this division, they mention two key points—interpersonal treatment (attitude) and compensation. They argued that customers are more satisfied with the recovery if employees are friendly and polite. What is more, they claimed that consumers are more positive towards service quality if they receive compensation.

According to Zhang and Gao (2011), successful remedies contribute to happiness and satisfaction. They also point out that the degree of recovery has a positive impact on satisfaction, whereas it has a negative influence on dissatisfaction. As a consequence, it is

conducive to earning face.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided a definition of ‘Chinese face’ with reference to the relevant literature. The importance of face for Chinese was emphasized and that face is deeply rooted in Chinese culture and people’s lives. People lose face or earn face in social interactions as well as in tourism activities.

To investigate how Chinese people’s face works within the Norwegian tourism industry, the literature review explored in three dimensions. First, it presented the relationship between face and consumption behavior. It included face’s influence on consumer behavior, characteristics of face consumer behavior and face and face-driven consumption in tourism. Second, it demonstrated acts that would result in face losing, and factors that lead to Chinese face sensitivity and relationships between politeness and face. Third, it noted strategies to save face. Redress was elaborated from two aspects: Brown and Levinson’s five strategies as well as some remedies in terms of recovery of service failure.

In the following chapter, the research questions and research methods are discussed.

Chapter III Methodology

This chapter presents the research design, including the type of research undertaken for this thesis as well as the reasons. In addition, the chapter indicates the reasons for adopting specific methods to address the research questions. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the role of the researcher as well as consideration of ethics.

3.1 Research questions

Research questions are the cornerstone of a thesis, and the provisionality they indicate is penetrated throughout the research process (Robson, 2011). Research questions represent the problems or ideals that a researcher attempts to address or verify by carrying out research.

The research that informs this thesis aimed to improve Chinese tourists' satisfaction and promote Norwegian tourism for these tourists by studying and analyzing Chinese face. There were three research questions.

RQ1: How does the 'showing-off' feature of the concept of face influence Chinese tourists decision to travel to Norway?

It is meaningful to find out why Chinese tourists decide to visit a foreign country—Norway even if it is more expensive than domestic travel. Among several characteristics of face, showing off is significant because it is also a motivation for face consumption. In addition, it is linked to one of the features of Chinese consumer behavior—buying branded and costly products. Consuming expensive commodities shows one's purchasing ability, which is a way to show off as well. Thus, if the relationship between the trait 'showing off' and the motivation for Chinese people to visit Norway were well studied, it would be helpful for promoting and advertising Norwegian tourism.

RQ2: What behavior leads to Chinese tourists losing face when they travel in Norway?

For thousands years ago, face has been an inherited cultural trait. Many Chinese are face sensitive. It is possible that Norwegian tourism industry professionals may hurt

Chinese visitors' face due to different understandings of politeness and face. Therefore, with a goal of enhancing their satisfaction, determining, which kind of deeds and words make Chinese tourists lose or earn face is important.

RQ3: What strategies for saving face would be better accepted by Chinese tourists?

The loss of face disappoints Chinese people. Consequently, face loss could decrease satisfaction and may influence Chinese people's decision-making with regard to visiting Norway. In order to better satisfy Chinese tourists, it was necessary to find out what strategies they prefer and with which they are more comfortable.

3.2 Research design

From a theoretical framework angle, the interpretive paradigm was adopted to design the research. An interpretive approach emphasizes on interpreting and understanding people's behavior or a social phenomenon (Matthews and Ross, 2010). Researchers attempt to “‘get inside’ the minds of subjects and see the world from their point of view” (Veal, 2011:32). This is exactly the same as the goal of this thesis—to investigate Chinese face and tourists in depth. The Chinese cultural concept of face and Chinese tourists' behavior were interpreted and understood in order to find out the relationship Chinese tourists and Norwegian tourism.

The research design guides how to put the research questions into practice and address them. Research questions have a close relationship with methods employed in a project. According to Robson (2011), Blaike divides research questions into a ‘what’, ‘why’, ‘how’ typology. Specifically, ‘what’ questions mainly describe features of the researched group. ‘Why’ questions aim at providing explanations and understandings. ‘How’ questions indicate the relationship between two objects or more. In this thesis, research questions combined with ‘how’ and ‘what’ questions. It was more appropriate to use qualitative research methods in this project because qualitative research questions “...are more open-ended and tend to address ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions” (Robson,2011:60). In addition, qualitative research method is better for those who carry out tourism research as it makes it possible for theories to guide the early phases of research and achieve findings in the end (Kevin and Dan, 2010).

A quantitative research method was not accommodated in this thesis. Quantitative research

methods are usually survey- and questionnaire-based, with a focus on numerical results (Merriam, 2009). Hence, a quantitative research method fits scientific research better. The limitation of the survey method is that there is less possibility to find out the exact reasons why participants give answers. A questionnaire's limitation is its difficulty in making sure respondents completely comprehend the meaning of questions (Kevin and Dan, 2010). A qualitative research approach "aims to achieve 'depth' rather than 'breadth' (Blaxter et al., 2006). It is able to solve 'what' and 'how' question and come up with some new ideas. Unlike a quantitative research approach, a qualitative research method focuses on the information that words (both oral and literal terms), images and sounds are empowered to convey rather than on numbers (Veal, 2011). Merriam (2009:5) also argued that "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences". The research points out that interpreting a behavior or phenomenon is a significant way to address research questions. In this thesis, the goal was to go into "depth" to find out how face influences Chinese tourists and some remedies towards the loss of face. Besides, a quantitative method was less appropriate than a qualitative approach for this project because of expected small numbers of participants in this study.

3.3 Sampling and data collection

3.3.1 Sampling

Sampling is a process that selects certain people to participate in research (Veal, 2011). There are several sampling methods which are divided into two kinds—probability and non-probability sampling (Blaxter et al., 2006). Non-probability methods are adopted when the researcher carries out qualitative research aimed at going in 'depth'. Hence, non-probability approaches were employed in the research that informs this thesis.

Among non-probability samplings, purposeful sampling, which is also named purposive or judgment sampling (Patton, 2002), was deemed best for this thesis. Purposeful sampling is "generally associated with small, in-depth studies with research designs that are based on the gathering of qualitative data and focused on the exploration and interpretation of experiences and perceptions" (Matthews and Rose, 2010:167). The researched subjects are selected

because of a purposive characteristic, which enables the researcher to address research questions. Samples of this method were in the field of the researcher's interest so that their experiences or feelings could be interpreted to solve research questions.

In this thesis, all participants were selected because of a purposive feature. They came from China, and they chose Norway as a destination country. In addition, these Chinese traveled in groups. To investigate in depth, Chinese tourists' feeling about face and experiences in Norway were collected and analyzed. In particular, how showing off, a face characteristic, motivated Chinese people to travel to Norway was anticipated to be understood.

3.3.2 Data collection

In this thesis, interviews were used to collect data. Interviewing is a research method aimed at getting data by asking questions or having discussing with sample participants (Blaxter, et al., 172), which involves face-to-face interaction (Jennings, 2005). This approach not only can make sure interviewees understand what the interviewer asks, but also enables the researcher to directly gain answers to research questions. Further, the interviewer can ask about a particular question or topic to gain insight into participants' ideas, perceptions and feelings (Botterill and Platenkamp, 2012). In this project, Chinese visitors' opinions and feelings have priority over other information. Hence, interviews were deemed the best way to gain data.

Interviews are divided into three types: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Among them, structured interview lack reflexivity because questions are already set, while unstructured interview are too open and conversational (Jennings, 2005). As for semi-structured interview, these focus on a set of topics rather than questions. It is "associated with the collection of qualitative social data when the researcher is interested in people's experiences, behavior and understandings and how and why they experience and understand the social world in this way" (Matthews and Rose, 2010:221). To some degree, it is conducive to explore Chinese tourists' experiences and understand face issues so as to answer the research questions. Therefore, semi-structured interview was adopted.

In order to get access to Chinese tourists, the author asked for permission to interview the

Chinese tour groups at a Chinese restaurant. In return, the researcher helped to serve these tourists for free. When groups got to the restaurant, it was effective and necessary to explain the Master's research project to tourist guides of the Chinese tour groups and to ask for their help. The tourist guides were kind and friendly. The interviewer was introduced to their group members by the tourist guides and allowed to interview the tourists. Interviews were conducted in restaurant, in the city center of Alta where they roam around it and on the way to airport.

There were some main questions per research question. To address RQ1, two key questions were asked as below:

1. Many people think that travel to Norway can show their wealth. (Some people think that traveling to Norway, a country whose consumption level is high, can show they have more ability to enjoy life.) What is your opinion?
- 2: Do you think is it worthy spending a great amount of money traveling to Norway to win others' admiration? (What can you get from it?)

Regarding with RQ2, the two main questions were:

- 1: 1: When you travel in Norway, do you have uncomfortable moments interacting with local employees? Could you please tell us the story?
- 2: Have you experienced any culture differences that make you feel embarrassed? What were they?

Concerning RQ3, two leading questions were:

- If local workers make you uncomfortable, did they do something to attempt to make you feel better? If yes, what did they do?
- 2: What else do you think could make you less embarrassed?

All questions were asked in Chinese in order to make sure interviewees totally understood questions and to be able to communicate freely. In the process of interview, words were used with careful consideration because of the sensitive topic—showing off. Chinese are sensitive towards face issues. Therefore, it is not wise to directly ask them if they can earn face by showing off—spending a great amount of money traveling to Norway. It is impolite and

disrespectful to judge someone as a show-off. Although showing one's wealth can earn face, Chinese people are reluctant to be described as a show-off. To avoid embarrassing Chinese tourists, it was more appropriate to use language in a euphemistic way. For example, use of commendatory terms, such as 'show wealth' and 'show ability', instead of mentioning the word 'show off'. Also, it is better to talk about the topic in the third person—their opinions towards other people's views.

During the process of collecting data, some interviewees were reluctant to be audio recorded. The interviewer made notes of these interviews without being recorded in detail. After data collection, audio recordings were transcribed into Chinese, while notes were compiled into Chinese as well. In order to retain the original meanings, all transcriptions were not be translated into English but in Chinese in 15 pages.

3.4 Data analysis

Analyzing qualitative data is a process starts when a researcher begins asking research questions, and continues through concept thinking, data gathering and finally to data reflecting (Matthews and Rose, 2010). As for data collection, interviews were the key method. After collecting data, it was necessary to transcribe the audio recordings. In the period of analyzing data, the main task was to analyze the transcriptions. In analyzing the data, the process aimed to address the three research questions.

Content analysis was used to analyze the transcribed interview data. Content analysis is growing fast in social research (Neuendorf, 2002), and it has been more popular in tourism research (Hall and Valentin, 2005). Content analysis focuses on analyzing messages or texts. As Neuendorf (2002) indicates, content analysis is suitable for all contexts, which includes interpersonal and group messaging. Hence, this analysis is applicable for face-to-face interviews. Also the work of transcribing is a time consuming work. It is therefore of great importance to focus on key points or research questions attempting to minimize the amount of work as much as possible (Blaxter et al., 2006).

Through this analysis, different understandings of concepts in tourism can be identified (Camprubi and Corona, 2016; Hall and Valentin, 2005). Moreover, it not only helps to

determine tendencies and point out changes with the passing of time, but it is also helpful to find out new ideas or opinions ((Matthewse and Rose, 2010). In this thesis, other researchers' ideas are adopted. Content analysis was used to examine responses and to check if changes existed. It was also useful to collect some new ideas from the interviewees.

To analyze data, interview transcripts were coded. The first step was to read transcripts. The second step was to extract meanings commenting in the margins of pages, which helped to reveal themes. The third step was to compare these comments and code them. The next step was to review these codes. The last step was to compile codes into higher and lower levels. The data was categorized into three main categories, which were formed in subcategories. The main categories are motivations for visiting Norway, and respectively, face losing and face saving strategies. 'Motivation for visiting Norway' was divided into perceptions about showing off, acquisition and attitude towards the trip, experience sharing and emotion and identity and taste. Subcategories of 'losing face' were unhappy experiences and culture differences, while those of 'face saving strategies' were local employees' remedies and better redress.

3.5 Role as a researcher

As a tourism student in UiT, The Arctic University of Norway, Campus Alta, the researcher had been studying here for more than one year. During the study period, the researcher had opportunities to engage in and understand Norwegian culture. Also, the researcher, a student who majored in tourism studies, was familiar with Norwegian tourism. As a Chinese, Chinese culture is not a difficulty, especially the cultural concept of face, which was also the theme of my bachelor thesis. Although there are some articles about Chinese the cultural concept of face written in English, the number of articles written in Chinese is greater than those in English. Chinese is the native language for the author so that such literature was not an obstruction. Language difficulties did not impede the researcher when collecting data from Chinese tourists.

3.6 Research ethics

Ethical approval from NSD (Data Protection Official for Research) was sought and obtained before data collection. Therefore, a notification form was created with a written consent form

and interview guide attached in order to obtain approval. The project was registered, and the project number is 48691.

Before interviewing, it was necessary to inform interviewees that the research was associated with a Master's thesis project. In addition, a consent form was handed to them to read and sign. The English version of the consent form was translated into Chinese for the tourists so it could be easily read and understood. Interviewees were asked for permission to be audio recorded. Concerning confidentiality, personal data of the participants was mentioned and all participants were anonymized.

After the completion of thesis, all data collected will be stored in a file with a password. The file will be stored in a private computer protected with a password as well. Personal data was not involved in the thesis.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the methodological approach was presented. It started with research questions, which indicated what the thesis was about. It was followed by research design, which revealed that this thesis used qualitative research based on an interpretive paradigm. As for sampling, purposeful sampling was adopted. Chinese tourists who traveled to Norway in groups were interviewed. After collection, data were transcribed into Chinese. The transcripts were coded into three categories and subcategories. Penultimately the chapter addressed the role of the researcher and the process of obtaining ethical approval.

The next chapter presents the findings of the collected data.

Chapter IV Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the interviewees' background information and presents findings regarding the three research questions. All interviewees were Chinese speaking tourists, who had traveled in groups to Northern Norway. In total, 26 people were interviewed. The purpose of these interviews was to explore three fields: how a feature of face—showing off, influenced Chinese tourists visiting Norway, what behavior would lead to the loss of face and what strategies would save them face.

4.2 Background information of the interviewees

Some background information, such as gender, occupation and age (see Table 1), was gathered at the beginning of interviews in case these data made a difference to the research. For example, one's occupation to some degree can indicate one's education level as well as their social status. It is of great importance to ensure interviewees being unable to be identified. It is also necessary to follow NSD's (Data Protection Official for Research) instruction to protect interviewees' personal information. Hence, the interviewees are quoted using a number instead of their names for the sake of confidentiality.

Table 1. Tourists' basic information

Tourists no.	Gender	Age	Occupation
1	female	60	doctor
2	male	65	economist
3	female	28	office clerk
4	female	29	kindergarener
5	male	49	businessman
6	female	38	accountant
7	male	50	teacher
8	female	51	teacher

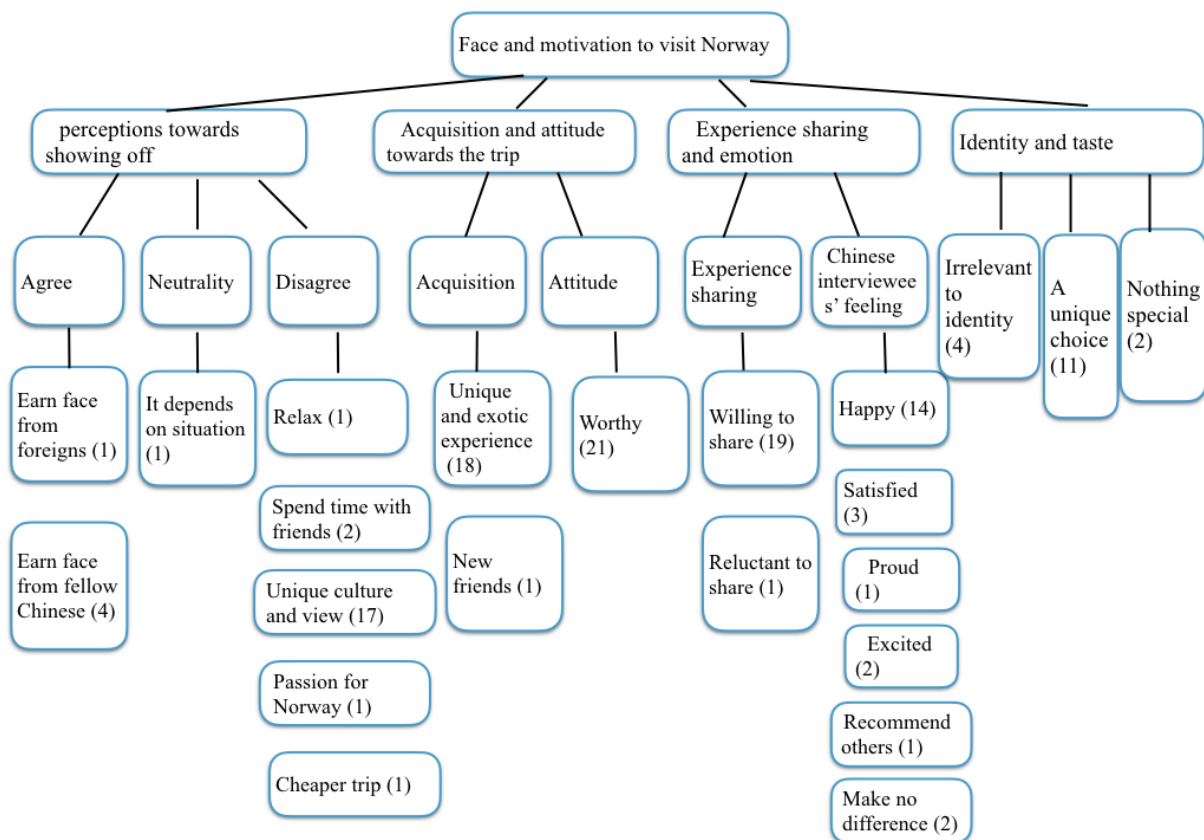
Tourists no.	Gender	Age	Occupation
9	female	50	teacher
10	male	52	teacher
11	female	30	manager
12	male	70	teacher
13	female	62	retired staff
14	female	40	teacher
15	male	60	civil servant
16	female	35	office clerk
17	female	59	retired staff
18	male	52	retired staff
19	female	59	freelancer
20	female	30	civil servant
21	female	45	teacher
22	female	49	office clerk
23	female	48	teacher
24	male	39	businessman
25	male	58	retired staff
26	female	62	retired staff

Among the 26 Chinese tourists, nine were male. As for females, they accounted for around 65%, which is 17 people. They ranged in age from 20-70. There were four Chinese tourists in each of the age groups 20 to 30, 31 to 40 and 61 to 70, six between 41 and 50 and eight between 51 and 60. Most of them were older than 40 years, the age group 51 to 60 was especially represented. Many interviewees had reasonably well paid jobs, such as doctor, economist, civil servant and teacher and so on. Nine people worked as teachers—the job that had the largest proportion of interviewees. There were five visitors who were retired, three

who were office clerks, two who were businessmen, and two who were civil servants. The rest, five people were respectively a doctor, an economist, an accountant, a manager and a freelancer.

4.3 Face and motivation to visit Norway

Figure 1. Overall outline



To address RQ1 (How does the ‘showing-off’ feature of the concept of face influence Chinese tourists’ decision to travel to Norway?), interview questions were put forward around two main themes. One was their attitude towards the opinion that visiting Norway demonstrates a tourist’s wealth. The other one was concerned with their feelings towards the trip. The second theme helped to explore the first one further and find out how Chinese tourists earn face by buying expensive package tours to Norway. It was anticipated that some unexpected ideas might be gathered through that question. Chinese tourists’ answers were subcategorized into four aspects: perceptions about showing off, acquisition and attitude

towards the trip, experience sharing and emotion and identity and taste. The first subcategory—perceptions about showing off, showed whether Chinese tourists agreed that visiting Norway is a way to show off or not. In addition to show off, it also identified what motivated them to travel to Norway. The second one—acquisition and attitude towards the trip, reflected whether they were satisfied with the trip or not. It also could show if their expectations were met in the tour. The third one—experience sharing and emotion, indicated which motivation could earn them face in social interactions. The last one—identify and taste, manifests how they identified themselves. It also investigated if their motivations accorded with their identity/taste. Figure 1 shows findings for these four aspects.

4.3.1 Perceptions about showing off

When asked their opinions regarding whether traveling to Norway demonstrate their wealth, the tourists gave different answers to it. Figure 2 presents the Chinese interviewees' perceptions in relation to this.

There were five informants in total who agreed that traveling to Norway was a way to demonstrate one's wealth. Four people indicated that they felt they earned face when others knew they spent a lot of money traveling to Norway:

“I agree with the idea. Many Chinese would take photos and post them on social media when they travel to European countries, especially a European country like Norway. They would get ‘likes’ after sharing photos. To some degree, these ‘likes’ earn those visitors face because it is not everyone that could come to Norway due to the high cost. The high price result in the fact that those who can visit Norway are from a well-off family or the middle or higher social class” (Informant 2).

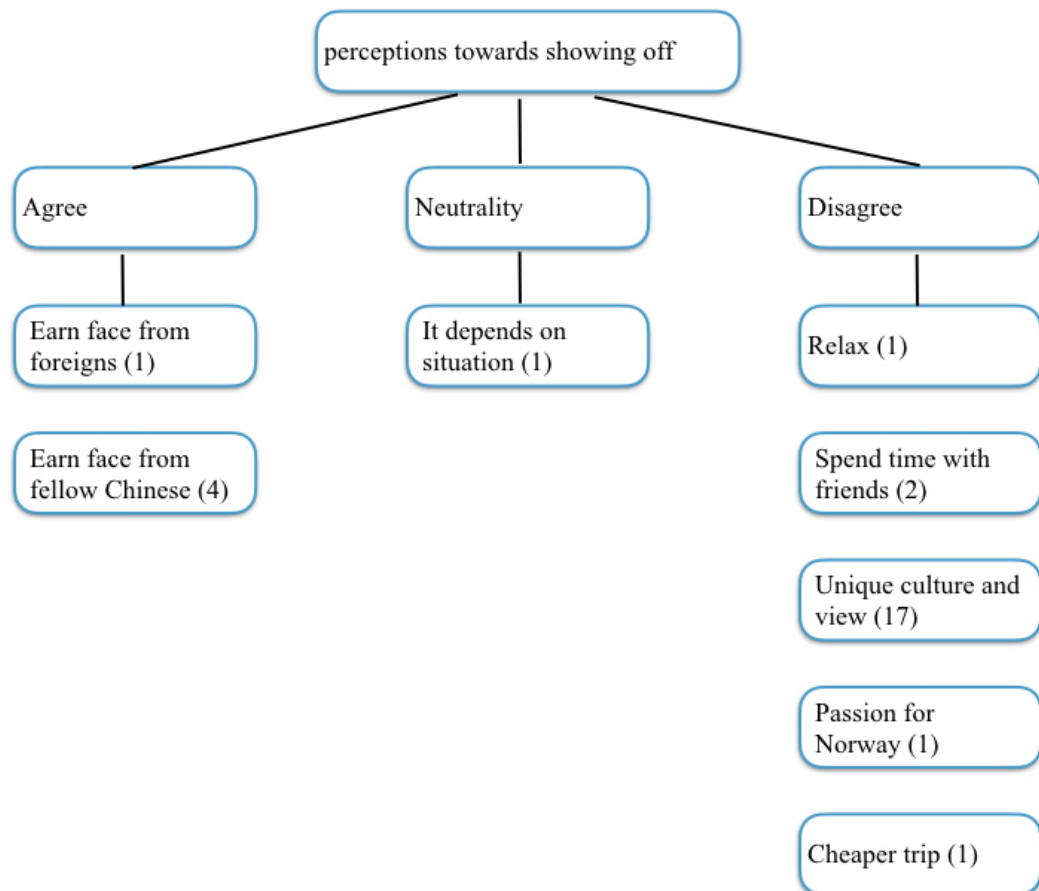
“To some extent it can show wealth since the commodity price is so high in Norway. Therefore people should have enough money to travel to a high-consumption country like Norway” (Informant 4).

“I totally agree. Good economic background is the basic requirement for buying the

costly package tour to Norway—a place, which is so beautiful but also expensive” (Informant 11).

“I agree with the idea, which shows that those visitors have more abilities or money to enjoy life. However it doesn't mean that you could only enjoy your life when you are rich or competent. Sometimes you can still enjoy life even when you spend a little money” (Informant 14).

Figure 2. Informants’ ideas towards showing off



In addition to earning face from fellow Chinese, one interviewee also mentioned that she was given face by local employees:

“It sounds reasonable. Western people may label Chinese people as poor men who cannot afford a trip to Europe before. But now things have changed. There are even Chinese workers in European tourist attractions and shopping malls. These Chinese serve, greet, and talk with us in Mandarin. Why would this happen? It is because Chinese are richer now. Also European businessmen know that they can earn much money from Chinese tourists. It reflects that western people are abandoning their old views of Chinese people. From this point, I am proud of being a Chinese. As a Chinese, I feel that I earn face from foreigners even when I am abroad” (Informant 1).

Their answers demonstrate that visitors need a certain economic foundation to travel to Norway owing to the high consumption level in Norway as well as the expensive package tour. Therefore, visiting Norway is a way showing wealth.

One informant was entangled with the consumption standard and displayed wealth. Finally, she stated that it depended on the situation:

“I am uncertain about it. It depends on which angle you are going to talk from. The consumption level in Northern European countries may be higher than other countries. If you want to come to Norway, for example, you have to pay that much money, which you cannot resist. Living in a second-tier city in China is completely different from living in a big city like Shanghai. Can we say that living in Shanghai is an embodiment of showing off? I do not think so. If you want to live in Shanghai, you have to spend more money compared with living in a second-tier city. Therefore if you come to Norway once for the different landscape, it may be not a way to show wealth. On the contrary, if you visit Norway many times, it is a probably an approach to show off” (Informant 8).

Conversely, the rest of tourists firmly proposed opposite views. The majority (17 interviewees) expressed a willingness and desire to experience a different culture and landscape:

“I can not agree with the saying. We choose Norway as our destination country purely for the special scenery and exotic culture” (Informant 16).

“Absolutely disagree. It is not necessary to care about if others would think that you show off by traveling to Norway. We only want to see the world and have fun. Most importantly, our purpose is to see the different view and hear local stories. We love traveling” (Informant 10).

“Traveling to Norway, you need to have money, time and interest. For me, money is the not most significant because many Chinese are wealthier than before. However they do not necessarily have the time or interest to come to Norway” (Informant 13).

“The backing of economic base is necessary to travel abroad. Nowadays, I think many Chinese can afford an outbound trip. Hence, it is not appropriate to say that traveling to Norway can show people have more ability. Besides some people are wealthy but don't have enough time to enjoy a long-distance trip. Regarding traveling to Norway, the desire to experience the culture and views were the most important motivations” (Informant 21).

“Yeah, those who visit Norway should have some abilities. The commodity price is high in Norway. Also the package tour is very costly. Thus an economic foundation is needed. However those abilities are not the most influential factors. We decided to come only for the unique Northern European view” (Informant 26).

Answers quoted above indicate that the willingness or interest to experience a special culture and scenery outweighs other factors, such as economic foundation, although they agreed that visiting Norway requires a certain economic base. It also suggests that Chinese are wealthier than before.

In addition to willingness and interest, there were two tourists who cherished the time spent

with friends:

“I can not say I agree. How to explain? Traveling is my personal habit. My friend happens to ask me to travel to Norway so that I come here” (Informant 9).

“It (traveling to Norway) could show wealth. Indeed, money is the base for traveling abroad. But, it is not the most important factor. It is of great significance to have different experiences as well as spending time with my friends” (Informant 5).

One interviewee disagreed because the main purpose of the trip was to relax:

“Personally I don't think outbound trip shows others how wealthy I am. Nevertheless, I cannot deny that it is necessary to have a certain economic base in order to travel to Norway. The motivation driving me to visit Norway was to relax. From the subjective angle, perhaps others think that it is your intention to show off. But I do not use it as a way to show my wealth” (Informant 3).

The passion for Norway is another reason for the disagreement:

“For me, the goal of visiting Norway was not to show my wealth. Instead, the passion for Norway impels me to come. There is a song called ‘Norwegian forestry’ in China. Although the song is mainly about expressing feeling, it arises curiosity about Norway, and also leads people to imagine what it is. Also, many people regard Northern Europe as the last pure land in virtue of relatively simple culture which has been less invaded by other cultures. I am fascinated by it. If I want to show my wealth, i maybe go to America or Britain to go shopping” (Informant 6).

One Chinese traveler pointed out that a cheap trip contradicts showing off:

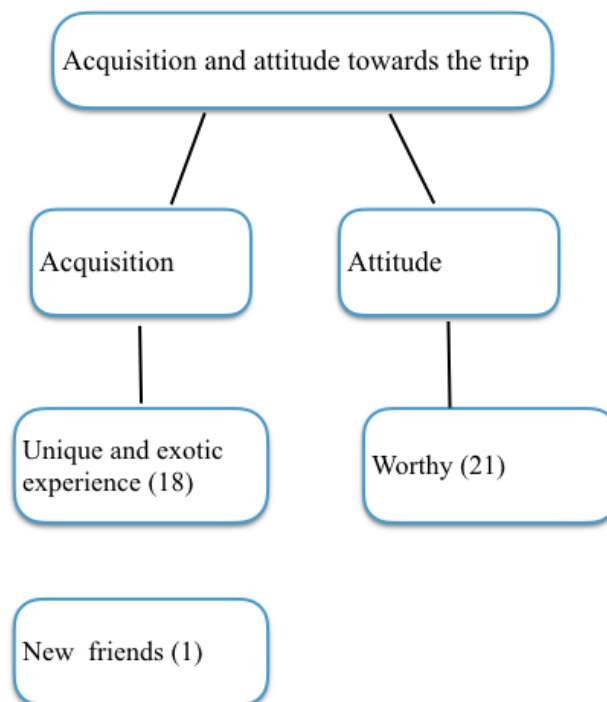
“I don't agree. For instance, a backpacker could have a money-saving trip, which does not necessarily need capability (wealth). Yet a stronger capability is wanted if people

join a group tour which involves several countries” (Informant 15).

4.3.2 Acquisition and attitude towards the trip

Interviews also explored what these tourists wanted to acquire, and if they were satisfied with the trip or not. The questions helped to gain access to responses regarding what is more important for them to travel to Norway in order to know about what would earn them face. It is also possible to find out if their goals were achieved or not, and if they were satisfied or not by their attitude towards the package tour. Figure 3 show what they acquired in the trip and their attitude.

Figure 3. Acquisition and Attitude



Eighteen interviewees were asked what they gained from the trip while they were in Norway. All of them responded that the most meaningful thing they gained was the unique and exotic experience including landscape, architecture, culture, food and pleasant emotions:

“ (I get) a novel feeling and a distinct experience. For instance, when I stepped out of the Arctic Circle, I did feel that I stepped on the Arctic. It is so fancy to have the experience of being in Arctic” (Informant 9).

“It is now the fifth day. We went to North Cape. The environment, scenery, architecture and transportation are all not bad” (Informant 14).

“The view of nature is pretty beautiful. It makes me relaxed and pleasant” (Informant 18).

“We visited North Cape, which is picturesque. It is so quiet and beautiful like a picture. The midnight sun for us is so unique and special, which is what we look for” (Informant 21).

“We tried local food that is different from ours. We saw the unique Northern European view such as the midnight sun. We also experienced different culture” (Informant 22).

“The architecture here is different (from ours). Houses in Northern Norway look like those in fairy tales. Trees are many and beautiful here. The sky is blue and the air is so fresh. All these make me feel happy” (Informant 26).

One of those 18 tourists expressed that making new friends was of great importance as well:

“I made new friends. The trip also broadened my horizons because I saw many different things, such as landscape, culture and food etc” (Informant 12).

During interviews, twenty-one tourists talked about their feeling or attitudes towards their trip to Norway. Almost everyone agreed that it was worth spending a vast amount of money in order to visit Norway for a variety of reasons. They were positive about their journey and never regretted coming to Norway, although they paid a lot of money for the tour.

“Personally, I think Northern Europe is a well-developed area whose pace of life is slower. This place is an attractive tourism destination for many Chinese. Hence, it is worthy because it enriches my spirit. Spirit is much more important than money. We can earn money again after spending it. Let’s just enjoy life” (Informant 11).

“It is worth money. It is a once-in-a-lifetime tourism experience. It is worthy no matter how much money I spend on it” (Informant 19).

“It is pretty worthy. Money can be earned again. I would regret if I missed the chance to see such beautiful and different view” (Informant 21).

“Of course, it is worthy. There is an old Chinese saying: ‘read one thousand books; travel ten thousand miles’. It is of importance that outbound travel not only expands our mind but also teaches us something. It is also a success to have enough money to travel to Norway. It is also a self-affirmation” (Informant 2).

The trip was worthwhile when these tourists considered it on their own terms. One tourist still said it is worthy when she considered it from others’ position:

“It is worthwhile. You see, more Chinese tourists come, more Chinese tourist guides and shopping guides are hired in Europe. It creates more job opportunities for our compatriots. Of course, it is more convenient for us to travel abroad” (Informant 1).

4.3.3 Experience sharing and emotion

Face can only be earned and lost in a social interaction. Sharing photos and stories with others

engages tourists in a social interaction. Furthermore, sharing experiences can be utilized as a way to show one's wealth/ability. Twenty Chinese tourists were asked whether they would share their experience of the trip. Some of them also expressed their reasons as to whether or not they would share photos and anecdotes of the tour. In order to find out if face was gained by virtue of communication, a vital part in interview was how they felt towards their friends' reactions.

With respect to the willingness to share what they had seen and experienced, nineteen tourists were happy to share photos that they took:

“Sure. I am bound to take pictures of such beautiful scenery. First, I would share with friends. Second, I am self-satisfied by taking photos. Third, I tend to promote this amazing country ” (Informant 4).

“Definitely I would take photos for recalling memory. Every moment is our memory. This beautiful place is worth recommending to friends” (Informant 7).

“Absolutely, good things deserve to be shared with others. I will post photos online once I get access to the Internet” (Informant 14).

“Yeah I would. After all, it is a rare chance to travel to Norway so that I should seize the opportunity” (Informant 18).

In addition to photos, some people would also share information about other aspects, for example, the local cultures they experienced and special foods they tasted during the tour:

“I may also share local culture and art. The church here, for instance, is very unique” (Informant 11).

“Oh, food. Salmon here is so tasty. It is really yummy. All salmon dishes are amazing” (Informant 14).

“(I would share) anecdotes and funny, small stories. Everything only if it is interesting” (Informant 18).

“It would be my feelings and experience. Also I would like to share with them what our tourist guide shared with us. I would tell them what I regarded as funny” (Informant 19).

Nevertheless only one visitor was reluctant to post any photo on social media:

“I won’t post pictures I took on the trip on ‘Moments’ (a Chinese social media). I think this behavior seems to show off. It depends on the person whether to share photos. I would only talk about or share my trip to Norway when my friends happen to talk about the relative topic” (Informant 2).

To investigate further concerning earning face, some interviewees were asked what would they think if people appreciated their sharing or admiring them. The result is presented in figure 4.

Most interviewees (14 people) expressed that they were pleased when they got a ‘like’ and admiration:

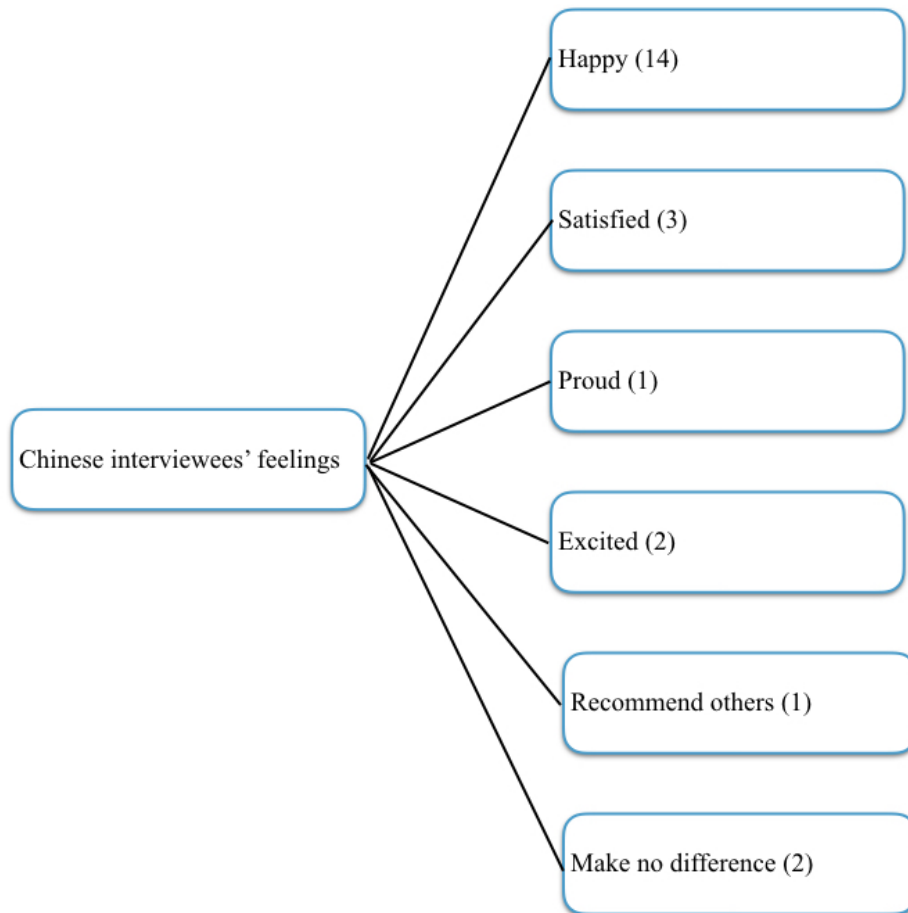
“I would be happy if they acknowledge my talk” (Informant 12).

“I may be happy. It is not only because I could travel to Norway but also I achieve recognition from my friends” (Informant 23).

Three Chinese travelers stated that they felt satisfied with their friends’ admiration. One of them said that she was not only happy but also satisfied if her friends admired her trip to Norway.

“Certainly I would be pleasant at first because they resonate with me. Also I may be satisfied. Everyone deserves a wonderful life since life is short” (Informant 21).

Figure 4. Chinese tourists’ emotion



One who felt satisfied also regarded it as pride:

“(I would be) satisfied, I think, proud as well. After all, it is a very unique experience, which is different from a trip to other places in Asia” (Informant 5).

There were two interviewees who would be excited if they received admiration:

“I would be very excited for being acknowledged by friends” (Informant 18).

“Well, I may be happy and excited” (Informant 26).

One woman would recommend her friends to come:

“If they like my trip I would recommend them to visit Norway. However, many people would consider carefully due to the high tour and commodity price” (Informant 17).

The last two people maintained that other people’s thoughts would not influence them. It did not make any difference even if their friends showed their admiration:

“I think their perspectives have nothing to do with my feelings. The main thing is that I feel happy and satisfied” (Informant 24).

“It is none of others’ business, I think. For me, traveling to Norway is one of my life goals. I wouldn’t feel that I get respect or something else even if you admire me. I come because I want and it is my wish” (Informant 15).

4.3.4 Identity and taste

One’s identity shows what he or she wants to deliver to others. Good taste could earn people face. How Chinese tourists identify their trip to Norway, to some degree, reflected how they could earn face through the trip. In regard to whether visiting Norway could show tourist’s special taste, Chinese tourists expressed their perspectives. Figure 5 presents the results of their thoughts.

Eleven interviewees agreed that traveling to Norway was a unique choice, which could reflect their taste or identity:

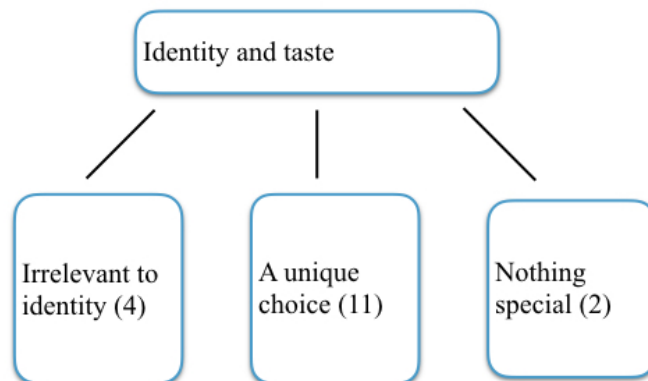
“ Yeah, everyone may have different tastes just as people might be fond of distinct kinds of music. Norway for me is unique, which is attached by my special feeling.

Thus choosing Norway could show that I have a certain taste” (Informant 6).

“I agree that it shows identity. Norway as a tourism destination is less popular (in China). Those who decide to come will have their own personal reason” (Informant 13).

“Well I guess so. The North Cape location here is where people can see the mid-night sun. The mid-night sun for us is really different and amazing, which fascinates me. Traveling to Norway could be a taste that shows affection to nature” (Informant 14).

Figure 5. Identity and taste



However four people held the view that it was irrelevant to identity.

“I think it is irrelative to taste. I can just say that I want to come to experience a Northern European culture. Taste seems too broad to describe it” (Informant 11).

“It cannot be thought of as a taste. It only shows my hobby and a love for nature” (Informant 22).

Only two visitors insisted that it was nothing special to choose Norway as a destination country:

“It is nothing special. Maybe (it is) just an expensive choice. Hahahaha” (Informant 12).

“I don’t think it is a different choice. It might only reflect that everyone may have different interests” (Informant 15).

4.4 Face losing

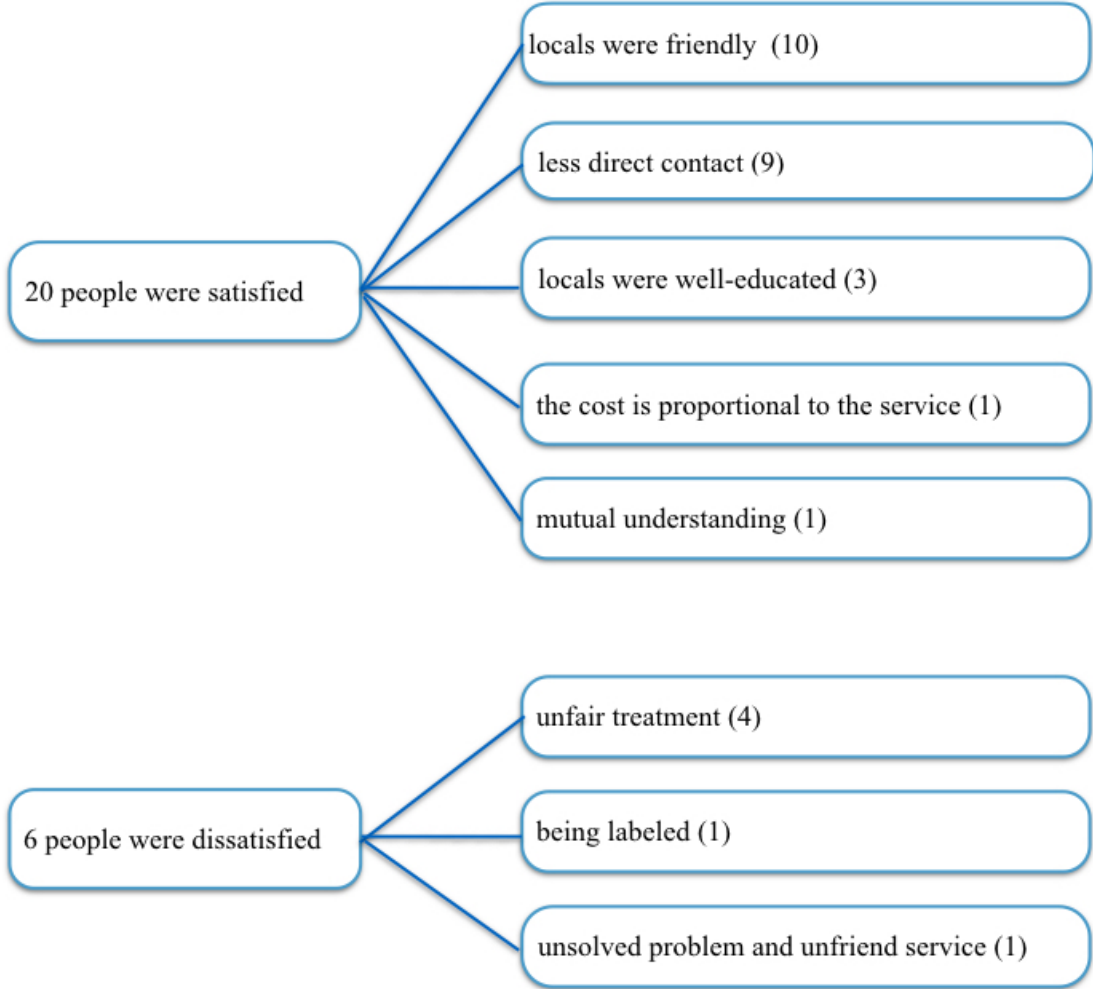
For addressing RQ2 (What behavior leads Chinese tourists losing face when they travel in Norway?), interviewees were asked about two aspects. One concerned uncomfortable moments communicating with locals, and the other one was about cultural clashes that embarrassed them.

Relating to uncomfortable moments, the majority of Chinese tourists (20 people) said that they were happy with the trip (results are showed in figure 6). They did not have any unpleasant experiences. Five reasons for experiencing a satisfying trip were summarized from the interviews. First, the most common reason, which was mentioned 10 times, was that they thought local tourism workers were so friendly:

“I didn’t have an embarrassing moment. I immersed myself in the beautiful landscape. Locals were friendly as well” (Informant 22).

“No, I didn’t have. Local residents were kind and friendly” (Informant 26).

Figure 6. Results of unhappy experiences.



Second, nine interviewees illustrated that they had less chances to have direct contact with Norwegian employees. The tourist guide of the tour took charge of most things. For instance, booking flights, arranging accommodation and planning the itinerary, etc. Among these nine people, two tourists mentioned little direct contact as well as kindness:

“I guess not. Local employees are friendly since we are customers. Besides, we do not have many chances to interact with them because our tourist guide undertake all

tasks” (Informant 6)

“I don't think I had any unhappy experiences. Norwegian people are friendly and well educated. We have experienced nothing unpleasant. In fact, we had a few opportunities to communicate with them. The tourist guide conducts and leads us in the trip. We have nothing to worry thanks to our guide's help” (Informant 7).

Third, three people noted that the local residents they had met were well-educated and polite. In addition to informant 7, there were two more interviewees who also said so:

“I didn't have any (disappointing experiences). Norwegians are well-educated and friendly” (Informant 17).

Fourth, it was mentioned once that the cost Chinese tourists had paid was proportional to the service they received.

“As a whole, I do not think we have unhappy feelings. Local workers are well educated. They dedicate to work since we pay them a lot of money. Expenses are proportional to the service, I guess” (Informant 1).

Last, one person never experienced an unhappy moment in the trip because of mutual understanding and preparing well:

“Well, I prepared and collected data before the trip, which can avoid unpleasant incidents. Also put myself in the other's shoes making my journey happier” (Informant 11).

Nevertheless six visitors had awkward moments. Four people thought they were unfairly treated. Informant 2 was asked if he was a Japanese, which made him feel like he was “being looking down on”. Informant 3 stated that she was unfairly treated because her luggage was checked in the airport while a foreigner in front of her passed without being checked.

Informant 10 argued that their seats were arranged in the back of airplane while European people seated in the front or middle of airplane. Informant 9 complained that the receptionist helped western people check in first.

Informant 5 felt labeled, which annoyed him. He indicated that a shopping guide recommended him to buy a specific watch because he was a Chinese. He felt labeled and angry.

Informant 4 was disappointed with an unsolved result and unfriendly service from an airline. She explained that she found her luggage was broken when she collected her luggage. She asked airline employees for a solution. However they could not offer an effective solution, and were not even friendly.

Only one tourist acknowledged that she encountered a culture clash:

“Food is cooked differently. Food here has a stronger flavor, which disappoints me a little bit” (Informant 14).

Most of people (16 interviewees) held that cultural differences did not influence them during their trip:

“Absolutely cultural differences exist. However it does not lead to any unhappy feelings” (Informant 15).

“Culture clashes doesn’t make me sad. Of course there is cultural differences between China and Norway. It will not lead to unpleasant events if we try to understand each other” (Informant 21).

4.5 Effective face saving strategies

In order to answer RQ3 (What strategies for saving face would be better accepted by Chinese tourists?), those who had had a bad experience were asked two questions. The first was “what did service providers do to make them feel better?”, and the second one was “what kind of

remedies would be better accepted?”.

Regarding remedial action, informant 10 stated that he received an official answer. Informant 4, informant 5 and informant 9 said that local workers did not intend to fix it up. Informant 4 was dissatisfied with the employees' service:

“I think my face showed my disappointment at that moment. It really dissatisfied me as the man didn't even intend to pacify me” (Informant 4).

Another interviewee also was not satisfied with response that local service provider made:

“I was not satisfied. They did not care but just answer me officially in a indifferent attitude” (Informant 3).

Only one (informant 2) felt happier for the Norwegian staff member's apology. Informant 14 who encountered cultural differences was satisfied with what Norwegian employees tried to do to make up for the issue:

“Yeah they tried to remedy. For example, the waitress gave me another bowl because the soup in my bowl was too salty for me. The following dishes were less salty, which tasted better” (Informant 14).

As for suggestions to save face, three people put attitude in first place:

“As it happened, I would feel more comfortable if they had better attitude. Besides, to do their best, don't make Asians feel they are being discriminated” (Informant 3).

“Treat everyone the same way as fairly as possible. Serve enthusiastically too. That is all” (Informant 10).

In addition to positive attitude, one of the three also regarded a timely apology as an effective

method to comfort customers:

“At the very least employees on behalf of their company should apologize. His company hired him. He should apologize to customers like me whose property was lost as a representative of his company. Also he should serve in a better manner. His attitude showed disrespect for me. There is an old saying in China: ‘do not hit the smiling guy’s face’. I would feel more comfortable if he was more sincere and more friendly, even if the problem was left unsolved” (Informant 4).

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the results of interviews to 26 Chinese tourists who traveled to Norway in groups have been presented. Transcriptions were analyzed by content analysis.

In the beginning of the chapter, interviewees’ background information, such as gender, age and occupation, was anonymously represented. Next, findings were presented using three main categories: face and motivation to visit Norway, losing face, and effective face saving strategies. The first category, ‘face and motivation to visit Norway’, presented how Chinese tourists think of the relationship between showing off and a trip to Norway. It also identified motivations that influenced their decision to travel to Norway, and how they could earn face by the trip. The second category, ‘losing face’, was about interviewees’ unhappy experiences and cultural differences that they experienced during the trip. The last one, ‘effective face saving strategies’, demonstrated remedies tourists received and what aspects of redress to which they paid more attention.

The next chapter discusses the findings in light of the literature review.

Chapter V Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research results and analyzes these outcomes in light of previous literature. The literature chapter presented the relationship between face and consumer behavior, acts threatening face and influencing factors as well as effective strategies to save face. Compared to the literature review, new ideas or different perspectives may have come up from the collected data. It is also probable in this chapter that findings will verify extant theoretical frameworks or emphasize one or two points of those frameworks and associated theories.

Based on the literature review, this chapter is organized into three themes. First, theme one is about face-driven consumption and face earning. It compares the results of various face-driven motivations for buying a tour package to Norway with literature in chapter 2. In addition, it investigates how such consumption earns face for Chinese tourists. Second, theme two focuses on factors that make Chinese tourists sensitive to face. Last, theme three indicates the face saving strategies that Chinese visitors, who participated in this study, received and considered were more acceptable.

5.2 Face-driven consumption and face earning

Based on the literature review, showing off is a face feature as well as a face-driven motivation that urges Chinese people to consume. According to Zhang and Si (2010), people earn face by presenting their wealth, social status, capability and so on. Chinese consumer behavior is closely connected with face. One feature of Chinese consumer behavior is the buying of expensive and better quality products, of which Chinese consumers can feel proud (Hong, 2011; Wang & Huang, 2010). Showing wealth can earn them face so as to push them to consume. Hence showing off is also a face-driven motivation in consumer behavior. The costly package tour to Norway could represent tourists' wealth. According to face theories, tourists might earn face through purchasing such packages.

Only five Chinese interviewees regarded the trip to Norway as a way to show wealth—to

show off. They stated that money was a foundation which supported the tour. However, the majority of interviewed Chinese tourists expressed that showing off was not their purpose for visiting Norway, although they agreed that an economic base was necessary for the tour. To find out the reason why tourists were less interested in showing off, interviewees' answers were interpreted. China's great economic progress could account for it. According to informant 7, informant 13, informant 20, informant 21 and informant 22, Chinese life standard has improved remarkably. Therefore, it has witnessed an increase in the number of wealthy people in China. Nowadays, many people can afford an outbound trip. Traveling abroad was not as rare and unaffordable as before, which has contributed to a loss of significance related to showing one's wealth.

As for findings about motivations to visit Norway, most of interviewees declared that a different culture and landscape fascinated them the most. This was reflected in their talking, and that they were very curious about Norwegian culture and its unique view. It is obvious that they had a great passion to travel to Norway for its nature and culture. Some tourists even identified themselves as big fans for different cultures and unique landscapes.

As mentioned in the literature review, there are four tourism types that result in face earning: culture type, high consumption type, harmonious relationship-building type and special activities type (Guo, 2015). Chinese tourists belonging to the culture type earn face through experiencing different culture. Those who belong to the special activities type also feel proud by taking part in unique tourism activities. Most of interviewed Chinese tourists identified themselves as the culture-type and subconsciously, as special-activities-type people. They argued that a different culture attracted them to come to Norway. Besides, many people were impressed by the trip to North Cape. They regarded it as an unique activity to watch the mid-night sun and step into the Arctic Circle. Thus, 'different culture and unique landscape' that Chinese interviewees mentioned can be interpreted as the culture type and special activities type. Tourists can earn face by these two types of tourism because of uniqueness—a different culture and a special activity. According to Shi and Cao (2013), distinctiveness as a feature of consumer behavior makes Chinese consumers earn face. Uniqueness is not only a characteristic, but also a face-driven motivation in consumption (Wu & Tao, 2010; Guo &

Lin, 2015).

Nowadays, as China's economy grows, people are wealthier. Less Chinese rely on showing off to earn face in terms of outbound tourism. The concept of face earning in tourism has broadened in recent studies. Chinese tourists gradually shift their focus on uniqueness now with the purpose of earning face.

Seeking for distinction helps them gain face by self-evaluation and the evaluation of others. Many Chinese interviewees regarded their tour to Norway as a unique choice. They identified themselves as the group who adored different culture and unique landscape, which reflected their special taste. This identity was what they attempted to show to others. The special taste earned them face by their self-evaluation. As for the evaluation of others, the tourists were given face by sharing their experience and photos. As findings noted, the majority of tourists were willing to share what they saw and experienced in the trip with others. Most of them had a positive feeling when their friends admired, and liked their trip. These feelings included happiness, satisfaction, pride and excitement. The positive emotion rendered them honor and satisfied. Other people's appreciation gave them face.

On the whole, showing off by price tag was not a popular approach for the Chinese tourists to earn face in an outbound trip any more. Nowadays, they change their attention to being unique, for example, to experience an exotic culture and different nature view, because more Chinese citizens can afford a trip to Norway. This trend reflects that the culture tourism type and special tourism activities type are more and more popular in China. These two types of tourism have a common feature—distinctiveness. To be unique is becoming a significant motivation for Chinese tourists to make decisions to travel to Norway. They can gain face through the trip by identifying themselves and the appreciation of others through sharing.

5.3 Factors influence Chinese tourists to lose face

It was surprising to find out in the process of organizing and analyzing collected data that the majority of Chinese tourists were satisfied with the trip and the service local employees offered. They stated that they did not have unhappy experiences in the trip. Two reasons for the high satisfaction were frequently mentioned. One was that local personnels were friendly,

while the other was that Chinese tourists had less direct contact with local service providers as the tourist guide took charge of many things. There are still some points that are beneficial for the future Norwegian tourism market. According to a report by Chinavia (2013), although group tours are prevalent, in the future, Chinese tourists will gradually tend to travel individually and prefer in-depth tours. In this case, Chinese tourists should interact with local tourism personnels themselves. Norwegian service providers should be aware that being friendly is a means to improving Chinese tourists' satisfaction. The positive attitude of local workers plays a significant role in Chinese tourists' satisfaction.

Although most of the Chinese tourists did not experience unpleasant moments during the trip, there were six tourists who complained about their unhappy experiences. Four tourists were treated unfairly, and one was labeled as Chinese, while the last one received unfriendly service with a problem remaining unsolved. According to their complaints, there was one thing in common. They all suffered unhappy interaction for being judged or treated differently as a certain group versus other groups. Informant 2 was regarded as a Japanese, which disrespected him. In his eyes, as a Chinese, he was looked down on because the service provider's judgment suggested that Asians who travel to Norway may come from a developed country like Japan. Informant 3 argued that as an Asian, her luggage was checked in the airport, whereas the Western people standing in front of her passed successfully without being checked. Informant 9 was disappointed with a hotel receptionist because Western people checked in first. It seemed that Asian guests for the hotel employee were not as important as Westerners. Informant 10 complained that Europeans were provided better seats, while they, Chinese people, had to sit at the back of airplane. Informant 5 was advised to buy some types of watches because he was Chinese. He was angry because he thought that Chinese people were labeled. He said that other customers from Europe would not be recommended specific products only because they were Europeans. Informant 4 was dissatisfied with airline workers not only because of unfriendly service, but also because they served a Norwegian guest queuing in front of her warmly and wholeheartedly. She felt she was discriminated against as a Chinese person owing to the different service.

As He and Zhang (2011) mentioned, Chinese are sensitive to face because of three factors,

namely individual factors, relational factors and group factors. Group factors refer to a sense of honor shared by a group or community—that is, a collective honor. The member of a group will feel proud of being a member of the group if the group is honored, praised or respected. Similarly, they will lose face if the group is disrespected, shamed or disliked. Hu (1944) also demonstrated that for Chinese people every member in the group shares glory and shame. Face for Chinese people belongs to both the individual himself or herself and the whole group, which is different from the western recognition of face. Informant 2 classified himself as a member of the group—Chinese. He felt despised as his group was regarded worse than the other group—Japanese, which caused his loss of face. Informant 3 identified herself as a member of the group—Asians. She lost face because her group suffered bias compared with Westerners. Informant 10 and informant 5 lost face as their group—Chinese received different treatment that they were unhappy with from Europeans. Informant 9 was frustrated for her group—Chinese were given less importance to than Western people. Informant 4 was dissatisfied since she received unfriendly service as a member of the group—Chinese, while a Norwegian person received wholehearted service.

Overall, Chinese tourists travel independently and in depth will become a popular trend. Therefore, local employees would have more chances to directly interact with Chinese tourists. According to most of interviewees, warm and friendly service satisfied them. It is of great significance to welcome or serve them warmly, friendly and wholeheartedly. Group factors had great impact on Chinese tourists who lost face in the trip. Chinese people are sensitive to face. When they travel abroad, they are more sensitive to group factors, especially the group as Chinese or Asians. Owing to different cultural backgrounds, Norwegian tourism personnel should be aware of group factors that can lead to Chinese tourists losing face.

5.4 Effective face saving strategies

As noted in the literature review, service failure means that customers are dissatisfied with the service, which failed to meet their expectation (Grönroos, 1994; Keaveney, 1995). For Chinese people, losing face in an interaction fails to satisfy them. The loss of face for them is one of the service failures. Brinter and Mohr (1995) point out that there are two types of service failure: service outcome failure and the process of service delivery failure. Service outcome failure refers to customers' dissatisfaction with the outcome being unable to meet

their requirements. The other failure shows that customers are unhappy with the service in the service process. The attitude or way local tourism personnel serve may cause dissatisfaction when they communicate with customers.

Informant 2 and informant 5 had unhappy experiences in service delivery. Informant 3, informant 4 and informant 10 were dissatisfied with the service because of the service outcome and delivery. Informant 9 was frustrated with the service outcome. After those interviewees' face was lost, only informant 2 was satisfied with the remedy since the local worker apologized in a timely manner. Informant 3 and informant 10 received official explanation as a remedy. Informant 3 was very disappointed because the Norwegian personnel did not show their care and the official answer seemed perfunctory. As for Informant 4, informant 5 and informant 9, they did not get any remedy, which upset informant 4. In general, most of the Chinese tourists who lost face were not satisfied with the remedies that locals made. Three reasons resulting in dissatisfaction were concluded: unsolved problems, indifferent attitude of employees and late or no remedy. Hence complaint handling, service attitude and timely remedies should be given attention to when local employees take face saving strategies.

To deal with complaints and offer a satisfying outcome, some steps were advised by a number of researchers. For example, analyze why customers lose face in the first place; give unhappy customers face by showing respect; make compensation and show care for customers' emotion; try best to solve customers' problems according to their needs (Miller et al., 2000; Du & Fan, 2012). As informant 4 mentioned, if the employee apologized on behalf of the airline as a way to show respect or care for her emotion, she would feel better and more comfortable even though the problem was left unsolved. As for timely remedy, Smith et al. (1999) point out that employees should use initiative and positive strategies to recover from a failure. It is important to take face saving measures in time to show care and attention to customers. Informant 4, informant 5 and informant 10 did not receive any strategy that made them feel happier. Informant 4 pointed out that a timely remedy was very important for those who feel upset with the service. With respect to attitude, interpersonal treatment (Lee et al., 2013) and psychological recovery (Miller et al., 2000) are important. Interpersonal treatment

equals to the attitude of service providers to customers. Friendly and polite service is conducive to changing customers' moods from dissatisfaction to satisfaction. Psychological recovery aims to make customers feel more comfortable, which requires a positive attitude as well.

With regard to handling complaints, providing a timely remedy, and attitude, for Chinese tourists, a good attitude plays the most important role in taking effective face saving strategies. When six Chinese tourists who had had unhappy experiences were asked what effective remedies they would have accepted, only three gave an answer. They all placed prime emphasis on a good attitude. That being said, most of the Chinese tourists did not experience awkward or unpleasant moments in their trips, primarily because local employees were friendly and polite. Obviously, Chinese tourists were sensitive to the attitude of local workers in interactions.

Most of the Chinese tourists who lost face were not satisfied with the remedy. According to their complaints, three aspects would improve Chinese customers' satisfaction towards face saving strategies. They are complaints handling, a timely remedy and attitude. In order to regain Chinese tourists' trust or satisfaction, local employees should comfort them with a good attitude and solve their problems in a timely manner. Of three aspects, Chinese tourists care about the positive attitude of employees the most. No matter when locals provide service or take strategies to save Chinese customers' face, a good attitude is of great importance.

5.5 Limitation of the study and direction for future research

Some limitations of this study should be acknowledged. First, the sample size is not big enough. Only twenty-six Chinese tourists were interviewed. Second, interviewees were selected only in Alta. Third, purposive sampling—Chinese tourists traveling in groups was chosen in this study. However, in the near future, it will become a trend that Chinese tourists will travel individually and in-depth. Four, only interviews were conducted in this study. Face-to-face communication may stop tourists from talking authentically about embarrassing experiences or stories.

Based on these limitations, more Chinese tourists should be selected in several tourist cities

for relevant further work. Additionally, Chinese tourists who travel individually should also be a focus. Further, it would be beneficial if the researcher could follow the researched and observe them on their tours. The research may observe some moments that the researched may be too ashamed to discuss.

5.6 Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter provided a discussion around three main themes of research findings. The first one was about face-driven consumption. According to research findings, to show off by price tag was not a prevalent motivation anymore that pushed Chinese tourists to visit Norway. As the Chinese economy grows, Chinese citizens become wealthier than before, consequently, many Chinese people can afford an outbound trip. Therefore, showing off was not the important face-driven motivation. The current vital motivation attracting the interviewed Chinese tourists to Norway was to experience a different culture and see a unique landscape. They pursued distinction, which could earn them face. To appeal to Chinese tourists, the tour to Norway should be designed as unique and exotic. Chinese tourists' great interest in cultural tourism and special activities tourism initiates an interesting topic for future research that attempts to promote the Norwegian tourism market to Chinese tourists. This demonstrates a changing trend from a focus on 'showing off' to a shift to culture and uniqueness.

The second dimension discussed factors that led to losing face. Six Chinese tourists, who had an unhappy experience during the trip, were sensitive to group factors when they traveled abroad. They identified themselves as Asians or Chinese. They were dissatisfied with the service because they were treated differently as the group—Asians or Chinese compared to other groups. There is a difference between the Chinese and Western concept of face. Western face emphasizes individual face, whereas Chinese face pays more attention to group face. This also could be studied further in order to avoid Chinese people's loss of face caused by cultural misunderstandings.

The third discussion was associated with effective face saving strategies. Combining the literature review and research findings, three points were found to be conducive to saving Chinese tourists' face, These were complaints handling, a timely remedy and a good attitude. Within these three points, a good attitude was the most influential one. A positive attitude by

local tourism personnel was mentioned most often as a remedy that Chinese tourists could better accept. In addition, a friendly attitude satisfied most of the Chinese interviewees in order to avoid face losing. Thus, a friendly and sincere attitude is effective in saving Chinese tourists' face.

Chapter VI Conclusion

Chinese people's standard of living has improved because of the great progress in the Chinese economy. As a consequence, Chinese people are gradually changing their focus from basic necessities to entertainment such as travel. Chinavia (2013) reported that there was enormous potential in the Chinese outbound tourism market as the number of Chinese tourists traveling abroad was increasing. This thesis aimed to better understand Chinese tourists to Norway and ways to continue improving Chinese tourists' satisfaction towards service by reducing cultural misunderstandings between Norway and China. 'Face' is an influential cultural concept in China and is deeply rooted in Chinese society. 'Face' plays an important role in Chinese social interactions. There are differences in perspectives between Chinese and Western views of face. Although many academics undertake research on face, limited researches has integrated Chinese face and Norwegian tourism. In the study that informed that Master's thesis, research linked Chinese face with Norwegian tourism with the purpose of promoting Norwegian tourism to Chinese tourists.

In order to have a better understanding of face, literature was reviewed around four aspects. First, the literature review introduced face and presented differences of face between the west and China. Second, it focused on the relationship between face and consumer behavior. The review demonstrated how Chinese face influences consumer behavior, the characteristics of Chinese consumer behavior influenced by face and face-driven consumption. Third, the review focused on earning and losing face. The review included theory from Brown and Levinson regarding acts threatening face, factors making Chinese people sensitive to face and the relationship between politeness and face. Last, the review identified face saving strategies with regard to loss of face. Literature was reviewed based on two dimensions of face saving strategies, in particular, Brown and Levinson's strategies towards face threatening acts and strategies to recover service failure.

This research that informs this thesis chose a qualitative research method. Twenty-six Chinese tourists were interviewed. The research used purposive sampling. Interviewees who came from China and traveled to Norway in groups were selected. They were interviewed in a

Chinese restaurant, the city center of Alta, and on the way to airport. All questions were asked in Mandarin for better communication. The interviewer carefully chose words to avoid embarrassment. Words such as showing off were substituted for neutral words like showing wealth. Some interviews were permitted to be audio recorded in the process. Recordings and notes were transcribed into Chinese for data analysis. Content analysis was employed to analyze collected data for this thesis. The transcription was coded into three categories, which were further subcategorized.

Background information of Chinese interviewees was given at the beginning of the research findings. Most of interviewees, two-thirds, were female. The majority was older than 40 years. Many tourists had a stable and good job with a steady income. Some people had retired from work and were pensioners.

According to codes, the following research findings were reported in relation to the three categories. First, most of tourists disagreed with the idea that a the trip to Norway can show one's wealth to others, although they admitted that a good economic base was needed to afford such a trip. Most of interviewees' motivation for visiting Norway was to experience a different culture and see a unique landscape. The majority described the travel as worthwhile since they received a unique and exotic experience. Many tourists would like to share photos and stories with their friends. Most of them felt happy if their friends admired and liked their trip. A fair number of Chinese visitors identified themselves as big fans for a unique nature view, which reflected their taste.

Second, concerning losing face, the majority of interviewees were satisfied with the service local tourism personnel provided. The friendly attitude of employees and the less direct contact were two of the main reasons for the high level of satisfaction. However, there were six people who complained about an unhappy experience during their journey. Four were treated unfairly; one was labeled as Chinese; one was offered unfriendly service and problems were left unsolved.

Third, in relation to remedies to save face, only one of the six dissatisfied tourists was happier after receiving an apology. The rest were not contented. Three tourists mentioned that a good attitude was effective to saving face, and one of them also argued that timely redress was important as well.

The discussion chapter considered the three main categories of the research findings in light of the literature review. The first category related to face-driven consumption and earning face. Chinese visitors' motivations to travel to Norway shifted from showing off to experiencing a different culture and a unique landscape because the Chinese people were richer than before. Distinctiveness made them earn face through showing a special taste and gaining friends' admiration of their trip.

The second category related to factors that had an impact on Chinese tourists' sensitive face. After analyzing findings, one factor, group factors, was found to result in Chinese tourists' losing face. Those tourists lost face because they identified themselves as a group—Chinese or Asians. They thought that they were treated differently and unfairly compared with other groups, such as Norwegian, Europeans or the Westerners. Group factors made Chinese tourists more sensitive to face when they traveled abroad.

The third category focused on effective face saving strategies. The findings indicated that Chinese tourists were concerned with complaints handling, timely redress as well as a positive attitude. Some researchers have already provided advice on how to save tourists' face related to those three points. Of the three points, tourists cared most about a good attitude. A friendly and polite attitude would comfort them and effectively save their face.

To promote Norwegian tourism to Chinese tourists, future research could focus of the following topic—cultural tourism and special activities tourism as many Chinese tourists have a strong interest in these two types of tourism. To improve Chinese tourists' satisfaction towards service, it is also important to study group factors further.

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Appendix I: Interview Guide

Interview guide

All interviews are semi-structured.

Topic 1: how does a face feature, showing off, influence Chinese tourists to travel to Norway?

- 1: Many people think that travel to Norway can show their richness. What is your opinion?
- 2: Do you think is it worthy of spending a great amount of money traveling to Norway to win others' admiration? (what could you get from it)

Topic 2: what behavior would lead to Chinese tourists' face losing when they travel in Norway?

- 1: When you travel in Norway, do you have uncomfortable moment interacting with local employees? Could you please tell us the story?
- 2: Have you experienced any culture differences that make you feel embarrassed? what is it?

topic 3: what strategies would save Chinese tourists' face?

- 1: If local workers make you uncomfortable, did they do something attempting to make you feel better? If yes, what did they do?
- 2: What else do you think can make you less embarrassed?

Appendix II: Consent Form

Request for participation in research project

“Defining Face Culture for Improving Chinese Tourist’s Service Satisfaction towards Visiting Norway”

Background and Purpose

This is a master project in UiT The Arctic University of Norway. It aims to promote Norway tourism to Chinese people and enhance Chinese tourists’ satisfaction when they travel to Norway. In order to achieve the goal, face culture—an important and unique culture in China is investigated.

Chinese tourists who travel to Norway are our interviewees because it is a project about Chinese people visiting Norway.

What does participation in the project imply?

The data would be collected by interviews. All talks would be audio recorded without mentioning personal data. The questions is about: how face influence Chinese tourists’ consumer behavior? what would lead to face losing or earning? what face saving strategies are effective?

What will happen to the information about you?

All personal data will be treated confidentially. Only the interviewer and supervisor would have access to the data. The name in the data/recording would be anonymized. The file of data would be protected by password. The data would be stored in personal computer protected by password as well.

The interviewee would not be recognized in the thesis. The project is scheduled for completion by September.

Voluntary participation

It is voluntary to participate in the project, and you can at any time choose to withdraw your consent without stating any reason. If you decide to withdraw, all your personal data will be made anonymous.

If you would like to participate or if you have any questions concerning the project, please contact Young-Sook Lee: +47 93006954.

The study has been notified to the Data Protection Official for Research, NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

Consent for participation in the study

I have received information about the project and am willing to participate

(Signed by participant, date)