

# **Crisis Management, Tourism and the Three Gorges Dam, China**

**by**

**Qiyong Zheng**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Central Lancashire

January 2015

## Student Declaration

I declare that while registered as a candidate for the research degree, I have not been a registered candidate or enrolled student for another award of the University or other academic or professional institution

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I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award and is solely my own work

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**Type of Award** \_\_\_\_\_ Doctor of Philosophy \_\_\_\_\_

**School**\_\_School of Sport, Tourism and Outdoors\_\_\_\_\_

## **Abstract**

Within the tourism literature, studies of crisis and disaster management in the tourism industry are relatively numerous. However, not only are most research case studies based on a Western-oriented paradigm, but also relatively few studies pay attention to tourists' perceptions in relation to tourism crisis management.

China has experienced numerous crises related to tourism in recent years and eventually coped with them. However, until the SARS outbreak in 2003 there tended to be a lack of subsequent research of crisis management. Following the completion of the Three Gorges Dam in 2009 and the successful completion of the 175-meter experimental water storage of Three Gorges Reservoir in 2010, the debates surrounding the major negative impacts of the dam on the Three Gorges region have become more intense. The transformation of environment has impacted on tourists' experiences and perceptions, and even the number of inbound tourists. From a Western perspective, therefore, the Dam has become a 'self-induced' crisis for the Three Gorges area in general and for Three Gorges tourism. However, the Chinese government stresses that the Dam provides significant benefits to China's economic development.

The aim of this study is to identify appropriate strategies, within a conceptual framework of crisis management and tourism policy development, for rebuilding Three Gorges tourism in China following the completion of the Dam. Therefore, the research critically reviews the development of the Dam and existing tourism policies as a foundation for the principal research question: what are inbound tourists' attitudes towards the Dam, and how might these inform strategic responses to the consequences of the Dam on the Three Gorges tourism?

Subsequently at Stage One of this study, in addition to the secondary data collection related specifically to tourism in the Three Gorges, scoping research was conducted to elicit primary data regarding both tourism policy and planning for the region and an overview of tourists' perceptions of the experience of the Three Gorges. Thus, the research at this stage involved two in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the supply-side stakeholders, namely, an expert specializing in Three Gorges tourism research and a high-level official from Chongqing Tourism Bureau, and semi-structured interviews with nine tourists from western countries visiting the Three Gorges.

Having elicited the initial data and an overview of tourists' perceptions of the Three Gorges Dam and the Three Gorges, it became evident that more detailed, rich data were required to inform an analysis of tourists' perceptions of the Three Gorges and,

hence, to underpin recommendations for future policy for Three Gorges tourism. Therefore, an additional 17 semi-structured interviews with international tourists were conducted at Stage Two alongside a quantitative survey amongst international tourists who had just completed their trip in the Three Gorges region and were still on a cruise ship. In addition to these, an unstructured-interview with a senior tourist guide, as a supplementary source, was also conducted to further identify the international tourists' perceptions of the Three Gorges and the Dam.

The findings reveal that, from the perspective of Chinese government, the Three Gorges Dam is not considered as a self-induced crisis. Similarly, from the perspective of international tourists, the Dam has not yet caused any perceived tourism crisis. However, international tourists' perceptions of environmental pollution indicate that water pollution in particular in the Three Gorges region is becoming worse. Such problem, if not controlled effectively, is likely to become a serious water pollution crisis in the future, affecting not only the life of local residents, but also the development of new Three Gorges tourism. Thus, in response to international tourists' perceptions of the Three Gorges and the Dam, this research makes a number of recommendations for the development of new Three Gorges tourism.

Overall, the purpose of this research is to establish a link between strategic responses, Faulkner's framework of tourism crisis management and tourists' perceptions of the destination in order to expand present tourism crisis management theory and models. In so doing, it adds an additional dimension to the contemporary crisis management and tourism in China literatures. The research also demonstrates the uniqueness of the case: although the Dam has been thought as a self-induced crisis created by humans, it differs from many crises, as the possible negative consequences brought by the Dam were predicted and predictable.

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## **Acknowledgement**

The author would like to express her gratitude to the following people for their support in facilitating this research.

- Professor Richard A.J. Sharpley – for his encouragement, insightful comments and guidance throughout the duration of my studies. Without his help, this research would not be what it is.
- Staff members in School of Sport, Tourism and The Outdoors at the University of Central Lancashire for their encouragement and suggestions throughout the duration of my studies.
- Associate Professor Ruliang Kan in China Three Gorges University, Yichang, Mr Fuqiang Liu, the Director of Tourist Commodity Promotion Division of Chongqing Tourism Bureau, and Mr Ji Zhang, a senior tour guide in Chongqing, for devoting their time and providing information and assistance during the data collection in the Three Gorges region.
- My parents and my husband for their funding, encouragement and support.

## Acronyms

BMI	Business Monitor International
CCYIA	China Cruise and Yacht Industry Association
CIRI	Canadian Investor Relations Institute
CNTA	China National Tourism Administration
CQTA	Chongqing Tourism Administration
CTGPC	China Three Gorges Project Corporation
DMT	Disaster Management Team
EXPO	Expositions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HR	Human Resource
HSR	High-speed railway
IROs	Investor Relations Officers
JCCC	Johnson County Community College
RMB	The official currency of the People's Republic of China
RT	Ritz Tours
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SHRM	Society for Human Resource Management
TGP	Three Gorges Project
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization
WTTC	World Travel and Tourism Council
WTO	World Tourism Organization

# Chapter One

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background

#### 国务院常务会议讨论通过《三峡后续工作规划》等

国务院总理温家宝在 5 月 18 日主持召开国务院常务会议，讨论通过《三峡后续工作规划》和《长江中下游流域水污染防治规划》。会议指出，三峡工程初步设计建设任务如期完成。防洪、发电、航运、水资源利用等综合效益开始全面发挥。会议也指出，三峡工程在发挥巨大综合效益的同时，在移民安稳致富、生态环境保护、地质灾害防治等方面还存在一些亟须解决的问题，对长江中下游航运、灌溉、供水等也产生了一定影响。这些问题有的在三峡论证设计中已经预见但需要在运行后加以解决，有的在工程建设期已经认识到，但受当时条件限制难以有效解决，有的是随着经济社会发展而提出的新要求。适时开展三峡后续工作，对于确保三峡工程长期安全运行和持续发挥综合效益，提升其服务国民经济和社会发展能力，更好更多地造福广大人民群众，意义重大。……

—— 国务院办公厅，中国政府网 2011 年 5 月 18 日

#### *Interpretation:*

#### **State Council Executive Meeting Discussed and Passed the 'Three Gorges Follow-Up Planning'**

On May 18, Premier Wen Jiabao chaired a State Council Executive Meeting that discussed and adopted the 'Three Gorges Follow-Up Planning' and the 'Yangtze River Basin Water Pollution Prevention Planning'. The meeting pointed out that the task of the preliminary design and construction of the Three Gorges Project has been completed on schedule. The Dam has started to facilitate flood control, power generation, shipping and water use. However, although the Dam provides significant and comprehensive benefits, there are at the same time a number of urgent problems that must be resolved, including the stabilization and improvement of living conditions for relocated people, the protection of the environment, the prevention of geological disasters, and so forth. In addition, it is accepted that the Dam has negatively impacted upon shipping, irrigation and water supply on the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River. Some of these problems had been expected at the initial demonstrative phase of the Three Gorges Dam design, but they could not be addressed until the completion of the project, whilst other problems were recognized during the construction phase but, owing to conditions at the time, could not be solved immediately. Moreover, further challenges have arisen because of new demands brought on by social and economic development. If the Three Gorges follow-up work can be carried out in a timely manner, it will ensure the keep long-term safe operation of the Three Gorges Project and its ability to constantly generate integrative efficiency, to enhance its service capabilities for economic and social development, and to provide more and better benefits for the public. ……

(State Council News, Chinese Government's Official Web Portal, 18<sup>th</sup> May 2011)

China's top government body, the State Council, released this statement on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2011, and it was subsequently published on the Chinese Government's Official Web Portal. Following the announcement, the long-controversial Three Gorges Dam project on the Yangtze River once again became the focus of global attention. Within a short period of time, a variety of major domestic and international media, including Xinhua News (2011), People's Net News (2011), Kent (CNN 2011), Wan (the Washington Post 2011), Bristow (BBC 2011), Guardian News (2011) and ECADF News (2011), had reproduced the statement on their websites, contributing to vociferous critical debates worldwide. Some Western media employed phrases such as 'a rare admission' (Kent 2011), 'China warns of "urgent problems" facing Three Gorges Dam' (Watts 2011), and 'China acknowledges Three Gorges Dam "problems"' (Bristow 2011), to suggest that the Chinese government was finally aware of and, indeed, had admitted the problems and impacts caused by the construction of the Dam. Moreover, the title of some reports, such as 'China admits Three Gorges Dam has "urgent problems" as drought persists' (Kent 2011) and 'Amid severe drought, Chinese government admits mistakes with Three Gorges Dam' (Wan 2011), implied that there was a direct relationship between the Dam and the severe drought that occurred in southern China soon after its construction. Such inference immediately stimulated debate on whether or not the construction of the Dam had also caused the Wenchuan earthquake in 2008 and, as a consequence, numerous opponents of the project expressed their views in various ways:

Among China's millions of microbloggers, few of whom appear to be climate scientists, there's a wide range of opinion on whether or not the Dam is the cause of the drought. One opinion that's been resurrected in the midst of the Dam debate is its supposed role in triggering 2008's devastating Wenchuan earthquake – and that quake had some connection to a previous drought. Journalist Zhao Shilong, opining on the Sina microblog, joined other microbloggers in making this explicit connection: 'there are certain connections between the drought and earthquakes. Three years after the southwest drought, the... Wenchuan Earthquake occurred. This year there is a drought in the middle and lower reaches of Yangtze River ... It is very strange! We should beware of it'.

(Minter 2011)

Dai Qing, an environmental activist and longtime opponent of the project, also suggested that 'for years, we've made some of these very same points and failed to get any notice, but now the problems have gotten to the point where the government is unable to continue covering up the issues' (Wan 2011).

Unsurprisingly, perhaps, such fierce controversy aroused the attention of the central government, with relevant departments and many experts responding quickly to these issues and criticisms. For example, Cai Qihua, the director of the Yangtze River Water Resources Commission in the Ministry of Water Resources, stressed that the Three Gorges Project had not induced drought and flood on the middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River (Shen 2011) whilst Chen Houqun, an academic at the Chinese Academy of Engineering, emphasized that there was no identifiable relationship between the Wenchuan earthquake and the Three Gorges Project (Wei 2011). China National Radio News (2011) also emphasized that the State Council executive meeting had clearly pointed out the advantages and disadvantages of the Three Gorges Project, and had responded to the social concerns surrounding the project. Some, however, interpreted the spirit of the meeting as excessively optimistic, noting that the Chinese government admitted the Project's drawbacks.

These recent disputes are, in fact, no more than a continuation of earlier debates surrounding the Chinese government's initial decision to construct the world's largest Dam on the Yangtze River, and the potential impacts of the Dam. In both academic and media circles, particularly in the West, concern has long been expressed with respect to the potential impacts of the Dam on the local environment, ecology, geology, and the consequences of the necessary relocation of local communities. Importantly, however, and despite the fact that it has long been an important tourism destination, a Three Gorges cruise typically being included in tourists' itineraries, more limited attention has been paid to the potential consequences of the project on tourism in the area in which the Dam is located. This is not to say that the potential consequences of the Dam's construction on the tourism sector have not been addressed; indeed, Chinese academics have undertaken studies of the project on the local tourism sector, though most focus on how to develop new Three Gorges tourism (Kan & He 2009; Li, Guan & Liu 2009; Liang 2010; Luo 2012; Wang 2002; Wang, Xie & Qiu 2006; Yan & Kan 2006; Yin & Lv 2004). Conversely, only Zhou (2005) adopts a more theoretically framed approach, considering the development of Yangtze Three Gorges tourism as a case study within a systematic summary of tourism crisis management theory. In so doing, she attempts to provide a guide to tourism crisis management practices in crisis-prone areas as a basis for promoting sustained regional tourism and development. Zhou's work is significant inasmuch as it is the only research to date that recognizes that, as considered below in more detail in section 1.4, the Three Gorges Dam project represents a crisis for tourism, a crisis that demands effective management responses

in order to sustain a healthy tourism sector in region. However, their work remains descriptive and the strategies they propose adopt only a supply side perspective whilst the attitudes and perceptions of tourists are not addressed. Other than their research, no other studies have applied the theory of crisis management to the case of Three Gorges tourism, perhaps reflecting a more general lack of academic attention paid to crisis management in China's tourism industry. Therefore, in contrast to the previous studies referred to above, this thesis focuses on the direct impacts that the Dam brought to the Three Gorges tourism, such as the transformation of tourist resources, and potential crises, such as environmental pollution (more details can be found in Chapter 5). The residents' resettlement programme resulting from the construction of the Dam has attracted much attention in international media and, indeed, of tourists. However, as this issue is of less direct relevance to the development of Three Gorges tourism compared with, for example, the transformation of tourist resources and environmental pollution, it will not be discussed as a key point in this thesis.

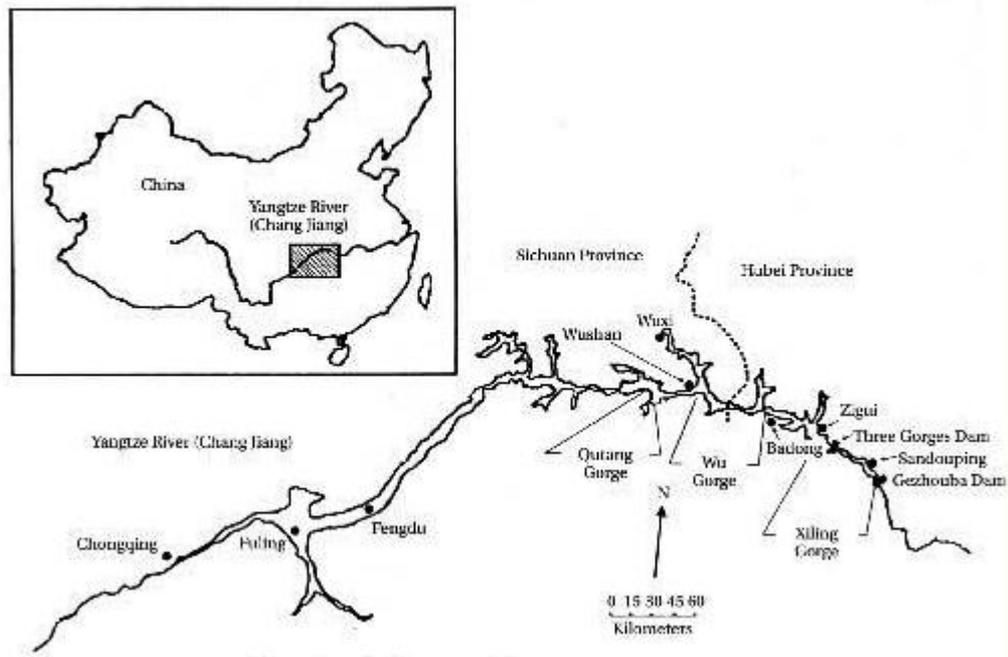
Given this evident gap in the literature with respect to Three Gorges tourism in particular and tourism development in China more generally, the overall purpose of this thesis is to explore critically the development and management of tourism in the Yangtze Three Gorges region within the context of contemporary tourism crisis management. In particular, it focuses on the potential relationship between visitors' perceptions of the area following the completion of the Dam project and strategic responses proposed by crisis management models. In so doing, it seeks to contribute to the tourism crisis management literature in general, and to knowledge and understanding of tourism in the Three Gorges in particular. The specific aims and objectives of the thesis are introduced in section 1.6 but, in order to better understand and justify the purpose of this research, it is first necessary to review briefly the social and historical background to the Three Gorges, the Three Gorges tourism, and the Three Gorges Project.

## **1.2 The Three Gorges and Three Gorges tourism**

The Yangtze River, flowing some 6,418 km, is the longest river in Asia and the third longest in the world after the Nile (6,695 km) and the Amazon (6,516 km). Along with the Yellow River, the Yangtze River has played a significant role in the history, culture and economy of China. For thousands of years, people have praised the Yellow River as China's mother river and as the cradle of Chinese civilization. However, archaeologists, who have been working in the Three Gorges area of the Yangtze River in recent decades, argue that if the Yellow River is thought as the mother of the

Chinese civilization, then the Yangtze River should be the father; the fossil of Wushan Man, excavated from Wushan County at the Three Gorges region in Chongqing municipality in 1985, suggests that Wushan Man, living about two million years ago, is currently the oldest hominin in Asia (China Net News 2003). As a consequence, the Three Gorges region is thought to be the most representative part of the civilization of the Yangtze River (see Figure 1.1).

**Figure 1.1:** Map of the Yangtze River and the Three Gorges



**Source:** [http://cgee.hamline.edu/rivers/Resources/river\\_profiles/Yangtze\\_3gorges.html](http://cgee.hamline.edu/rivers/Resources/river_profiles/Yangtze_3gorges.html)

'The Three Gorges begins at Baidicheng Town (White King Town) in Fengjie County, Chongqing Municipality and ends at Nanjin Pass in Yichang City, Hubei Province, and consists of three sections: Qutang Gorge, Wuxia Gorge and Xiling Gorge, with a full length of 192 kilometers' (Li 2009: 10). The first two gorges are located in Chongqing municipality whilst the third Gorge belongs to Hubei Province.

The Three Gorges comprise a natural art gallery, each gorge defined by its own characteristics. As Li (2009) describes, Qutang Gorge (see Figure 1.2 overleaf) is the shortest of the Three Gorges, but is regarded as the most spectacular. Commencing at Kuimen (Gate of Kui), it is just eight kilometers in length and no more than 150 meters wide at its widest point, though its sides rise to some 1,200 meters. It is home to numerous ancient sites and attractions, a number of which, as discussed shortly, were submerged following the construction of the Dam.

**Figure 1.2:** Qutang Gorge



**Source:** <http://www.topchinatravel.com/china-attractions/qutang-gorge.htm>

In contrast, the second of the Three Gorges, Wuxia Gorge (see Figure 1.3), is more than 44 km long and, hence, is also known as Da Xia or Large Gorge. With twelve mountain peaks along its route, often shrouded in mist, it can be both dramatic and mysterious. Two tributaries join the Yangtze River in Wu Gorge, the Daning River and the Shennong Stream. These flow through valleys that are quieter, deeper, simpler and more primitive; the water is cleaner, the mountains are greener and the peaks are stranger.

**Figure 1.3:** Wuxia Gorge



**Source:** <http://english.sina.com/life/p/2009/1209/292060.html>

And finally, Xiling Gorge (see Figure 1.4), stretching some 78 km, is the longest of the gorges. Famous for its numerous shoals and swift torrents, it is also renowned as the most dangerous of the gorges although it also offers dramatic natural scenery along its route.

**Figure 1.4:** Xiling Gorge



**Source:**

[http://www.chinatourmap.com/yangtze\\_river/xiling\\_gorge.html#UbpPDIXBFJM](http://www.chinatourmap.com/yangtze_river/xiling_gorge.html#UbpPDIXBFJM)

Indeed, the Three Gorges collectively offer a wide variety of beautiful scenery and, as a consequence, numerous ancient intellectuals and poets, including three great poets of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) – Li Bai, Du Fu and Bai Juyi – and in more recent times, Chairman Mao, wrote memorable poems in praise of the region’s beauty (see Figure 1.5).

**Figure 1.5:** A poem by Li Bai

朝辞白帝彩云间 千里江陵一日还  两岸猿声啼不住 轻舟已过万重山  李白	<i>Leaving Baidi, cast in blush of dawn cloud, The day's passage to Jiangling a thousand miles, Monkeys cry incessantly from the river shores, This swift boat, already beyond these ten thousand mountains.</i>  Li Bai
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**Source:** <http://community.travelchinaguide.com/review2.asp?i=635>

Moreover, images of the Three Gorges have been printed on the back of 5-Yuan note of the 4<sup>th</sup> set RMB and 10-Yuan note of the 5<sup>th</sup> set RMB (see Figure 1.6).

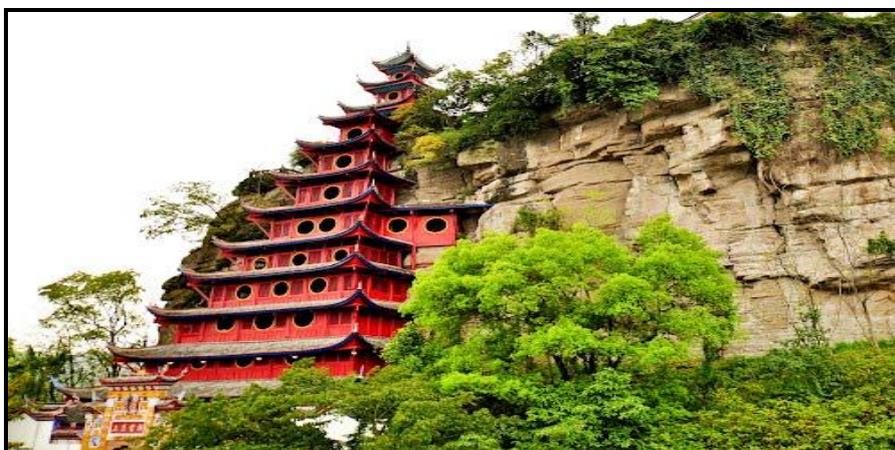
**Figure 1.6:** Image of Qutang Gorge on the back of 10-Yuan note



**Source:** <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/2834295>

At the same time, the Three Gorges boast abundant historical and cultural tourist resources. There are not only a large number of historical sites, such as the engraved inscriptions on the white cliff dating from the Song Dynasty (960-1279), the Shibaozhai Pagoda (see Figure 1.7), the Ancient Pathway, Baidicheng (White King Town), the Ancient Coffins, the Ancient Dachang Town, Huangling Temple, and the Ancient Residence, but also various local customs and cultural practices can be experienced, including the Dragon Boat Festival, Crying Wedding of Tu ethnic group, and Chinese traditional Ghost Festival at Fengdu – Ghost Town.

**Figure 1.7:** Shibaozhai Pagoda, Three Gorges, before the water storage



**Source:** <http://www.panoramio.com/photo/69673258>

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Three Gorges has long been a popular destination for both international and domestic tourists. For example, according to Kan (2010), Chongqing Tourism Administration (2012) and Yichang Tourism Administration (2012), between 1986 and 2011 the number of international tourist arrivals in the Three Gorges increased from 69,000 to more than 2 million, representing growth by a factor of 30. The main tourist markets for the Three Gorges tourism are Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, the United States, the UK, Germany and France (more details can be found in Chapter 6). Here, it is necessary to mention that the Chinese definition of international visitors can be divided into two categories: foreign tourists and compatriots. The latter refers to those citizens from Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, and overseas Chinese (Zhang, Pine & Lam 2005: 26) (more details can be found in Chapter 4). According to Mintel (2008), 'most foreign visitors to China (90%) come in groups, following prescribed routes that take in the attractions for which the country is famous' with most travel itineraries include cruising through the Three Gorges (Discover Yangtze Tours 2004-2013; Voyages Jules Verne 2013). Moreover, many international celebrities, such as Microsoft founder Bill Gates, American business magnate and investor Warren Buffett, and former U.S. Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger, have visited the Three Gorges (China Hourly News 2011; China Travel 2011; Wang 2010).

Nowadays, however, the Three Gorges are becoming yet more famous, not for their natural beauty and historical attractions but as home to the world's largest Dam which is located at Yichang City on Xiling Gorge, Hubei Province. Construction of the Dam commenced on 14<sup>th</sup> December 1994; it opened to visitors in 1997 and was completed in 2009 and, since then, has become a popular tourist site in its own right. Indeed, 'the number of tourists to the Dam has increased by 40 percent every year since it opened to tourists in 1997' (Xinhua News 2006). As a result, it can be said that the Three Gorges Dam has had a significant impact on the development of the Three Gorges tourism. According to Kan, Deng & Mou (2010), the development of Three Gorges tourism can be divided into three stages in terms of the Three Gorges Project (i) pre-construction phase of the Dam (1978 – 1991): (ii) the construction phase (1992 – 2009), and (iii) the post-construction phase of the Dam (2010 – present). The development of Three Gorges tourism at each stage has its own characteristics (see Table 1.1).

**Table 1.1** The characteristics of the development of Three Gorges tourism at each stage

Stage	Characteristics
Stage 1 (1978-1991)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inbound tourists were the main source markets for Three Gorges region;</li> <li>• The number of international visitors grew slowly and steadily each year;</li> <li>• The supply of tourism products around the Three Gorges was relatively simple. There were only long-term charter tours between Shanghai, Wuhan and Chongqing available for tourists;</li> <li>• Since the Three Gorges cross Chongqing Municipality and Hubei Province, Three Gorges tourism was managed separately. This resulted in many problems, such as disorderly competition, the failure to integrate tourism resources, and the lack of uniform service standards, potentially causing seriously Damage to the image of the Three Gorges, as a tourist destination (More details can be found in Chapter 6).</li> </ul>
Stage 2 (1992-2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the construction phase, impacted by the construction of the Dam, the number of tourists to the Three Gorges showed a fluctuant growth with a rapid increase between 1992 and 2009. Domestic tourists became the main source markets, supplemented by inbound tourists;</li> <li>• ‘Ten Years of Tourism Development in the Western Region’ introduced in 2001 was implemented successfully, in which CNTA has organized staff to compile the Tourism Development Planning in the Three Gorges region;</li> <li>• Chongqing and Hubei governments were aware of the importance and necessity of cooperation for the development of the Three Gorges tourism, and then began to explore areas of cooperation. In 2009, the governments of the two regions issued the ‘Three Gorges Regional Tourism Cooperation Declaration’ and decided to work together for the development of Three Gorges tourism. The initial cooperation included the improvement of regional transport and roads, and marketing promotion. For example, docks, roads and other infrastructures in tourist spots of the Three Gorges region have been improved by introducing foreign investment.</li> </ul>
Stage 3 (2010-present)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The number of inbound and domestic tourists is increasing rapidly. Domestic tourists remain the main source market, though supplemented by inbound tourists;</li> <li>• There are more and more luxury cruise ships used to serve international visitors;</li> <li>• New attractions have been developed effectively and reasonably;</li> <li>• Transportation road construction has been greatly improved;</li> <li>• Joint promotion campaigns at home and abroad have greatly enhanced the image of the new Three Gorges.</li> <li>• The establishment of ‘Tourism Law’ also facilitates the development of the new Three Gorges.</li> </ul>

**Source:** Adapted from China Hospitality News (2009); China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) (2009); Kan, Deng & Mou (2010); Xinhua News (2007)

As can be seen from the summary presented in Table 1.1 above, both central and local governments have made great efforts to develop the new Three Gorges tourism. However, the challenge of developing the Three Gorges into a well-known international destination continues to face many uncertainties.

### 1.3 Background to the Three Gorges Project

To build a giant dam on the Yangtze River had been a dream for almost a century in China. For example, in 1918, Mr. Sun Yan-sen first made a proposal in his Nation-Building Strategy Part II: Industrial Plan to build water gates on the Yangtze in order to block the flow of the river, to allow boats to sail upstream, and to utilize hydraulic power (Gleick 2008; CTGPC 2010). More than thirty years later, Mao Zedong, Chairman of the CPC Central Committee, wrote an ‘Ode to the River-Swimming’ at Wuhan, envisioning a project at the Three Gorges that would tame the turbulent river (CTGPC 2010). Subsequently, during the first half of the twentieth century, a severe series of floods on the Yangtze River in 1931, 1935, 1949, and 1954 resulted in innumerable deaths and huge economic loss, stimulating the government in 1955 to revitalize the plans for building a large dam in the Three Gorges (Gleick 2008; Ponseti & López-Pujol 2006), the primary objective being flood control. However, as a result of socio-political events and upheaval, including Civil War, the Communist Revolution, the Cultural Revolution, and Democracy Movement, it was not until 1993 that the proposal to building a large-scale dam on the Yangtze River was finally approved (see Table 1.2).

**Table 1.2** History of the Three Gorges Project (TGP)

Year	Relevant Events
1918	First mention of the Three Gorges project in Sun Yat-sen’s “Plan to Develop Industry.”
1931-1932	Massive flooding along the Yangtze River kills 145,000 people. Nationalist government proposes building a low dam at Three Gorges.
1935	Massive flooding kills 142,000 people.
May 1945	Dr. John Lucian Savage, a famous American expert in dam construction arrived in Three Gorges and put forward his <i>Preliminary Report on Development Plans of Three Gorges</i> .
1946	The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation helps Chinese engineers identify a site.
1947	Nationalist government terminates all design work, due to Civil War.
1949	Communist revolution in China.
Feb. 1950	Changjiang Water Resource Commission, a special governmental organization, was founded for the comprehensive management of the Yangtze River.
1953	Mao Zedong proposes building a single large-scale dam at Three Gorges to control flooding.
1954	Flooding along the Yangtze leave 30,000 people dead and one million people homeless.
1955	Soviet engineers play a role in project planning and design.

Jan. 1958	Mao appoints Zhou Enlai to begin planning along Yangtze.
May 1959	Yangtze Valley Planning Office (YVPO) identifies Sandouping site for dam.
1966	All work halted by the Cultural Revolution (1965–1975).
Dec. 1970	Gezhouba project was approved for construction, which started power generation in 1981, and totally completed in 1989, which can be seen as a test for the future Three Gorges project.
1976	Planning recommences.
Feb. 1982	Qian Zhengying communicated the instructions from the central government that the Project was listed in the recent national plan. And on 24, Nov, Deng Xiaoping, the former leader of China talked of the future Three Gorges Project in a meeting that “I myself prefer to the lower dam scheme. Be determined once be assured, do not hesitate”.
Feb. 1984	Ministry of Water Resources and Electric Power recommend immediate commencement of construction.
Spring 1985	The National People’s Congress delays a decision until 1987 because of economic difficulties.
1986	The Chinese Ministry of Water Resources and Electric Power asked the Canadian government to finance a feasibility study.
Aug. 1988	Canadian-World Bank “Three Gorges Water Control Project Feasibility Study” is completed and recommends construction at “an early date.”
Feb.-March 1989	The Leading Group for Three Gorges Project Argumentation reviewed and approved the revised <i>Feasibility Report of Three Gorges Project with normal storage level of 175m</i> , which indicates that the re-argumentation of the project concluded.
Apr.-Jun. 1989	Democracy movement sweeps through China.
Feb. 1992	Politburo Standing Committee agrees to the construction of the project.
3 <sup>rd</sup> Apr. 1992	The 5 <sup>th</sup> meeting of China’s National People’s Congress (NPC) formally approved the “Resolution on the Construction of the Yangtze River Three Gorges Project”, which indicates that the project entered in to the executive process from legislative process.
Apr. 27, 1992	The Canadian government cancels development assistance for the project.
May 1992	179 members of the Democratic Youth Party reportedly detained in connection with their protests against the Three Gorges Project in Kai County, Sichuan (HRW 1995).
3 <sup>rd</sup> Jan. 1993	The State Council Three Gorges Project Construction Committee was founded, which would include an executive office, a migrant relocation development bureau and the future China Yangtze Three Gorges Development Corporation (CTGPC).
2 <sup>nd</sup> Apr. 1993	The State Council Three Gorges Project Construction Committee defined the project management system and financing sources and approved the Regulations for Three Gorges Project Migrant Relocation at the first meeting.

**Source:** CTGPC (2010); Gleick (2008: 147-148)

**Figure 1.8:** Three Gorges Dam



**Source:** <http://www.absolutesinatours.com/Yangtze-River-attractions/Three-Gorges-Dam.html>

Over a sixteen-year period, the Three Gorges Dam was constructed and eventually completed in 2009 (see Table 1.3 for a summary of construction phases and activities). Subsequently, water was successfully stored to the 175-meter level in the Three Gorges Reservoir in 2010 (Xinhua News 2010). Today, the Dam is recognized as the world’s largest and most expensive hydropower project. Standing 185 meters high and 2.3 kilometers wide, it created a 630 square kilometer reservoir with an average width of 1.3 kilometers (Power-Technology Report 2009; Cleveland 2010) (see Figure 1.8 above).

**Table 1.3** Construction phases of the Three Gorges Project (TGP)

Phase	Year	Construction Stage
<b>Phase I (1993-1997)</b>	29 Jul. 1993	The State Council TGP Construction Committee approved the Report of Preliminary Design of the Three Gorges Project forwarded by Changjiang Water Resource Commission the second committee meeting, which indicates the project entered into the overall preparation stage for construction.
	27 Sep. 1993	China Yangtze Three Gorges Development Corporation (CTGPC) was, under the authorization of the State Council, founded in Yichang, Hubei province.
	14 Dec. 1993	The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation terminates agreements for technical services because of economic and environmental impacts.
	Early 1994	The full resettlement programme begins in earnest.
	Mid-1994	Excavation and preparation of the Dam’s foundations are underway at Sandouping, the chosen Dam site.

	14 Dec. 1994	Premier Li Peng formally declared the project under construction.
	May 1996	The US Ex-Im Bank's board votes unanimously to withhold support for the project and voices serious reservations about the Dam's environmental and social impacts and its economic viability.
	Aug. 1997	China awards a contract for 14 power-generating units to GEC Alstom, ABB, and an industrial consortium formed by Germany's Voith and Siemens and General Electric Canada (VGS).
	Sep. 1997	The State Development Bank of China signs a loan package with Germany's Kreditanstalt Fur Wiederaufbau, Dresdner Bank, and DG Bank that includes both export credits and a \$200 million commercial loan.
	Nov. 1997	The river close-off succeeded, which indicates the construction target of phase I was completed.
<b>Phase II (1998-2003)</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> Nov. 2002	The close-off of diversion channel succeeded.
	1 <sup>st</sup> Jun. 2003	The reservoir began its storage, the water reached at 135m on 10 June and at 139m on 5 November.
	16 <sup>th</sup> Jun. 2003	The trial navigation of ship lock succeeded. On 18 June 2003, the ship lock started to be open to all sorts of ships.
	10 <sup>th</sup> Jul. 2003	The first generator unit began generating and connected to power grid.
<b>Phase III (2004-2009)</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> Jul. 2004	The double-way and five-step ship lock passed acceptance by an official group (water level between 135-139m).
	25 <sup>th</sup> Apr. 2005	The 12 <sup>th</sup> generator unit began generating. Till 30 June 2005, Three Gorges power plant produced totally 68.1 billion kWh, which yields a powerful function to relieve the pressure of national electricity gap, and a big promotion to the shape of national interconnection with trans-regional transmission.
	16 <sup>th</sup> Sep. 2005	The last generating unit in the left-bank powerhouse of TGP was put into operation. With this, the 14 generating units in the left-bank powerhouse became fully operational one year ahead of schedule.
	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2006	The Dam was completely topped out.
	6 <sup>th</sup> Jun. 2006	The TGP Phase III roller-compacted concrete cofferdam was removed and the Dam started blocking water across the river; thus, the project started to provide flood control benefits two years ahead of schedule.
	27 <sup>th</sup> Oct. 2006	The TGP reservoir achieved its goal of el. 156m-water impoundment in the initial phase one year ahead of schedule.
	1 <sup>st</sup> May 2007	The dual-line five-stage ship lock was completed, significantly boosting the navigational efficiency and benefits of the golden waterway of the Yangtze River.
	Jun. 2007	The first generating unit in the right-bank powerhouse of TGP became operation.

29 <sup>th</sup> Oct. 2008	All 26 generating units in the right and left bank powerhouses in the initial design of the TGP were completed and became operational. On 30 <sup>th</sup> Oct., all of the units began commercial operations.
After flood season of 2008	Trial impoundment was conducted for the Three Gorges. On 4 <sup>th</sup> Nov., the water level at the Dam site rose to 172 meters.
1 <sup>st</sup> Jul. 2009	The daily electricity output of the Three Gorges Hydropower Plant exceeded 400 million kWh, setting a new record.
29 <sup>th</sup> Aug. 2009	The third phase of the TGP passed the final inspection for normal impoundment to 175 meters, making the completion of all construction tasks set in the project's initial design (except for the ship lift, whose construction was postponed with approval).
4 <sup>th</sup> Oct. 2009	The world's first fully artificial-propagated Chinese Sturgeon fry hatched at the Three Gorges Dam area, marking a major technical breakthrough in research on the preservation of Chinese Sturgeon.

**Source:** Adapted from CTGPC (2010)

### 1.3.1 Debates surrounding the Three Gorges Dam: the Three Gorges Dam vs. the Aswan High Dam

The construction of the Three Gorges Dam reminds us of the Aswan High Dam in Egypt, built between 1960 and 1970, which used to be the largest Dam in the world, (see Table 1.4). Although the Aswan Dam is slightly smaller than the Three Gorges Dam, its main functions and impacts are almost the same as the Three Gorges Dam (see Table 1.5 on Page 17). More importantly, since the Aswan Dam was built forty years ago, the benefits and impacts of the Dam have evolved and have been recognized gradually over time, and this provides a good reference point for considering the controversies surrounding the construction of the Three Gorges Dam.

**Table 1.4** The Three Gorges Dam and the Aswan High Dam: key facts

	The Three Gorges Dam	The Aswan High Dam
<b>The period of construction</b>	1993-2009	1960-1970
<b>Height</b>	185m	111m
<b>Width</b>	2.3km	3.83km, 980m wide at the base, 40m wide at the crest
<b>The number of generating units</b>	26	12
<b>The size of reservoir</b>	630km long reservoir with an average width of 1.3km	550km long with an average width of 12km

**Source:** adapted from Cleveland (2010); Osman (1999)

As can be seen from Table 1.5 on Page 17, which provides a summary comparison of

the benefits and impacts of the Aswan and Three Gorges Dams, the Aswan Dam has, on the one hand, achieved the goals of flood control, hydroelectric power, navigation, water supply and tourism development, and brought great benefits to Egypt. With the development of tourism in Egypt, various investments and a large number of work opportunities have been increased. For example, farmers and merchants have taken advantages of the new agricultural and business opportunities respectively, and the fishing industry has also been well developed (Fearnside 1988; Osman 1999; Ponseti & López-Pujol 2006; Wikipedia 2011). On the other hand, a number of negative impacts of the Aswan Dam have been identified, including population resettlement, threats to the environment and historical monuments, health impacts, coastal erosion, increased soil salinity and water evaporation. Nevertheless, some of these impacts, such as population resettlement and the potential loss of environmental and historical assets, can be minimized through investment and the establishment of new policies. Conversely, some impacts may be considered unavoidable, such as coastal erosion, soil salinity, and water evaporation due to climatic factors.

Most of adverse impacts of the Aswan Dam are also applicable to the Three Gorges Dam, apart from water evaporation. Over the last three decades, the debates surrounding the impacts of the Three Gorges Dam have focused mainly on population resettlement, impacts on the environment, biodiversity and archaeological sites, geologic disasters, and climate change (Acharya 2007; Bai, Wang, Zhou, Hou & Xu 2009; Fearnside 1988; Highland 2008; Rosenbaum 2006; Space Daily News 2008; Wang, Shen, Niu & Liu 2009; Zhang & Hu 2001).

**Table 1.5:** Main benefits and negative effects: the Three Gorges Dam vs. the Aswan High Dam

	<b>The Three Gorges Dam</b>	<b>The Aswan High Dam</b>
<b>Main Benefits</b>	Flood control Hydroelectric power generation Navigation Water transfer Tourism Irrigation Reservoir fisheries	Flood control Hydroelectric power generation Navigation Water supply Tourism Irrigation Fishing industry
<b>Main Negative Effects</b>	Population resettlement Environment & biodiversity Archaeological sites Coastal erosion Geological disaster Reservoir siltation Natural habitats Climate change Yangtze lake hydrology	Resettlement of the Nubian population Environment Historical monuments Coastal erosion Loss of sediments and soil fertility Waterlogging & increase in soil salinity Health impact Evaporation from Lake Nasser

**Source:** adapted from Acharya (2007), Fearnside (1988), Highland (2008), Ponseti & López-Pujol (2006), Wikipedia (2011)

Although the central and local governments in China have made efforts to minimize those impacts (see Table 1.6 overleaf), these may take time to have an effect and there are still many uncertainties. For example, with regard to the problems such as reservoir landslides, reservoir sedimentation and the protection of endangered species, the government has been undertaking control measures for number years to address these issues and some achievements are in evidence. Nevertheless, following the water storage in the Three Gorges Reservoir, many other issues and problems have increasingly appeared, including the drawdown zone of the Three Gorges Reservoir and floating debris during the flood season, which need to be solved immediately (Xinhua News 2011). The drawdown zone, also named the water-level-fluctuation zone, is a unique phenomenon of reservoirs, referring to the shore zone between full and lower levels in a reservoir. After the completion of the Three Gorges Dam Project, a 30-meter-high drawdown zone is anticipated along its banks, covering an estimated area of 450 square kilometers. Therefore, the development of the greening technology for the water-level-fluctuation zone is a key issue for the successful vegetation recovery in the region (Chinese Academy of Sciences News 2007). To take another example, with regards to the resettlement of local residents of the Three Gorges region, the Chinese government relocated 1.3 million people during the 17-year dam construction, the

resettlement process being completed in 2008 (Tan 2008: 20). However, less than two years after the completion of the Dam, a further 300,000 people had to be relocated due to the risk of landslides and water pollution caused by the Dam (BBC News 2010; Watts, the Guardian 2010). Moreover, it was reported (Wee 2012) that tens of thousands people who had been resettled in 1998 were forced to move again owing to the threat of landslides along the Dam's banks. Some were critical that such forced resettlement has left many without compensation (BBC News 2010).

At the same time, as noted in the introduction to this chapter, some problems were neither anticipated nor addressed either during or after the construction of the Dam; consequently, these have become more pressing and require immediate solutions. Fortunately, it is not too late for Chinese government to recognize the seriousness of the situation before it turns into a crisis; nevertheless, how to effectively and properly resolve these problems remains a challenge.

**Table 1.6** Major impacts of the Dam and relevant responses from the government

Major impacts of the Dam	Relevant responses from the Government
Population resettlement: a change of residence and a substantial modification of their livelihoods	A series of policies has been introduced since 1985 to improve the living standards of the resettled population, including developing local economy, the construction of new infrastructures, the improvement of sanitation and the whole health system, and the investment in education and training.
Environment and biodiversity: blocking a river can involve a series of consequences that will affect to the three environmental matrices (air, soil and water), which, in turn, would have severe consequences at different biodiversity levels (ecosystems, species and genomes).	The relevant authorities have carried out official environmental impact assessment, which has positive effects on downstream. Secondary forests and croplands have replaced most of the original vegetation. A series of conservation measures have been planned for some of vegetation types, including the translocation of populations, the establishment of species-specific reserves and the maintenance of germplasm banks. Some measures have been carried out by the authorities to protect the migratory fishes, such as a programme for the artificial reproduction of Chinese sturgeon and the prohibition of commercial fishing. A myriad of wastewater treatment plants have been built along the Three Gorges region to treat sewage and garbage.
Archaeological sites: around 1,300 sites have been excavated, but more than 8,000 sites have been inundated.	The State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) was established and responsible for designing annual Cultural Heritage Management plans in different territories and overseeing daily operations in the field. For the aboveground cultural sites, three types of preservation measures have been implemented: 'on-spot' protection, relocation, and data

	collection. Underground archaeology embraces underground sites to be recovered through archaeological methods.
Partial natural sceneries have been flooded	New destinations will be added and more hidden natural sceneries will be exploited and reached. There are also great opportunities for the development of potential tourist source market.
Geologic disasters include landslides and other slope failures, destructive waves in the river from slope failures, earthquakes and reservoir-induced earthquakes, and sediment problems.	The government and geologic experts claim that the occurrence of geologic disasters in the Three Gorges area has been relatively frequent since ancient times. The relevant authorities have made efforts to mitigate the effects of landslides and to monitor potential earthquake during and after the construction of the Dam. For example, 4 corner reflectors for InSAR data were installed in order to monitor the instability of Xintan landslide and Lianziya hazardous rock mountain. The riverbanks in some areas have been strengthened with concrete, in anticipation of the rising water level. With regard to the earthquakes, a network of 21 digital earthquake monitoring stations have been set up in the Chongqing section of the Three Gorges Reservoir area, which can monitor seismological activity around the clock and provide an earthquake warning system for the local government.
Climate Change: the Dam may be a significant source of greenhouse gases, due to the decay of submerged vegetation and carbon inflows from the catchment, and the land use change. Therefore, it contributes to the global climate change, might also induce more local climate changes, such as fog and humidity caused by the reservoir, continuous high temperature around reservoir areas in summer, and severe drought at downstream.	The government insists that the Dam will contribute to the decrease in the concentration of greenhouse and other harmful gases, but also reduction of the acid rain deposition and on halting the climate change. Also the government denies that the Dam causes severe drought at downstream.

**Source:** adapted from Heggelund (2003), Highland (2008), Ponseti & López-Pujol (2006), Ruggia (2002)

### 1.3.2 The impacts of the Three Gorges Dam on the Three Gorges tourism

Nowadays, many countries, particularly those in the developing world, including China, are attempting to develop tourism as a pillar industry to contribute to their national economies (Dunn & Jamieson 2011; Telfer & Sharpley 2008). Differing from other industries, however, the tourism industry is vulnerable and can be easily influenced by

various factors, including politics, economy, environment, natural disasters, man-made crises, climate change and so forth. Moreover, the tourism sector is closely associated with a wide range of constituent businesses, particularly the hotel industry, the catering industry, transport, entertainment, retail trade, travel agencies, electronic communications and financial services. Therefore, a crisis or a disaster that affects the tourism industry will inevitably have wide-ranging impacts (Center for Tourism Research & Development 2008; Mistilis & Sheldon 2005; Santana 2004; Soñmez, Apostolopoulos & Tarlow 1999).

The construction of the Three Gorges Dam has had significant consequences for tourism in the Three Gorges region. Certainly, the physical environment has been impacted upon. Indeed, as Table 1.6 above shows, although around 1,300 sites have been excavated, more than 8,000 sites have been inundated whilst, following the flooding in the region, the original natural scenery of the Three Gorges has been transformed. Thus, there is no doubt that the transformation of environment has impacted upon the supply of tourist resources in the region and, consequently, on tourists' experiences and perceptions. Although Li (1998) argues on a more positive note that the construction of the Dam and reservoir has resulted in the emergence of new scenic sights along the Three Gorges, how to rationally develop and fully utilize these new resources for tourists, particularly for international visitors, is another challenge.

It is also likely that the Three Gorges Project has had a negative impact on the number of tourists visiting the region, although the extent to which this is the case remains uncertain. Between 1990 and 2009, the number of international visitors fluctuated significantly, mainly as a result of misleading information provided by Taiwan media and the different stages of construction of the Dam (Bao, Xu & Dai 2002; Kan, Deng & Mou 2010). As mentioned in section 1.2, above Taiwan is one of the main source markets of Three Gorges inbound tourism; therefore, any reports related to the Three Gorges reported by Taiwan media can significantly impact the Three Gorges tourism (more details can be found in Chapter 6). In the years 1992, 1997, 2002 and 2007, the number of international visitors increased sharply within a short time, and then reduced dramatically and recovered slowly in next few years (Kan, Deng & Mou 2010). For example, after the Taiwan media released news about the Chinese government's decision to build a huge dam on the Three Gorges in 1992, many travel agents promoted a 'Farewell Tour of Three Gorges' to the public, resulting in a significant increase in the number of tourists to the Three Gorges region. The number of

international visitors to the Three Gorges increased from 129,800 in 1991 to 254,600 in 1992, and then started to reduce from 1993. In 1995, only 165,000 international visitors visited the Three Gorges. Again, more details and figures can be found in Chapter 6.

Moreover, according to Bao, Xu & Dai (2002), 'apart from the reduction of tourists, other consequences, such as quick expansion of service capacity, vigorous and non-regulated competition, the damaged investment environment for long term public infrastructure and new attraction projects, accelerated the cycle of the development of Three Gorges tourism'. Thus, it can be said that the construction of the Dam has significant impacts on the Three Gorges tourism in particular, regardless of its more general impacts on the region.

It could, therefore, be argued that the Three Gorges Dam represents a crisis for tourism in the region. Not only has its construction had an immediate impact on the tourism resource base and the nature of tourists' experiences of the Three Gorges and, consequently, on visitor numbers, but also if some of the potential issues highlighted in this chapter are not resolved, the occurrence of a future crisis is highly likely. In other words, the Three Gorges Dam project may be considered an evolving crisis for Three Gorges tourism; immediate consequences have been experienced and further impacts are likely to emerge. Therefore, it is logical to suggest that the future of Three Gorges tourism should be considered within the conceptual framework of tourism crisis management.

#### **1.4 The relationship of tourism crisis management, destination image and the role of government**

In recent decades, and with the apparent growing frequency of crises and disasters in tourist destinations, increasing attention has been paid to the study of tourism crisis management (Anderson 2006; Beirman 2003; Faulkner 2001; Glaesser 2006; Laws, Prideaux & Chon 2007; Prideaux, Laws & Faulkner 2003; Ritchie 2009; Scott, Laws & Prideaux 2008). In particular, numerous case studies have been published that have enriched the theory of tourism crisis management (for example, Carlsen & Liburd 2007; de Sausmarez 2004; Evans & Elphick 2005; Henderson 1999; Hui 2009; Morgan, Pritchard & Pride 2004; Pforr & Hosie 2007; Santana 2004; Scott, Laws & Prideaux 2008; Soñmez, Apostolopoulos & Tarlow 1999; Stankovic & Dukie 2009; Zhong & Low 2009) (see Table 1.7 overleaf).

Although crisis management has long been studied in a variety of fields, in particular in

business and organizational management, Faulkner (2001) was one of the first to explore critically the challenges of managing crises and disasters within the specific context of tourism. Drawing on the broader literature relating to crisis and disaster management, he developed a generic framework for tourism disaster strategies and, despite the growing body of literature focusing on tourism crisis and disaster management, his seminal work continues to inform research into the topic. Indeed, although Ritchie (2004: 673) emphasizes that, 'at all stages of the strategic management process, there needs to be flexibility, evaluation and potential modification to strategy development and implementation depending on the nature of the crisis/disaster and stakeholder response to strategies', Faulkner's framework provides destination managers with a guide to develop strategies for coping with various crises. However, as Speakman & Sharpley (2012) observe, it should be noted that there is limited evidence of the extent to which Faulkner's framework has been adopted or applied in practice.

**Table 1.7** Studies on Crisis Management in Tourism

Authors	Supply Side Focused	Tourist Focused	Study Area	Theory
Anderson (2006)	Yes		Australian	Preparedness, HR strategies
Carlsen & Liburd (2007)	Yes		Not specified	Tourism crisis management, market recovery and communications
de Sausmarez (2004)	Yes		Malaysia, Asia	Crisis Management policy, proactive crisis management
Evans & Elphick (2005)	Yes		UK	Crisis management in tourism
Faulkner (2001)	Yes		Not specified	Disasters, crises, risk, tourism disaster management plans, chaos
Glaesser (2006)	Yes		Worldwide case studies, but not include China	Crisis management in tourism industry
Henderson (2003)	Yes		Bali, Indonesia	Crisis, destination image, tourism
Henderson (1999)	Yes		Singapore	Crisis management, tourism planning
Hui (2009)	Yes		China	Politics, managing a crisis
Laws, Prideaux & Chon (2007)	Yes		Countries in Europe, Africa and Asia	Crisis Management in tourism

Miller & Ritchie (2003)	Yes		UK	Understand and manage a crisis
Mistilis & Sheldon (2005)	Yes		Not specified	Knowledge management for tourism crises
Prideaux, Laws & Faulkner (2003)	Yes		Indonesia	Forecasting methods, chaos theory
Pfarr & Hosie (2007)	Yes		Not specified	Proactive crisis management and HR management
Ritchie (2004)	Yes		Australia, Fiji, USA	Chaos and complexity theory, crisis management in the tourism industry
Ritchie (2009)	Yes	Yes	Worldwide case studies	Tourism crisis and disaster management
Santana (2004)	Yes		Brazil	The importance of crisis management in tourism management
Scott, Laws & Prideaux (2008)	Yes		Not specified	Tourism crises, chaos, marketing recovery strategies
Scott, Laws & Prideaux (2009)	Yes	Yes	Worldwide case studies, but not include China	Safety and security in tourism, marketing recovery strategies, tourism crisis
Zhao & Zhang (2010)	Yes		China	Government's role in tourism crisis management
Avraham & Ketter (2008)	Yes	Yes	Worldwide case studies, but not include China	Place image, image management campaign, crisis management, crisis communication management
Zhong & Low (2009)	Yes		Not specified	Complexity theory, crisis response communication

Following Faulkner's (2001) original work, a significant number of studies have focused on the evolution of tourism crises and the corresponding responses. Broadly, Glaesser (2006: 152) claims that both proactive and reactive approaches are the basic forms of crisis management strategies in tourism crisis contexts. However, de Sausmarez (2004) argues that proactive management in particular can sometimes prevent a crisis or at least minimize the impact of a crisis. Therefore, 'although reactive crisis management is essential in order to influence the direction that events take after a crisis and so increase the speed and effectiveness of recovery, the ideal is to prevent the crisis happening at all' (de Sausmarez 2004: 158). Nevertheless, the evidence of recent years suggests the occurrence of most crises and disasters is inevitable. Thus, it can be argued that more attention should be given to disaster management responses at

the 'action' and 'recovery' stages. As Ritchie (2009: 18) suggests, managers in a tourist destination should take the initiative for the development of core competencies to meet the challenges of the inescapable. Unfortunately, however, the literature on impacts of and recovery from crises has received much less attention (Carlsen & Liburd 2007).

Although Faulkner's (2001) framework demonstrates how to cope effectively with a crisis according to its evolution and indicates the importance of destinations having strategic planning for crises in place, there are still some limitations inherent in his framework. Firstly, Faulkner neglects the analysis of visitors' perceptions and attitudes as a crucial factor that might inform the development and implementation of recovery strategies. Consequently, both his and most subsequent studies focus primarily on the strategic responses to tourism crises or disasters from a supply-side perspective (governments, agencies and tourism organizations). However, by definition the tourism industry cannot exist without the participation of tourists. Therefore, visitors' attitudes towards or perceptions of a destination, namely, their destination image, influences their destination choice and travel behavior. In particular, after an extraordinary situation such as a crisis or disaster, it is immeasurably important to understand visitors' perceptions of the affected destination at the recovery stage, as it can facilitate destination managers in re-developing tourism resources and products, and in rebuilding tourists' confidence in the destination.

Certainly, a number of commentators have identified a growing awareness among tourists about health, safety and the environmental matters in recent years, and they emphasize that a consideration of consumers' destination decision-making is important for a strategic planning and management approach in a destination (Andereck 2009; Beirman 2003; Hanlan, Fuller & Wilde 2006; Laws 1995; Seymour & Moore 2000; Trotter 2001). However, to date, no link has been made between visitors' perceptions and crisis management. This is not to say that the importance of understanding visitors' perception of a destination after a crisis has not been recognized, with some suggesting that the design of marketing strategies to bring customers back should be based on an analysis of visitors' attitudes (Avraham & Ketter 2008; Ritchie 2009; Scott, Laws & Prideaux 2009). However, these proposals lack the support of empirical evidence. Thus, through the analysis of visitors' perceptions of the impact Three Gorges Dam on the Three Gorges tourism, this thesis will establish a unique link between destination image and crisis management as a basis for the development of a new conceptualization of tourism crisis management: that is, the need for recognizing visitors' perceptions/destination image, in order to facilitate the development of an

enhanced model of tourism crisis management.

Secondly, Faulkner (2001) also overlooks the fact that there are a variety of factors that may influence the management of crises in tourism destinations, not least the diverse groups of stakeholders related to tourism destinations, and different regional or national cultures. On the one hand, as Campiranon & Scott (2007: 142) claim, tourism destinations involve many different and diverse groups of stakeholders, such as the community, individual business operators, sectoral organizations, regional tourism organizations, local, state and national government representatives and many others. Thus, in a crisis management situation, these stakeholder groups may perceive and respond to a crisis in different ways according to their different objectives and priorities. On the other hand, there is a close relationship between national culture, leadership and tourism crisis management. In most cases, governments play a very important role in prevention of, response to and coping with crises. 'The manner in which governments respond to shocks in the tourism industry is important, as it may influence the rate of recovery of the industry' (Prideaux, Laws & Faulkner 2003). Nevertheless, national culture can generally influence management decision-making and leadership (Campiranon & Scott 2007: 142). Thus, variations in cultural and political backgrounds amongst different countries may lead to different perceptions of crises and different modes of crisis management. Mistilis & Sheldon (2005: 11) emphasize that tourism is a 'multi-cultural industry, and when a crisis occurs, the context differs by culture, organizational style and political structure'. In contrast to Western countries, most governments in Asia have their own culturally defined mode of crisis management. Therefore, in order to make approaches to crisis management more applicable worldwide, some elements of the process must be adjusted according to the nature of crises and specific national characteristics. In this thesis, Western approaches to tourism crisis management as portrayed within the English language academic literature will be blended with Chinese national characteristics to develop the literature on tourism crisis management and tourism planning in China.

### **1.5 Research aim, questions and objectives**

From the discussion above, it is evident that, for the purposes of this research, a number of points deserve emphasis, as follows:

- Although the Chinese government does not consider that construction of the Dam on the Three Gorges has produced something of a crisis, 'Communist Party officials admit that surrounding areas are paying a heavy, and potentially calamitous, environmental

cost. If no preventive measures are taken, the project could lead to catastrophe' (Macartney, *The Sunday Times News* 2007).

- Before the serious problems caused by Dam evolve into catastrophe/crisis, the Chinese government needs to take preventative actions, in particular to protect and support the development of Three Gorges tourism.
- Different political environments result in differing perceptions of crises and different modes of crisis management. However, most theories of crisis management still can be rationally adapted to the Chinese context.
- It is inevitable that the transformation of the environment has impacted on the supply of tourist resources in the Three Gorges area and, consequently, on tourists' experiences and perceptions. Therefore, the effective development of a marketing strategy to rebuild the Three Gorges tourism will depend on the extent to which international visitors' demands and perceptions are understood.

Drawing on Faulkner's framework of tourism crisis management, the overall purpose of this research, therefore, is to establish a link between strategic responses to a tourism crisis and visitors' perceptions of the affected destination. In so doing, it seeks to contribute further to contemporary tourism crisis management theory and models, thereby adding an additional dimension to the tourism crisis management literature in general, and tourism in China literature in particular. The research will also demonstrate the uniqueness of the case: although the consequences of the Dam's construction may be thought as a self-induced crisis, it differs from many tourism crises inasmuch as such consequences were predicted and predictable. Thus, the primary focus of this research is on the negative impacts of the Dam on the Three Gorges tourism and the strategic planning to build the image of the new Three Gorges and its tourism. In other words, it will emphasize the importance of destination image and visitors' perception in tourism crisis management theory. Thus, the aim of this study is to identify appropriate strategies, within a conceptual framework of crisis management and tourism policy development, for rebuilding Three Gorges tourism in China following the completion of the Dam. The research will critically review the development of the Dam and existing tourism policies in China as a foundation for the principal research question: what are inbound visitors' attitudes towards the Dam, and how might these inform strategic responses to the consequences of the Dam on the Three Gorges tourism. The research aim, question and objectives are outlined in Table 1.8 overleaf.

**Table 1.8:** Research aim, questions and objectives

<b>Research Aim</b>	To identify appropriate strategies, within a conceptual framework of crisis management and tourism policy development, for rebuilding Three Gorges tourism in China following the completion of the Dam.
<b>Research Question</b>	What are inbound visitors' attitudes towards the Dam? How might these inform strategic responses to the consequences of the Dam on Three Gorges tourism?
<b>Research Objectives</b>	Identify and critically appraise the main tourism policies and guidelines in China, with respect to Three Gorges tourism; Reveal the impacts of the Dam on the Three Gorges region, particularly on Three Gorges tourism; Review the circumstances of the inbound tourism in Three Gorges region, before the launch of and after the completion of the Dam (1990-2011) by analysing the transformation of international visitors' attitudes towards the destination; Identify existing tourism resources in Three Gorges region; Consider appropriate strategies, which can be supplied for the improvement of tourists' experience in Three Gorges region, according to the framework of crisis management.

## **1.6 The structure of the thesis**

The thesis comprises eight chapters, each chapter focusing on one or more topics based on the research objectives. Following this introductory chapter, Chapters Two, Three, Four and Five comprise Section One which, through a review of the relevant literatures, develops a theoretical link between tourism crisis management, destination image, the development of China's tourism, and the background and current circumstance of the Three Gorges tourism and the Three Gorges Dam. Chapters Six, Seven and Eight comprise Section Two. This discusses the methodologies applied in the research, and analyzes and draws conclusions from the combination of primary and secondary data collated during the research.

In Section One, Chapter Two commences with the review of the literatures on crisis management in general, including definitions of crisis and crisis management, and the differences between crises and disasters. Subsequently, the literature on crisis management in the tourism industry is reviewed through exploring definitions and characteristics of tourism crises, the types of crisis, the stages of a crisis, and Faulkner's tourism disaster management framework. The limitations of Faulkner's framework are also discussed. Chapter Three is divided into three parts. The first part explores the concepts of country image, identifies factors that could impact country image and the formation of country image, and presents the most applicable

measurements of country image. The second part focuses on destination image, the reviewed literatures including definitions of destination image, similarities and differences of country image and destination image, the role of destination image and the factors that may influence destination image, the formation and measurement of destination image, and discussions of how to brand a destination. In the third part, western perceptions of China are discussed. Then, Chapter Four presents the development of China's inbound tourism over recent decades through an analysis of its tourist resources, tourism policy and tourist source markets. Finally, drawing on the broader literatures of crisis management, destination image, the background and current status of China's inbound tourism development, Chapter Five introduces the case study to illustrate the impacts of the Three Gorges Dam on the Three Gorges tourism, through an analysis the transformation of tourist resources and the number of inbound tourists between 1992 and 2011. It also reveals contemporary policy and planning processes for the development of the new Three Gorges tourism.

In Section Two, Chapter Six explains the methodological perspectives and approaches applied to the thesis. It also provides a link between the two sections of the thesis, drawing conclusions from the first and introducing the second section of the thesis. Chapter Seven provides primary data gained from both quantitative and qualitative research the importance of the relationship between tourism crisis management and destination image. It demonstrates the necessity of understanding visitors' perceptions of the affected destination in recovery stage, as well as the influence of different cultural and political backgrounds on the mode of crisis management. Finally, the main conclusions from the study are considered in Chapter Eight. The overall thesis structure is outlined as follows (see Figure 1.9 overleaf):

**Figure 1.9: Thesis Structure**

<b>SECTION ONE</b>	<b>Chapter One</b>	Introduction: Background to the Three Gorges Dam and the Three Gorges Tourism, Brief Theories of Crisis Management in Tourism and Destination Image
	<b>Chapter Two</b>	Crisis Management in Tourism: Concepts, Themes and Issues
	<b>Chapter Three</b>	Country/Destination Image: Western Perceptions of China and China's Image Building: Concepts, Themes and Issues
	<b>Chapter Four</b>	Tourism Policy and Inbound Tourism in China
	<b>Chapter Five</b>	The Impacts of the Three Gorges Dam on Three Gorges Tourism, and New Tourism Planning at the Three Gorges
<b>SECTION TWO</b>	<b>Chapter Six</b>	Methodology
	<b>Chapter Seven</b>	Analysis of Findings and Discussion: Visitors' perceptions and Government Role
	<b>Chapter Eight</b>	Conclusions
		References
		Appendices

## 1.7 Chapter summary

Within the tourism literature, studies of crisis management in the tourism industry have become relatively numerous in recent decades, reflecting perhaps the increasing frequency and diversity of crises occurring in tourist destinations. However, not only are most case studies of tourism crises based on a Western-oriented paradigm, but also relatively few studies devote attention to visitors' perceptions in relation to tourism crisis management. Thus, the purpose of this research is to establish a link between strategic responses to tourism crises as proposed in contemporary tourism crisis management models and visitors' perception of the affected destination. In doing so, the thesis critically explores the development of the Three Gorges Dam and its impacts on the Three Gorges tourism as a case study to demonstrate the importance of understanding visitors' perceptions in the design of crisis management strategies.

The Three Gorges Dam is a controversial project that has attracted worldwide attention for many years. On the one hand, it has brought benefits to China's economy and improvements to Chinese social life; on the other hand, it is bringing significant adverse impacts on the Three Gorges region, particularly on the Three Gorges tourism. Consequently, some commentators consider that the construction of the Dam is a man-made crisis and the Dam itself has become a self-induced crisis. However, it differs from many other crises, the potential negative consequences brought by the Dam being both predicted and predictable. The Chinese government plays an essential role in preventing and coping with consequences brought by the Dam. For the Three Gorges tourism in particular, the government has also attempted to design various marketing strategies in order to attract international visitors back to the region. However, it is not enough to consider how to redevelop tourism resources and how to rebuild tourists' confidence in traveling to the region just from the perspective of the government. That is, it is equally, if not more important to understand visitors' perceptions in developing plans and strategies for the development of local tourism and to attract more tourists.

The first task, then, is to review of the relevant literatures with respect to crisis management in general and Faulkner's generic framework for tourism crisis and disaster strategies in particular. This is the focus of the next chapter.

## Chapter Two

### Crisis Management in Tourism

#### 2.1 Theories of crisis and crisis management: Introduction

Politics and the economy are complementary to each other (Stastny 2002). If either one of them becomes problematic or unstable it will inevitably impact on the other, as well as having significant effects on society more widely. During the twentieth century, the relationship between politics and economy was particularly pronounced as, primarily as a consequence of the chronological outbreak of the World War I, the World War II and the Cold War, patterns of the global political economy were frequently transformed.

The two World Wars constrained many countries from economic development whilst, in particular, World War II fundamentally altered the political alignment and social structure of the world. Specifically, the Soviet Union and the United States became the world's two superpowers. Viewing each other as profound enemies as a result of their diametrically opposed political systems, the stage was set for the Cold War which was to last around 45 years. As both sides possessed very powerful military forces, they utilized all means other than military action to weaken the opponent, such means including economic competition, military coalitions, strategic conventional force deployments, proxy wars, espionage, conventional and nuclear arms races, technological competition, and so forth. Meanwhile, the influence of the great European powers continued to decline as the decolonization of Asia and Africa began, whilst most countries whose industries had been damaged during World War II moved towards economic recovery.

With the Soviet Union's collapse in 1991, the Cold War ended and the United States eventually became the world's dominant military power in the world. Nevertheless, the Cold War had a significant and lasting impact on the world, which particularly was reflected in economic recovery and the rapid development of science and technology. With scientific and technological progress, economic globalization has become an irreversible trend (Gao 2000); indeed, nowadays the process of globalization is evidenced far beyond the economic sphere, it having a wide-ranging positive influence on international political, security, social and cultural fields. As People's Daily News (2000) claims, however, 'economic globalization involves both gains and losses and implies the coexistence of opportunities and challenges'. Its negative impacts, therefore,

cannot be ignored, and are mainly reflected in economic crisis, social unrest, national resistance and regional turmoil. Affected by economic globalization, a diversity of crises has occurred with increasing frequency in recent decades, including financial crises, political crises, terrorist crises, environmental crises and so forth. Indeed, the tourism sector in particular has seemingly experienced a growing number of crises in recent years (Lepp & Gibson 2003; Speakman & Sharpley 2012) to that extent that, as Faulkner (1991: 142) suggests, 'tourism destinations in every corner of the globe face the virtual certainty of experiencing a disaster of one form or another at some point in their history'. As a result, increasing attention has been paid to the study of crisis and crisis management in a wide variety of fields, including the financial sector, service industries, the retail sector, business enterprises and other organizations, communities and, of course, tourism. Consequently, theories of crisis management have also been further developed. The purpose of this chapter is to explore critically the concept of crisis management, both generally and in the specific context of tourism, and to introduce critique and justify Faulkner's (2001) tourism disaster management model as the conceptual framework for the research into the development and perceptions of Three Gorges tourism as outlined in Chapter 1. As a starting point, it is first important to understand what is meant by the term 'crisis' and, of particular relevance to this thesis, how it differs from 'disaster'.

## **2.2 Definitions of 'crisis' and its characteristics**

Numerous authors have attempted to define 'crisis', such definitions often varying according to the differing contexts and nature of crises in order to fully understand and embrace the phenomenon (see Table 2.1 on Page 34). However, Selbst (1978), cited in Faulkner (2001: 136), defines a crisis generally as:

Any action or failure to act that interferes with an organization's ongoing functions, the acceptable attainment of its objectives, its viability or survival, or that has a detrimental personal effect as perceived by the majority of its employees, clients or constituents.

Faulkner (2001) analyzes Selbst's definition and suggests that there are two dimensions of the crisis situation emphasized in within it. Firstly, by referring to 'any action or failure to act', it implies that the event in question is in some way attributable the organization itself. Secondly, it implies that the event must have detrimental or negative effects on the organization as a whole or individuals within it. However,

Faulkner (2001: 136) goes on to argue that 'the definition seems to exclude situations where the survival of an organization or community is placed in jeopardy because of events over which those involved have little or no control'. Booth (1993: 85) similarly suggests that Selbst's definition views a crisis as essentially negative and threatening but, at the same time, ignored the fact that a crisis could also be seen as a turning point or opportunity for some stakeholders and, as such, could be seen in positive terms.

Pauchant & Mitroff (1992: 12) provide a much wider perspective on the concept of 'crisis':

A crisis is a disruption that physically affects a system as a whole and threatens its basic assumptions, its subjective sense of self, and its existential core.

Pauchant & Mitroff, however, do not appear to accept that, in many cases, the consequences of a crisis could be far beyond a 'disruption'. Moreover, Booth (1993: 86) argues that 'this definition covers most of the types of crisis that are recognized by decision makers, but it depends on how a system is defined. If seen in terms of organization, this definition ignores completely the individual and group and their perception of a crisis'. Therefore, Booth (1993: 86) offers a more realistic definition of 'crisis': 'a situation faced by an individual, group or organization, which they are unable to cope with by the use of normal routine procedures and in which stress is created by sudden change'.

Compared with Booth's definition, Clark (1995-1996: 41) has a different understanding of crisis, as follows:

A crisis is any unplanned event that can cause death or significant injuries to employees, customers, or the public; shut down the business; disrupt operations; cause physical or environmental Damage; or threaten the facility's financial standing or public image.

According to the above definition, Clark not only emphasizes what kind of consequences a crisis is likely to bring to the internal business, but also warns that, from an external perspective, the public image of the organization may also be damaged by a crisis.

Having reviewing a broad literature on crisis management, Coombs (2012: 2) accepts that 'there is no one accepted definition of a crisis'. Therefore, he attempts to provide a new, all-encompassing definition through synthesizing various perspectives on crises and, in particular, through capturing the common traits that other commentators have identified when describing crises. Consequently, Coombs (2012: 2) defines a crisis as the perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organization's performance and generate negative outcomes.

**Table 2.1: Definitions of a 'crisis'**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Hermann (1972)	An organizational crisis threatens high-priority values of the organization, presents a restricted amount of time in which a response can be made, and is unexpected or unanticipated by the organization.
Fink (1986: 15)	Crisis is an unstable time or state of affairs in which decisive change is impending - either one with the distinct possibility of a highly undesirable outcome or one with the distinct possibility of a highly desirable and extremely positive outcome.
Shrivastava (1987)	Crisis events, as low probability, high consequence events, could threaten organizational legitimacy, profitability and viability.
Barton (1993: 2)	A major unpredictable event that has potentially negative results. The event and its aftermath may significantly Damage an organization and its employees, products, services, financial condition, and reputation.
Soñmez, Backman & Allen (1994)	Any event, which creates negative publicity and the period of time after a disaster occurrence, which lasts until full recovery is achieved and pre-disaster conditions resume.
Pearson & Clair (1998: 60)	An organizational crisis is a low-probability, high-impact event that threatens the viability of the organization and is characterized by ambiguity of cause, effect, and means of resolution, as well as by a belief that decisions must be made swiftly.
Prideaux, Laws & Faulkner (2003)	Crises can be described as the possible but unexpected result of management failures that are concerned with the future course of events set in motion by human action or inaction precipitating the event.
Hosie (2009: 76)	Sudden, unpredictable or catastrophic occurrences, outside the firm's ordinary repertoire of experience, which present a substantial threat to people, property, assets and information.
Crandall, Parnell & Spillan (2010: 4)	A crisis is an event that has a low probability of occurring, but should it occur, can have a vastly negative impact on the organization. The causes of the crisis, as well as the means to resolve it, may not be readily clear; nonetheless, its resolution should be approached as quickly as possible. Finally, the crisis impact may not be initially obvious to all of the relevant stakeholders of the organization.

From the definitions above, it may be logical to conclude that a crisis is an event. Santana (2004: 318), however, disagrees, arguing that 'a crisis is not an event. It is a process that develops in its own logic'. Nevertheless, Coombs (2012: 2) still insists that 'crises are events that are easy to perceive as such', and suggests that this is 'why few people dispute industrial accidents or hurricanes being crises'.

Overall, then, numerous definitions of a 'crisis' have been proposed. The most widely cited are listed in Table 2.1 on Page 34.

In many studies, terms such as 'disaster', 'negative event', 'catastrophe', 'problem' or 'turning point' are often used synonymously to crisis. Inevitably, perhaps, this leads to a degree of conceptual confusion in the crisis management research literature. Consequently, Glaesser (2006: 15) clearly emphasizes that the term 'crisis' should be disassociated from various other terms that are also connected with negative events or are used instead of it, and distinguishes 'crisis' from 'catastrophes', 'turnaround', 'structural changes', and 'clashes'. With regards to the differences between 'crisis' and 'disaster' in particular (terms often used synonymously or in tandem), several authors put forward their opinions. Faulkner (2001: 136), for example, distinguishes between them by questioning whether the event is caused by the organization itself or by something else from outside the organization:

'Crisis' can be used to describe a situation where the root cause of an event is, to some extent, self-inflicted through such problems as inept management structures and practices or a failure to adapt to change. On the other hand, 'disaster' will be used to refer to situations where an enterprise is confronted with sudden unpredictable catastrophic changes over, which it has little control.

Prideaux, Laws & Faulkner (2003: 477) adopt a similar perspective, arguing that:

Crises can be described as the possible but unexpected result of management failures that are concerned with the future course of events set in motion by human action or inaction precipitating the event. .... Disasters can be described as unpredictable catastrophic change that can normally only be responded to after the events, either by deploying contingency plans already in place or through reactive response.

Conversely, however, Pforr & Hosie (2007: 77) suggest that:

Crises precipitated by disasters often occur without warning, with effects that are severe and sometimes catastrophic on the government and business communities. Conversely, disasters attributable to people, can emanate from accidents and hostile acts.

In practice, in some cases it is hard to identify the difference between 'disaster' and 'crisis'. As Henderson & Ng (2004: 411) argue, 'an outside disaster can also evolve into an institutional crisis'. Nevertheless, either a crisis or a disaster is always related to a lesser or greater extent to 'disruption' and 'damage'. Therefore, irrespective of how it is termed, it must be fully recognized by organizations or communities.

It is evident from the above discussion that to define 'crisis' seems to be a difficult undertaking. Indeed, Santana (2004) proposes that the definition of 'crisis' is problematic due to the construct itself, its application in different fields and the manner in which it is used jointly in the literature with other terms. Thus, rather than providing a precise definition, Santana (2004: 306) emphasizes some distinct characteristics of crises:

They are usually new situations to the organization, often defined as unexpected, definitely unstructured situations and outside the typical operational framework of the organization. As such, crises require a non-programmed response. They are also characterized by an excessive amount of incomplete and conflicting information.

A number of other commentators also present the common features of 'crises' in their research (see Table 2.2 overleaf). In particular, Faulkner (2001) synthesizes the opinions of a variety of different authors (Fink 1986: 20; Keown-McMullan 1997; Weiner & Khan 1972: 21) and summarizes the characteristics of crises as follows:

- A triggering event, which is so significant that it challenges the existing structure, routine operations or survival of the organization;
- High threat, short decision time and an element of surprise and urgency;
- A perception of an inability to cope among those directly affected;
- A turning point, when decisive change, which may have both positive and negative connotations, is imminent.
- Characterized by 'fluid, unstable, dynamic' situations.

Faulkner's summary has been frequently cited and widely adopted by in subsequent research (Anderson 2006; Laws, Prideaux & Chon 2007; Prideaux, Laws & Faulkner 2003).

**Table 2.2** Common features of a 'crisis'

Author	Common features of a 'crisis'
Brewton (1987)	A crisis should have some or all of the following features: severe disruption of operation, increased government regulation, negative public perception of the company, financial strain, unproductive use of management time, and loss of employee morale and support.
Reilly (1987)	A crisis implies elements of magnitude, the need for taking action, and the necessity of a timely response.
Keown-McMullan (1997)	Contrary to popular opinion, a crisis is not always bad or negative for an organization. A crisis could, therefore, be considered as a turning point. To qualify as a crisis, the entire foundation of an organization or business must be threatened. The idea of urgency and the speed with which decisions must be made are key components.
Ritchie (2009: 4)	Common characteristics of crises tend to be that they are internal and thus the organization has power or influence over a crisis. Another common theme expressed in the definitions is that the scale of Damage appears to be a key-differentiating factor. The urgency and speed of dealing with an incident is also a key point in many of the definitions and suggests that crises may be surprises. Another theme is that a crisis is often a turning point for an organization, which can have both positive and negative impacts and transformations for businesses and communities

Thus, just as it has been difficult to achieve consensus in defining crisis, so too has universal agreement over the characteristics of a crisis proved elusive. Hosie (2009: 76) criticizes that 'a complex discourse has emerged from the literature on the nature of crises. But commentators in the area continue to give vague descriptions leading to even more generalized conceptualizations of what constitutes and causes crises'. Thus, he suggests that 'a more definite description and subsequent definition of the actual complexion of crises is crucial to the progress of this discourse. More discussion is needed to circumscribe the essential nature of crises in order to more clearly describe and define the term' (Hosie 2009: 76).

### 2.2.1 Types of crisis

Having attempted to define what 'crisis' is and to identify its essential characteristics, many authors go on to attempt to identify various types of crisis, for different forms or manifestations of crisis can lead to different forms of organizational impacts and responses (Selbst 1978). Thus, it is important to identify the potential types of crisis an organization may face before it can propose strategic plans for such crises. 'Various scholars have categorized crises by their duration (short, long), their geographical scale (local, regional, national or international) or the scale of the Damage they do to lives and property' (Avraham & Ketter 2008: 80). For example, Glaesser's (2006: 17) classification, which is related to the field of place marketing, is by determined cause. He suggests a list of five possible crises every place should be prepared for:

1. *Crime-related* events, such as robbery, rape, murder or kidnapping;
2. *Terror-related* events, such as bombing of public places or plane hijackings;
3. *Political unrest* events, such as violent demonstrations, uprisings or riots;
4. *Natural disaster* events, such as earthquakes, forest fires, hurricane or tsunami;
5. *Epidemic-related* events, such as SARS, AIDS or foot and mouth disease.

Evans & Elphick (2005), however, argue that 'the most useful typologies for managers perhaps focus on the gestation period for crises' whilst Booth (1993: 87) proposes three types of crises:

1. *Gradual external erosion, internal decline, increasing threat* to part of organization (creeping crisis);
2. *Periodic threat or loss* to part or whole of organization;
3. *Sudden threat or loss* to whole of organization

Similarly, Parsons (1996) also suggests three types of crises, but uses different terms:

1. *Immediate crises*: where little or no warning exists therefore organizations are

unable to research the problem or prepare a plan before the crisis hits.

2. *Emerging crises*: these are slower in developing and may be able to be stopped or limited by organizational action.

3. *Sustained crises*: that may last for weeks, months or even years.

Glaesser (2006: 15-16), also focusing on the temporal aspects of crises, uses the term 'time pressure' as a characteristic to divide the phases of a crisis in to potential, latent and acute crises:

1. *Potential crises* are characterizing a phase in which the crisis is only an imaginary construct. They are neither ascertainable nor existent.

2. *Latent crises* describe the phase in which the crisis has already broken out but is not yet identifiable with the normal quantitative instruments available to the company.

3. *The phase of an acute crisis* is the period of time in which the destructive effect of the crisis is perceived and the company strives to cope.

In comparison with the above, however, Seymour & Moore (2000: 10) and Clarke & Varma (2004) consider that there are essentially two types of crisis: either the 'cobra' or the 'python'.

1. *A Cobra crisis*: it is typified by a sudden disaster and essentially leads to a defensive response, which relies on a known and trusted approach;

2. *A Python crisis*: it gradually creeps up on an organization and triggers a bureaucratic approach, where a crisis is not identified, but is negotiated when recognized.

The extent to which the Three Gorges Dam project and its subsequent impacts, both generally and on the tourism sector in particular, may be characterized by one or more of the above definitions is considered in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.3.2). Generally, however, it is evident from this brief review that, perhaps inevitably given the infinite variety of contexts within which they may occur, different commentators have different ideas about the types and characteristics of crises. That is, defining a crisis precisely may be an impossible task. Nevertheless, irrespective of the different forms a crisis

may take, a typology of crises is useful for crisis management, particularly for those local decision-makers who are interested in knowing what possible crises they should be prepared for and in accumulating knowledge for managing them (Avraham & Ketter 2008).

### **2.2.2 Definitions of crisis management**

Crisis management has been a recognized practice since the 1960s when the phrase was first coined, emerging from the field of conflict resolution and diplomacy (de Sausmarez 2004). Crisis management is thought to play a significant role in preventing, responding to and coping with the diversity of crises or disasters which organizations (or, in the case of tourism, destinations) face; effective crisis management may not only facilitate control of the negative situation, but also minimize the losses that may result from it. For example, Hosie (2009: 77) stresses that 'the capacity of a business to successfully deal with a crisis is an important management competency which determines the capacity to avoid or reduce the consequences of the ensuing response'.

Darling, Hannu & Raimo (1996) define crisis management as 'a series of functions or processes to identify, study and forecast crisis issues, and set forth specific ways that would enable an organization to prevent or cope with a crisis'. More specifically, Santana (2003) interprets crisis management as:

...an ongoing integrated and comprehensive effort that organizations effectively put into place in an attempt to first and foremost understand and prevent crisis, and to effectively manage those that occur, taking into account in each and every step of their planning and training activities, the interest of their stakeholders.

Coombs (2012: 6) and Mitroff (2005: 205) emphasizes that crisis management is not only a form planning, but also a process. Mitroff (2005: 205) defines:

Crisis management is systemic. It is the process of thinking about a wide range of potential crises and how they can happen to any business. In addition, it is anticipating the broad range of systems whose failure can cause crises. Finally, it is about planning for the actions of a wide variety of stakeholders that effect, and in turn are affected by, major crises.

Glaesser (2006: 22), however, simplifies the definition of crisis management as 'the strategies, processes and measures, which are planned and put into force to prevent

and cope with crises. Indeed, Avraham & Ketter (2008) state that Glaesser provides the definition of the modern paradigm for crisis management; whereas the traditional paradigm focused on the coping stage, Glaesser's definition emphasizes the role of planning and prevention as being of equal value in the management processes. Agreed with Glaesser, Coombs (2012: 5) identifies two main functions of crisis management in an organization: to prevent crises and to lessen the negative outcomes of a crisis.

In contrast, in order to develop a better understanding of crisis management, Mitroff & Anagnos (2001: 6) clearly identify the distinction between emergency and risk management and crisis management. Reflecting the distinction between 'disaster' and 'crisis' as discussed in Section 2.2 above, the former, emergency / risk management, is designed to deal primarily with natural disasters that are inevitable, whereas the latter mainly addresses man-made or human-caused crises that are avoidable. Nevertheless, irrespective of these differing definitions, it is clearly evident that crisis management embraces two broad functions: first, to prevent a crisis in the first place and, secondly, to cope effectively with a crisis when it cannot be prevented. Even so, Mitroff & Anagnos (2001: 7) also believe that 'crisis management is broader than dealing with crises alone. It provides a unique and critical perspective on the new management skills and the new types of organizations that will be required in the twenty-first century'. In other words, they suggest that crisis management should be an integral element of the management of contemporary organizations. In the context of this thesis, this of course reflects Faulkner's observation, noted earlier in this chapter, that 'tourism destinations in every corner of the globe face the virtual certainty of experiencing a disaster of one form or another at some point in their history' (Faulkner 2001: 135). That is, crisis management should be an identifiable and indispensable element of destination management.

Significantly, however, although researchers and scholars have over the last two decades repeatedly stressed the importance of crisis management, examples or cases of the failure to manage a crisis appear to be far more numerous than the successful management of crises:

Although many businesses leaders acknowledge that crises are a given for virtually every business firm, many of these firms do not take productive steps to address crisis situations. .... Companies generally go to great lengths to plan their financial growth and success. But when it comes to crisis management, they often fail to think and prepare for those

eventualities that may lead to a company's total failure. .... [As a result] When a crisis arises, the company will usually spend much more to solve the problem than the cost of having a strategic team continuously in operation. (Kash & Darling 1998: 179-180)

In addition, a survey conducted by CIRI & Fleishman-Hillard Inc. (2011) polled financial analysts and investor relations officers (IROs) at companies across Canada and the United States on operational and corporate crisis preparedness. It found that whilst many companies are mindful of the potential damage crises can cause to their sales, reputation and share value, few have an effective crisis management plan in place to deal with negative scenarios — and if they do it is likely out of date.

From the organizational perspective, however, it can be argued that there are a number of factors that may limit their ability, particularly in the case of small- or medium-size businesses, to develop and implement strategic planning for crisis management. For example, it requires time, drive and imagination on the part of managers to envisage different crisis scenarios and to devise appropriate and rational strategic planning to cope with such crises. Moreover, such planning also represents a potentially significant investment in human, material and financial resources that may not be available in smaller organizations whilst, as de Sausmarez (2004) observes in the context of tourism, the cultural background of organizations / managers may determine their willingness to prepare for and their responses to crises. At the same time, according to Hosie (2009: 79-80), 'perhaps the lack of readiness [in many companies] is linked with the myths about planning. Such plans are often seen as a waste of resources and can lead to inflexibility in relation to making the necessary changes to meet an unexpected occurrence'.

Nevertheless, on the whole, 'large (500 or more employees) and medium (100-499 employees) organizations are more likely than small organizations (1-99 employees) to offer formal disaster preparedness plans', according to the SHRM 2005 Disaster Preparedness Survey Report (Nancy, SPHR & GPHR 2005). This of course has implications for crisis management in tourism given the well-known predominance of micro- and small businesses within the sector. Indeed, as the next section discusses, although there is widespread awareness of the need for crisis planning and management in tourism, evidence of it in practice is more limited (Beirman 2003; Faulkner & Vikulov 2001; Hystad & Keller 2008).

### **2.3 Crisis management in the tourism industry**

Having considered the theory of crisis and crisis management in general, it is now necessary, given the focus of this thesis, to review crisis management in the tourism industry in particular as a framework and foundation for the subsequent research.

Given the nature of tourism in terms of its scale, diversity and site-based consumption, it is widely considered to be an industry that is one of the most susceptible and vulnerable to crisis (Cioccio & Michael 2005; Kuo, Chen, Tseng, Ju & Huang 2007; Mao, Ding & Lee 2010; Mistilis & Sheldon 2005; Santana 2004; Soñmez, Backman & Allen 1999). Since 'the tourism industry encompasses multiple interrelated businesses' (Centre for Tourism Research & Development 2008), including the hotel / accommodation sector industry, the catering industry, transport, entertainment, retail trade, travel agencies, electronic communications, banks and Bureaux de Change and so on, once a crisis or disaster occurs the impacts may be felt directly or indirectly across a number of sectors.

Over the last twenty years or so, tourism has experienced a diversity of disasters and crises with apparently increasing frequency, including: the Asian financial crisis 1997-98 (de Sausmarez 2004); the UK Foot-and-Mouth Crisis 2001 (Miller & Ritchie 2003; Sharpley & Craven 2001); the Bali bombings 2002 (Henderson 2003); '9/11' terrorist attacks 2001 (Blake & Sinclair 2003; Goodrich 2002); the SARS outbreak 2003 (Henderson & Ng 2004; Kuo, Chen, Tseng, Ju & Huang 2007; Mason, Grabowski & Du 2005; Zeng, Carter & de Lacy 2005); the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami 2004 (Carlsen & Hughes 2007; Sharpley 2005a); the political crisis in Thailand 2005-06 and 2008-10 (Jarumaneerat & Promsivapallop 2012); the global financial crisis 2008-09 (Smeral 2010; Song & Lin 2010) and the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis in Japan 2011 (Sakaki & Lukner 2013; The Sasakawa Peace Foundation 2012). Over this period, and as a result of these crises, many tourist destinations have been affected to a lesser or greater degree, with some suffering heavy losses and only achieving recovery in the longer term.

Moreover, 'with tourism now being 'big business' based on more than one billion international visitors per year, any crisis is likely to have a much stronger negative impact compared to the past and will affect a much larger part of the population' (Pforr 2009: 38). Consequently, increasing attention has been paid to crisis management in the tourism literature. Some of the first research was undertaken in the 1980s (for example, D'Amore & Anuza 1986; Lehrman 1986; Murphy & Bayley 1989; Scott 1988). Since the publication of Falkner's seminal paper in 2001, however, increasing research

has been undertaken and a large number of case studies have been used to enrich the theory of tourism crisis management. These consider, amongst other things, its relationship with human resource development (Pforr & Hosie 2007); strategies for marketing recovery (Carlsen & Liburd 2007; Scott, Laws & Prideaux 2008; Stankovic & Dukie 2009); crisis response communication management (Morgan, Pritchard & Pride 2004; Zhong & Low 2009); tourism policy development (de Sausmarez 2004); and, strategic responses to terrorism, financial crisis or natural disasters (Evans & Elphick 2005; Henderson 1999; Hui 2009; Santana 2004; Soñmez, Apostolopoulos & Tarlow 1999). Additionally, in order to better understand tourism crises, many authors (Beirman 2003; Faulkner 2001; Glaesser 2006; Santana 2004) have attempted to define tourism crises, to identify the essential characteristics and types of crisis, to list the stages of a crisis and, in particular, to propose a strategic and holistic approach to crisis management.

### **2.3.1 Definition of tourism crisis**

Within tourism studies, the concept of 'crisis' has been defined quite specifically. For example, modifying Faulkner's (2001) definition and relating it to the crises examined in the study, Beirman (2003: 4) defines a destination crisis in the following terms:

A crisis is a situation requiring radical management action in response to events beyond the internal control of the organization, necessitating urgent adaptation of marketing and operational practices to restore the confidence of employees, associated enterprises and consumers in the viability of destination.

Glaesser (2006: 14), however, proposes that a tourism crisis is a process and suggests that:

A crisis is an undesired, extraordinary, often unexpected and timely limited process with ambivalent development possibilities. It demands immediate decisions and countermeasures in order to influence the further development again positively for the organization (destination) and to limit the negative consequences as much as possible. A crisis situation is determined by evaluating the seriousness of the occurring negative events, which threaten, weaken or destroy competitive advantages or important goals of the organization/destination.

Expanding on Pearson & Clair's (1998) definition (see Table 2.1 in Section 2.2 above), Schmidt & Berrell (2007: 68) stress 'a crisis in global tourism is a low probability, high impact event that threatens the viability of tourism and its stakeholders, either directly or indirectly'.

As observed in Section 2.2, there is no an accepted definition of crisis, although the characteristics of every crisis generally include unexpectedness, urgency and danger. 'Tourism crises usually share these attributes; however, certain crisis situations can be predicted and lack immediacy' (Henderson 2007: 3). For example, in this thesis, and as mentioned in Chapter 1, the main negative impacts and potential consequences of the Three Gorges Dam, including resettlement of local residents, the transformation of the Three Gorges' landscape, the submerging of some archeological sites, water pollution and so forth, were predicted by the Chinese government before the construction of the Dam. Moreover, from the geological and environmental perspective, some potential consequences, such as water pollution, emerge slowly and need time to be identified (More detail can be found in Chapter 5). Therefore, as a unique and special case, the Three Gorges Dam is a valid focus for research, specifically as an emerging crisis.

As emphasized in Chapter 1, this research draws specially on Faulkner's framework of tourism crisis management in order to establish a link between strategic responses to a tourism crisis and visitor's perceptions of the affected destination. Therefore, the following section provides an insight into Faulkner's theory of crisis management in tourism.

### **2.3.2 Crisis management in tourism and Faulkner's tourism disaster management framework**

According to Pforr (2009), the literature on tourism crisis management appears to be fragmented and disjointed, though most researchers borrow from the management, marketing and, in particular, the general crisis management literature. Indeed, although increasing academic attention has in more recent years been paid to crisis management in tourism with a corresponding growth the number of publications on crisis management specifically in the field of tourism, it still remains relatively under-researched in comparison to more general studies of organizational and business crisis management.

Reflecting the characteristics and typologies of crises, a number of authors have

proposed the stages of a crisis (Fink 1986; Roberts 1994). Indeed, Faulkner (2001), noting the absence of theoretically robust frameworks for crisis management in tourism, draws on the ideas of Fink and Roberts to identify six stages in the 'lifecycle' of a crisis / disaster (see Table 2.3).

**Table 2.3** The stages of a disaster

Faulkner's stages	Fink's stages	Roberts stages
1. Pre-event		<i>Pre-event:</i> where action can be taken to prevent disasters (e.g. growth management planning or plans aimed at mitigating the effects of potential disasters)
2. Prodromal	<i>Prodromal stage:</i> when it becomes apparent that the crisis is inevitable	
3. Emergency	<i>Acute stage:</i> the point of no return when the crisis has hit and Damage limitation is the main objective	<i>Emergency phase:</i> when the effects of the disaster has been felt and action has to be taken to rescue people and property
4. Intermediate		<i>Intermediate phase:</i> when the short-term needs of the people must be dealt with – restoring utilities and essential services. The objective at this point being to restore the community to normality as quickly as possible
5. Long term (recovery)	<i>Chronic stage:</i> clean-up, post-mortem, self-analysis and healing	<i>Long-term phase:</i> continuation of the previous phase, but items that could not be addressed quickly are attended to at this point (repair of Damaged infrastructure, correcting environmental problems, counseling victims, reinvestment strategies, debriefings to provide input to revisions of disaster strategies)
6. Resolution	<i>Resolution:</i> routine restored or new improved state	

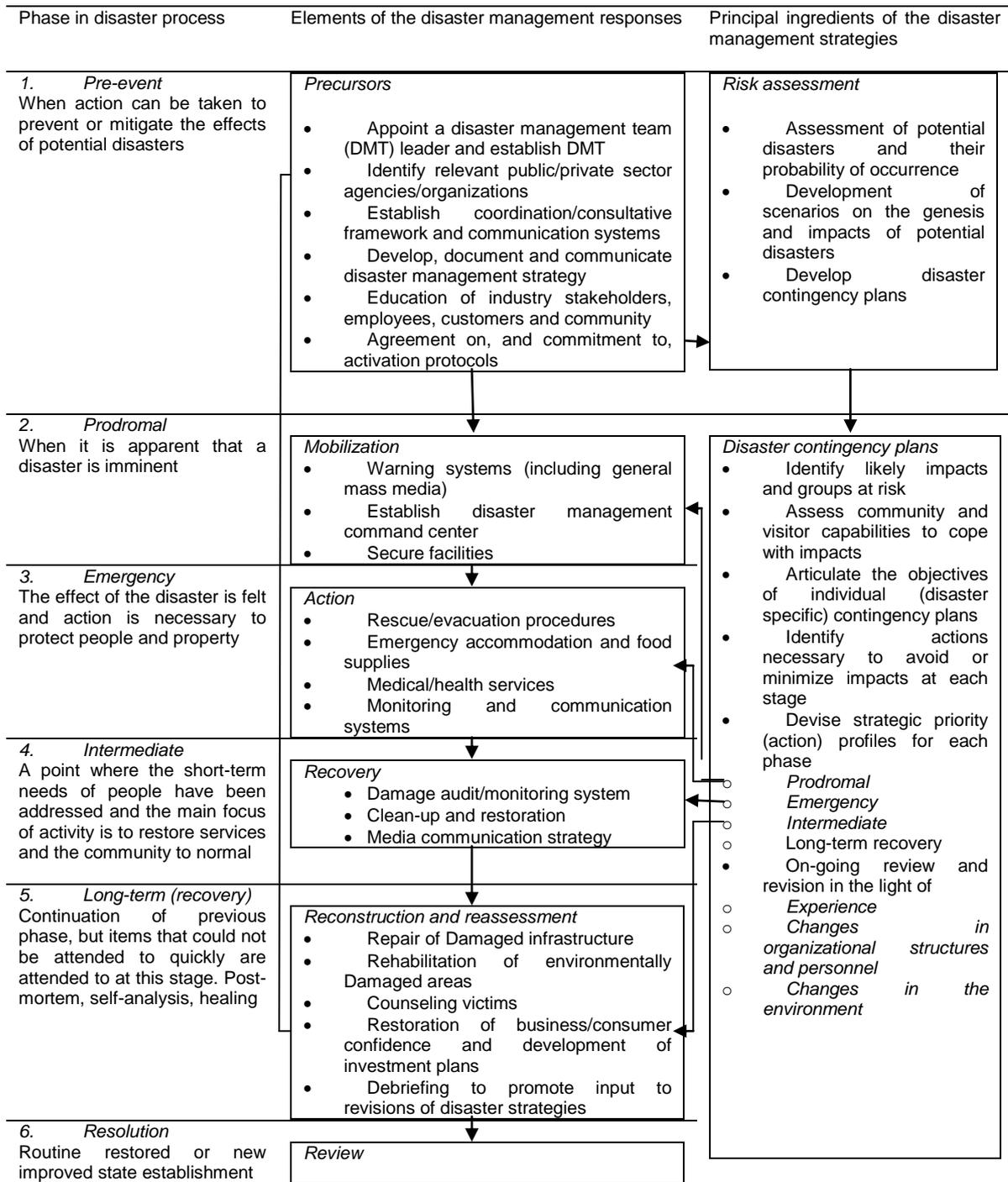
**Source:** Faulkner (2001: 140)

Since it was published in 2001, Faulkner's research has not only made a significant contribution to the study and understanding of crisis management within the tourism,

but it arguably remains the seminal work providing the foundation and focus for much subsequent research in the field. As noted above, Faulkner recognized that one of the reasons for the limited progress that had been made in the advancing of knowledge and understanding of tourism disasters and, indeed, the lack of disaster management frameworks, was the limited development of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks required to underpin the analysis of the phenomenon. Therefore, building on the concept of the lifecycle of a disaster, he developed a generic framework for tourism disaster management strategies (see Figure 2.1 overleaf) based on the broader literature relating to crises and disaster management. According to Niininen & Gatsou (2010: 194): 'the value of such a framework is in detailing the steps tourism management teams should take at each stage of the crisis situation', offering guidance and support to managers dealing with acute situations.

This framework is also regarded as 'one of the most appropriate for systematically analysing crisis management processes in the tourism industry' (Hosie 2009: 80). Consequently, it has been widely applied to many subsequent studies of tourism crisis management (Hosie 2009; Laws, Prideaux & Chon 2007; Mistilis & Sheldon 2005; Niininen & Gatsou 2010; Ritchie 2009; Scott, Laws & Prideaux 2008; Sharpley 2005b) and is frequently tested by other researchers through the use various real life case studies, such as 2001 UK Foot-and-Mouth outbreak in the UK in 2001 (Miller & Ritchie 2003), the terrorist attack on Bali in 2002 by Henderson (2003), and the impact of SARS on hotels in Singapore by Henderson & Ng (2004).

**Figure 2.1 Tourism disaster management framework**



**Source:** Faulkner (2001: 144)

In this framework, the six phases of the disaster process or lifecycle identified in Table 2.3 above, including pre-event, prodromal, emergency, intermediate, long-term recovery and resolution are further explained. At each phase, appropriate elements of the disaster management response are identified: precursors, mobilisation, action,

recovery, reconstruction and reassessment, and review. The principal ingredients of the disaster management strategy are developed in terms of the disaster management responses, and then are used back to management responses. For example, pre-event is identified as the stage when actions may be taken to prevent or mitigate the effects of potential disasters, a factor that will be repeatedly emphasized throughout the research. At this phase, precursors, as the first element of the disaster management responses, are required, which include:

- Appoint a disaster management team (DMT) leader and establish DMT
- Identify relevant public/private sector agencies/organizations
- Establish coordination/consultative framework and communication systems
- Develop, document and communicate disaster management strategy
- Education of industry stakeholders, employees, customers and community
- Agreement on, and commitment to, activation protocols

It is suggested that the appointment of DMT leader and the establishment of DMT are the most important actions, as other subsequent tasks are difficult to implement without them. As McKenzie (1994: 21) stresses, 'it is important to establish a crisis management team, with a clear chain of command, well in advance of any crisis'.

Once the constituent precursor elements have been established or identified, the relevant strategy, namely risk assessment, is then put in place. This includes:

- Assess potential disasters and their probability of occurrence
- Develop scenarios on the genesis and impacts of potential disasters
- Develop disaster contingency plans

Each step is closely linked together in order to avoid or minimize the impact of a disaster. Disaster contingency plans are developed to cope with the situations that a disaster is inevitable and causes varying degrees of impacts.

Faulkner (2001) emphasizes that prerequisites of effective tourism disaster management planning include a co-ordinated team approach, consultation and commitment. Faulkner (2001) also proposes that ingredients of the tourism disaster management planning process and its outcomes should include risk assessment, prioritization, protocols, community capabilities audit, disaster management command

center, media and monitoring activities, warning systems, flexibility, and involvement, education and review.

This framework provides destination managers with a guide to developing strategies for coping with various crises. Such planning is beneficial to managers to reduce risk efficiently and respond to the public swiftly. Ritchie (2004), however, emphasizes that 'at all stages of the strategic management process, there needs to be flexibility, evaluation and potential modification to strategy development and implementation depending on the nature of the crisis/disaster and stakeholder response to strategies'.

Following Faulkner's (2001) study, there have been a significant number of studies focusing on the evolution of crises in tourism and the corresponding responses. Although Glaesser (2006: 152) claims that proactive and reactive approaches together comprise the basic forms of crisis handling strategies in tourism crisis management, some commentators pay more attention to the study of proactive approaches, whilst others stress the importance of reactive approach.

For those who focus on the research into the reactive approach, even though they acknowledge the importance of proactive management for preventing and minimizing the impact of a crisis or a disaster, they still insist that the evidence of recent years has suggested the occurrence of most crises and disasters is unpredictable and inevitable. Therefore, more attention should be given to disaster management responses at the 'action' and 'recovery' stages. For example, Carlsen & Liburd (2007) criticize the fact that prevention and management of crises pervade the literature. Most of the literature is prescriptive in nature, describing strategies and techniques for assessing and managing risk and preventing crises, or descriptive in terms of the immediate, short-term effects on tourism destinations. Conversely, impacts and recovery have received much less attention.

Nevertheless, most researchers agree that the consideration of how to effectively prevent a crisis should be prioritized. For example, Mayers & Holusha (1986: 22) insist that 'proper preparation can prevent some crises and minimize the impact of those which cannot be avoided'. Similarly, Smallman (1996) suggests that there is a need for managers to move from a current dominant reactive paradigm to a proactive, holistic approach to dealing with chaos and change. Ritchie (2004) states although it is difficult to predict or control crises or disasters, managers are still able to reduce risk and prepare so that they can deal with such incidents more effectively than without any preparation. de Sausmarez (2004: 158) also states that 'although reactive crisis management is essential, in order to influence the direction that events take after a

crisis and so increase the speed and effectiveness of recovery, the ideal is to prevent the crisis happening at all'. de Sausmarez (2004: 169) goes on to suggest that it would be beneficial for 'regional associations [to] take a lead in developing some kind of crisis management provision with joint marketing initiatives'. Hosie (2009: 76) clearly points out that 'a proactive approach to preparing for and managing crises is arguably more effective than the passive approach, which is an integral part of any commercial recovery from such events. To be most effective, such preparation should ideally take place before crises occur, not only as a response to such occurrences'. However, according to de Sausmarez (2004:158) 'few countries appear to make any advance preparations or provision for the anticipation of a crisis. Instead, they tend to wait until after the event before starting to consider what action to take'.

With respect to the case of the Three Gorges Dam, what the Chinese government did was to take measures in advance for the prevention of possible disasters, irrespective of international and social public opinion might have obliged them to do so. Moreover, there is no suggestion that the Chinese government had underestimated the seriousness of the potential crises that might arise. In short, this is a case that demonstrates how the Chinese government had acknowledged that the adoption of a proactive approach would, to a great extent, contribute to the prevention of a potential disaster/crisis.

### **2.3.3 The limitations of Faulkner's framework**

Although Faulkner's (2001) framework demonstrates how to cope effectively with a crisis according to the evolution of the crisis, as well as indicating the importance of having strategic planning for crises, there are both some limitations and some crucial factors missing in the framework.

In common with other 'blueprint', prescriptive models of tourism crisis management, Faulkner's framework, commencing as it does with the preparatory stage including risk assessment and scenario planning, implicitly assumes that crises are predictable in both occurrence and form. However, as Speakman & Sharpley (2012) observe, this is rarely the case. Crises and/or disasters are unpredictable in their evolution and outcomes. Thus, creating realistic and likely scenarios is problematic, potentially time-wasting and fruitless (de Sausmarez 2004) and may lead to complacency and unpreparedness for an event when it actually occurs (Evans & Elphick 2005). Moreover, the linear, prescriptive nature of many frameworks, including Faulkner's, reflect the assumption that crises follow a defined path or lifecycle. Again, however, this is not

necessarily the case. Crises may be complex and chaotic in nature, displaying the characteristics of different stages at the same time, and as a consequence a linear planning model is unable to cope with this complexity (Paraskevas 2006). Equally, all crises are different, each requiring a unique response (Carlsen & Hughes 2007).

Nevertheless, Faulkner's framework is appropriate to the case of the Three Gorges Dam, particularly as the phases of a crisis as defined in the framework are clearly evident. However, three omissions serve to weaken the potential contribution of the framework to crisis management. Firstly, Faulkner neglects the analysis of visitors' perceptions and attitudes as a crucial factor that might inform the development and implementation of recovery strategies. Consequently, most subsequent studies largely focus on the strategic responses to the crises or disasters from a supply side perspective (governments, agencies and organizations). It is known that the tourism industry cannot exist without the participation of tourists. Visitors' attitudes towards a destination, namely destination image, directly influence their destination choice. This suggests that particularly, after an extraordinary situation, such as a crisis, to understand visitors' perceptions of the affected destination becomes more important as it can help destination managers to efficiently redevelop tourism resources and products, and rebuild tourists' confidence to the destination.

Although some authors (Andereck 2009; Beirman 2003; Hanlan, Fuller & Wilde 2006; Laws 1995; Seymour & Moore 2000; Trotter 2001) recognize that there has been a growing awareness among the general public about health, safety and environmental matters in recent years, and emphasize that a consideration of consumers' destination decision-making is important for a strategic planning and management approach in a destination, none of them link visitors' perceptions to tourism crisis management. For example, Laws (1995: 20) claims 'people's experience of international destinations suggests that holiday takers are becoming more experienced and knowledgeable as consumers. Tourists' destination choices involve health factors, involvement and freedom'. Trotter (2001) theoretically discusses the relationship between tourism, safety and terrorism by looking at some recent events where tourists have been subjected to physical threats or violence, and then indicates that safety has now become more of an important factor to be considered by tourists when they choose a long-haul journey. Beirman (2003) and Hunter-Jones, Jeffs & Smith (2007) also agree that a major determinant in a traveler's decision to visit a destination is the perception of risk, safety and security. Additionally, Andereck (2009: 489) stresses 'travelers also have become increasingly aware of the need for environmental protection'.

In contrast to the authors cited above, McKercher & Hui (2004) propose that most tourists have relatively short memories and will resume traveling when they feel the immediate threat has passed; therefore, disasters tend to have no lasting impact on tourist flows. However, 'tourist flows' cannot be seen as 'tourist perceptions', as it is difficult to judge if a disaster/crisis has a long-term or short-term impact on visitors' perception of an affected destination.

Few, if any, authors recognize the importance of understanding visitors' perception of an affected destination or suggest that the design of marketing strategies to attract customers back should be based on the analysis of visitors' attitudes. Certainly, Dolnicar (2007) notes that some global political events in recent years, such as terrorism attacks and the emergence of global epidemics, have reignited awareness of the importance of risk perception, adding a new dimension to the potential consequences of not understanding what scares tourists. Therefore, Dolnicar (2007) proposes that developing an in-depth understanding of the concerns tourists have and the way they might react to different kinds of events in the course of a travel or destination choice process becomes more important than ever for crisis management. Avraham & Ketter (2008: 105) suggest similarly that 'different target audiences are motivated by different needs, have different perceptions of places and are differently affected by the occurrences of a crisis event'. They go on to 'recommend five dimensions for analyzing the target audience: proximity of the audience to the place in crisis, type of audience and their size, knowledge of the crisis and of the place, sources of information and the social-political environment in which the audience live and operate'. Huang, Tseng & Petrick (2010: 206) stress that during the recovery period, 'it is crucial for destination marketers to understand touristic perceptions in order to tailor promotional messages accordingly. Communications need to address tourist concerns, change false perceptions, and reinforce positive-perceptions'. However, overall, there is a lack of empirical case studies which link visitors' perceptions of an affected destination to crisis management.

Secondly, Faulkner (2001) also overlooks the fact that a variety of factors influence crisis management in tourism destinations, including diverse groups of stakeholders related to tourism destinations, and different regional or national cultures. On the one hand, tourism destinations involve many different and diverse groups of stakeholders, such as the community, individual business operators, sectoral organizations, regional tourism organizations, local, state and national government representatives, and many

others; thus, in a crisis management situation, these stakeholder groups may not perceive a crisis in the same way, according to their different objectives and priorities (Campiranon & Scott 2007).

On the other hand, there is a closer relationship between national culture, leadership and tourism crisis management. In most cases, governments play a very important role in prevention of, response to and coping with crises.

The subject of tourism crisis management includes the government, tourism industry management departments at all levels inclusive tourism businesses. But because of the various inducements of tourism crisis and wide ranges, in order to reduce the losses the crisis has brought, the safest and the most effective management mode from crisis prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and conclusion should be the management oriented by the government. Theories related to tourism crisis management mainly involves in Chaos theory, Psychology theory, Organizational management theory, Government role theory, among which, the application of Government role theory is the important step to analyze the role of the government in the tourism crisis management.

Zhao & Zhang (2010: 1)

Nevertheless, the image of a government can often be threatened by crises if the government does not handle them well (Low, Varughese & Pang 2011). As a result, 'government efficient responses to shocks are important and will often affect the rate of recovery of the tourism industry, however, little in the tourism literature to assist governments to prepare for the unexpected, and cope with its impact' (Prideaux, Laws & Faulkner 2003: 479).

In Zhao & Zhang's (2010) research, it is suggested that before the outbreak of the crisis, the government should focus on building up a sense of the crisis, constructing early warning mechanisms of the crisis, and being well prepared to respond to the crisis. In the crisis, the government should focus on dealing with the crisis to ensure that needed resources are reasonably allocated and the losses of the affected areas are minimized. After a crisis, the government is expected to make new policy and provide capital supports for quick recovery of the affected destination. At this stage, main actions, such as reconstructing and rehabilitating infrastructures in affected tourism destination, building up the safety image of the tourism destination, smoothing

the tourists' psychological shadow caused by the crisis, providing accurate information to tourists, strengthening the marketing of the tourism brand, and introducing various tourism products, should be taken to eventually turn the crisis into opportunities. Certainly, governments may also 'enforce or implement external forces, such as regulation, government policies or changes, from other external stakeholders' (Blackman & Ritchie 2009: 60).

Indeed, national culture can generally influence management decision-making and leadership (Campiranon & Scott 2007). According to Schmidt & Berrell (2007: 67), 'typical Western responses to a crisis would be rooted in rational approaches underpinned by universal ideas. However, in some Eastern countries, the responses of people to a crisis will be subtly affected by differences in the prevailing cultural architecture'. Following this argument, Schmidt & Berrell (2007: 67) point out that 'the influence of Western crisis management practices on Eastern approaches to managing a crisis remains problematic'. Thus, it can be argued that although the characteristics of crises are the same or similar, the difference in cultural and political backgrounds amongst countries leads to different perceptions of crisis and modes of crisis management.

Tourism is a 'multi-cultural industry, and when a crisis occurs, the context differs by culture, organizational style and political structure' (Mistilis & Sheldon 2005). Chatterjee & Pearson (2009: 32) reveal that 'a common weakness of the scholarly research in crisis management is to routinely underemphasize a systemic thinking culture. It is essential to recognize and study inter-functional relations and motivation of the various elements of a system in order to successfully plan and implement crisis response in organizations'. Lee (2005) also criticizes that 'crisis communication theory is lacking cultural contextualization, dominated by applied case studies and is based on a Western oriented paradigm'. Differing from western countries, in many Asian countries 'losing face' is unappreciated, so even if a crisis happens, most governments are reluctant to admit it, which can directly affect the accuracy of information and timeliness of government response (de Sausmarez 2004). Therefore, in order to make crisis management frameworks more widely applicable, some elements in the framework must be adjusted according to the nature of crises and the characteristics of national circumstances.

To take China as an example for further explanation: China is not only one of four ancient civilizations, but also one of the very few contemporary socialist countries.

Crisis written in Chinese is ‘危机’ (Wei Ji), which includes two meanings: danger and opportunity. Since ancient times, Chinese people have believed that risk and opportunity co-exist. Although China has experienced numerous crises, such as 1959-61 Three-Year Great Famine (namely Three-Year Natural Disasters), 1966 the Cultural Revolution, 1989 Massacre in Tiananmen Square, 1994 the Qiandao Lake Incident, 1997-98 Asian Financial Crisis, it eventually coped with them and made good recovery from the worse situations. Nevertheless, prior to the SARS outbreak in 2003, there has typically been a lack of subsequent research and evaluation of crises. However, as Jia (2008) reveals, after the SARS outbreak, the Chinese government started to pay more attention to crisis management.

Nevertheless, the special political system of China has some advantages, which can be reflected in coping with major crises. The government of China is effectively a one-party state controlled by the Chinese Communist Party (Dumbaugh & Martin 2009). Therefore, ‘hierarchical power relationships and an authoritarian political culture remain an important and powerful factor. The autonomy of local authorities like provinces is not clear-cut and sometimes enhances contradictions. This is demonstrated by the tendencies of local governments to downplay the intensity of a crisis, which is what happened during the SARS episode in 2003’ (Hui 2009). The authorities in Guangzhou province were criticized for not doing more to stop the SARS outbreak and for not releasing information about the disease in the early stages (Hays 2008). As a result, Lai (2004) concludes, ‘these problems can only be addressed by strict disciplining from the central authority’. According to Boin, t’ Hart, Stern & Sundelius (2005), modern theories of crisis management tend to be in favour of decentralized modes of crisis operation, which is considered to yield higher efficiency and immediacy. However, within centralized states, such as China, these theories cannot be implemented immediately (Hui 2009), whilst the success of the Chinese government in managing 2008 Sichuan Earthquake crisis is a convincing case for retaining centralized control.

Thirdly, although Faulkner emphasizes the importance of media communication for crisis management, details about its strategy are only mentioned in the ‘action’ and ‘recovery’ stages. As Faulkner (2001) states, a media communication strategy can ensure that misleading and contradictory information is not disseminated, and support the coordination of responses. Indeed, ‘the media often plays a central role in tourism disaster situations, both in terms of providing important information to tourists during the emergency and in the recovery stage when other sectors of the industry and the consuming public need to be informed about the restoration of services’ (Faulkner 2001:

145). Therefore, without a good media communication strategy during a crisis, the validity and accuracy of information will be affected. Moreover, misleading information cannot only make the crisis even worse but also affect tourists' confidence of traveling back to the destination in the future.

Several authors (Avraham & Ketter 2008; de Sausmarez 2004; Grunig 1992; Ladkin, Fyall, Fletcher & Shipway 2007; Laws, Prideaux & Chon 2007; Ritchie 2004; Scott, Laws & Prideaux 2008; Zhong & Low 2009) also consider the management of communication and perceptions through a crisis communication and marketing strategy to be crucial. As Zhong & Low (2009: 271) stress, 'when an organization is threatened by external environment crisis and internal events, the need for communication increases to some extent'. 'Excellent' organizations are good at using the potential of communication management to assist in transformation and relationships with the environment (Grunig 1992). de Sausmarez (2004) recognizes the significance of communication between all stakeholders and claims that 'clear communication throughout the whole crisis period not only increases public awareness but also reduces anxiety by offering reassurance and advice'. Regular communication between government departments and between the public and private sectors would facilitate co-ordination and enhance progresses. Nevertheless, Laws, Prideaux & Chon (2007: 7) observe that although the media has a significant positive role in alerting the population to crisis situations, the visual and often-graphic nature of contemporary reporting on many occasions exaggerates the scale of the crisis and its impact, which may result in a greater impact on tourism than the crisis to a large extent.

Without doubt, when a crisis is inevitable, media communication plays an essential role at the 'recovery' stage. Nevertheless, it is considered that media communication should perform different functions at the different stages of a crisis. Its importance at the different stages of a crisis cannot be neglected. Contrasting with Faulkner's theory and other commentators, Avraham & Ketter (2008) propose an Integrated Model of Crisis Management and Crisis Communication Management (see Table 2.4 overleaf). The model summarizes and unifies the bodies of knowledge in the fields of crisis, crisis management and crisis communication management, which is based on the four stages of a crisis's life cycle – precaution, planning-prevention, crisis coping and post-crisis – and uses these stages to illustrate the different aspects, techniques and activities applied in crisis situations.

To take an example, at the precaution stage, the maintenance of the tourist destination

image can be achieved through creating rapport with the media. However, at the post-crisis stage, a good media strategy can transform a negative image of an affected destination into positive image, and eliminate potential tourists' anxiety and fear, thereby helping, to some extent, the destination return to normal operation.

**Table 2.4** Integrated model for the relations between crisis life cycle, crisis management and crisis communication management

<b>Crisis life cycle</b>	<b>Crisis management</b>	<b>Crisis communication management</b>
<b>Precaution</b>	Positive organizational environment; open communication between employees, executives and stakeholders; balanced and proper use of organizational resources; cultivating and motivating human resources	General image management as part of the place's management; media relations; allocating resources for PR; creating rapport with the media; community relations and social contribution
<b>Planning-prevention</b>	Preparing emergency response and action plan; forming crisis management team and special assistance team; risk management; signal detection	Training spokespersons; preparing ready-made media messages; issue management
<b>Crisis coping</b>	Staffing the crisis management center; operating medical team, logistic team, security team and victims' relief team; investigating the cause of the crisis	Crisis communication techniques such as quick response with one, simple message; using a single spokesperson; transparency and creating empathy
<b>Post-crisis</b>	Rehabilitation of infrastructure; reestablishing work routines; compensating victims; debriefing; updating crisis portfolios	Media strategies for improving negative image; activities to change the negative image; debriefing; impression recovery

**Source:** Avraham & Ketter (2008: 85).

Differing from Faulkner's theory, Avraham & Ketter (2008) argue that media communication is also crucial at the precaution stage of a crisis. As they (2008: 87) propose:

At the precaution stage, from the perspective of crisis communication management, this ongoing stage is used to create a strong and favorable image for the place or organization. One key factor in general image management is the creation of good media relations.... During a crisis situation negative information will naturally find its way to the media. If good media relations exist, the reporter is more likely to ask for the organization's comments and to take the organization's perspective on the crisis into consideration.

Also, Avraham (2003) found that good media relations had a positive effect on the coverage of specific places.

The development of the Three Gorges tourism during the construction of the Dam is a good case study to exemplify the importance of media communication for local governments at the precaution stage of a crisis. Following the Chinese government's announcement about the date (1992) of the construction of the Dam, Taiwan media immediately released reports about the disappearance of the fascinating scenery of the Three Gorges. These reports misled many domestic and international consumers which, as previously noted in Chapter One, resulted in a rapid increase of the number of tourists to the Three Gorges region in a short term. In 1997, when the construction of the Dam approached a new stage, similar reports appeared again, again leading to a boom in inbound tourism to the Three Gorges region (Bao, Xu & Dai 2002; Kan, Deng & Mou 2010). In the previous seven years (1992-1998), however, the local governments of Chongqing and Yichang took few, if any, actions to stop the misleading news until the development of Three Gorges tourism experienced a serious setback in 1998. At that time, limited service capacity and undeveloped public infrastructure could not satisfy both domestic and international visitors' demands and, as a consequence, the image of the Three Gorges tourism was seriously damaged. This directly impacted on the confidence of both potential return visitors and new tourists to the Three Gorges in the following years. After 1998, both local governments took a series of actions, mainly focusing on advertising and hosting international events, to rebuild the image of the Three Gorges tourism. With these efforts, Three Gorges tourism started to recover in 2001 (see also Chapter 6). As a result, it can be said that communication and communication management between the government and the public in an affected destinations is of vital importance.

## **2.4 Chapter summary**

Having reviewed crisis and crisis management in general, this chapter considered crisis management in the tourism industry in particular. Specifically, it introduced and analyzed Faulkner's tourism disaster management framework which, though acting as a foundation for subsequent research in tourism crisis management, has a number of limitations of relevance to this thesis. Firstly, the visitors' perceptions of an affected destination should be taken into consideration when devising recovery programmes and, secondly, national culture and leadership can influence the implementation of

crisis management; and thirdly, media communication is crucial for crisis management in crisis life cycle.

Given these conclusions, it is now important to review concepts and theory relevant to country/destination image as a basis for establishing a link between crisis management and destination image to further develop the contemporary crisis management model. This is the focus of the next chapter.

## **Chapter Three**

# **Country/Destination Image: Western Perceptions of China and China's Image Building**

### **3.1 Introduction**

As discussed in the introduction to this thesis in Chapter 1, the aim of the research is to establish a link between tourism crisis management and visitors' perceptions of an affected destination, the overall purpose being to develop further existing frameworks of crisis management within tourism industry. Therefore, having reviewed the literature on crisis management in general and tourism crisis management in particular in the preceding chapter, this chapter now reviews and discusses theories of country/destination image as a basis better understanding the importance of building a good image for a destination, particularly one that is experiencing a crisis.

### **3.2 Studies of country image**

Simply stated, when people wish to travel overseas for leisure purposes – that is, when they are motivated to engage in tourism – they usually decide on a particular country to go to and the specific places to visit there. In other words, when people feel the need or 'push' to travel, they will typically follow a 'tourism demand process' (Sharpley 2008: 5-6), a process of 'acquiring and organizing information in the direction of a purchase decision' (Moutinho 1987: 5) that best meets their needs. Destination choice will be based on a variety of factors, not least so-called 'filterers of demand' (Gilbert 1991: 79), such as demographic or economic constraints, but primarily on the attraction or 'pull' (Dann 1981) of the destination. That pull, in turn, will be determined by various influences, such as the tourist's previous experience, word of mouth or advertising, which may collectively contribute to their image or perception of the destination. Thus, it can be said that people's perception of a country may be a significant influence on their destination choice or, as Gilbert (1991: 79) puts it, an 'effector' of demand.

As Tunca (2007: 3) observes, generally 'a country's image has impacts on encouraging trade, tourism and inward investments to the country'. In particular, a positive country image plays a significant role in branding the country and helps it to brand its other products (Tunca 2007). Moreover, according to Lala, Allred & Chakraborty (2008), 'in many marketing studies, country image has been closely related to consumer products, but it can also be used to promote a country as a destination for foreign investment,

tourism, or settlement'. Indeed, as Kleppe & Mossberg (2001) state, a country itself is often used as the advertising or branding object in tourism marketing. That is, the national tourism board in many countries will launch international advertising campaigns in order to raise awareness and to create an image of the country as a tourist destination.

In short, country image plays a significant role in the development of a country's tourism industry. Therefore, before considering destination image in particular, it is first necessary to explore more generally the notion of country image, including what country image is, what kinds of factors may influence country image, how country image is formed, and how country image can be measured.

### **3.2.1 Defining country image**

'Numerous studies have been conducted on country image since the mid-1960s' (Han, Lee & Ro 1994), yet it is generally agreed (Li & Mizersk 2006; Roth & Diamantopoulos 2008; Roth & Romeo 1992; Tunca 2007) that Nagashima (1970) was the first to attempt a definition of country image:

Country image is the picture, the reputation, and the stereotype that businessmen and consumers attach to products of a specific country. This image is created by such variables as representative products, national characteristics, economic and political background, history, and traditions.

Following Nagashima's (1970) definition, it can be said that a country's image is, thus, associated with a wide range of aspects of its culture and society which can maintain its reputation and attract consumers to purchase its products. However, Roth & Romeo's (1992) definition of country image more closely relates to a country's products in particular:

It is the overall perception of the products from a given country based on the previous perception of the country's production and its strengths and weaknesses in marketing.

The specificity of their definition is, however, untypical, broader definitions being more usual. For example, drawing on the literature in the fields of both psychology and marketing, Martin & Eroglu (1993) develop a conceptual definition for the domain of the country image construct:

Country image is defined as the total of all descriptive, inferential and informational beliefs one has about a particular country.

Kotler, Haider & Rein (1993: 141) propose a very similar definition, country image being 'the sum of people's beliefs, ideas and impressions about a certain country'.

Both Martin & Eroglu's (1993) and Kotler, Haider & Rein's (1993) definitions thus refer to the variety of both tangible and intangible features or characteristics of a country that collectively comprise its image. Nevertheless, since 'a country's image results from its geography, history, proclamations, art and music, famous citizens and other features' (Morgan & Pritchard 2010: 42), 'country image could be associated with [specific] objects, events or persons from a country in politics and culture as well as international business' (Kleppe & Mossberg 2001).

As can be seen from these different definitions above, there is no agreed construct for country image (Li, Fu & Murray 1997). Indeed, some concepts related to country image tend to be used alternatively, further confusing the issue. In some literatures, for example, the concepts 'Product-Country Image and 'Country of Origin Image' are often used interchangeably instead of country image. 'These three types of image are closely related and somewhat overlapping, influencing each other both directly and indirectly' (Jenes 2008). However, as Kleppe & Mossberg (2001: 6) consider, 'products are excluded from the definition of country image, but country image can be associated with specific products'.

Roth & Romeo (1992) propose the concept of product-country image in order to capture the relationship between country image associations and specific product categories, such as German cars, Japanese high-tech digital appliances, and American Hollywood movies. Similarly, Nadeau, Heslop, O'Reilly & Luk (2008) also emphasize that product-country image refers to the perceptions of countries as related to the products they made, as evidenced by terms such as 'made in', 'designed in', 'head office in', and 'located in', which are often displayed on products.

With regards to the concept country of origin, Jenes (2008) considers 'country of origin to be that part of a product's overall image which is based on where the products come from. Thus, it is the result of stereotypes linked to a certain product merely because it originates from a given country'. In this sense, 'country of origin image' and 'product-country image' are not dissimilar, though utilizing either concept in place of country

image more generally is based on the premise that a consumer knows little about a particular country, but has an extensive knowledge about a specific product from this country (Han 1989). However, if a consumer has limited or no knowledge about a product from a particular country, then using the product-country image to represent this consumer's perception of this country will become problematic (Li, Fu & Murray 1997). Moreover, 'even if a consumer has certain knowledge about a product from a country, a consumer's belief about that product may not be equivalent to this consumer's belief about the entire country' (Li & Mizerski 2006). Therefore, country image differs from product-country image and country of origin and cannot be simply replaced by other concepts. Roth & Diamantopoulos (2008) review key definitions of the concepts of country image, product-country image and country of origin image, comprehensively illustrating the main differences between them as a basis for developing an agenda for future research.

### **3.2.2 Factors that influence the country image**

As is evident from the above discussion, country image comprises many elements, including national symbols, colors, clothing, typical buildings, objects, tunes, pieces of literature, characteristics of the political system, customs, historical heritage and so on (Jenes 2005). When, for example, people see those images shown in Figure 3.1 overleaf, they can tell immediately which country they represent. There are, therefore, innumerable factors that may influence a country's image, whilst some factors may play a more crucial role than others in developing a country's image. These may include population characteristics, countryside, social and cultural richness, food and beverages, economic structure, democracy and human rights in the country, international relations of the country, technical developments, the globalization of business, the history of the country, responsibilities to the environment and tourism, as well as representative products, movies, events and literature (Mayerhofer 1995; Tunca 2007). Thus, it can be argued that the maintenance a good and positive national image is a difficult and challenging task for any particular country.

**Figure 3.1** Collection of pictures demonstrating country image



### 3.2.3 The formation of country image

Martin & Eroglu (1993) suggest that there are three ways to form one's image of a country: 'from direct experience of the country, such as traveling to and within it; from external sources of information, such as advertising and word-of-mouth communications; and from inferences (correct or incorrect) based on past experience, such as opinions gained from using products originating in that particular country'.

Kunczik (1997: 1) adopts a similar perspective, though explains the image formation process in more detail. He suggests that the images of certain nations can be developed through a very complex communication process that starts with one's experiences in early life, such as in school, in children's books, fairytales and other leisure literatures, and in the theatre. Subsequently, more information can also be collected from relatives, acquaintances and friends, and from the work place. But, according to Kunczik (1997), mass media, including radio, international TV programmes, Internet, newspapers and magazines, some cultural exchange programmes, sports, books, and news services are probably the strongest image shapers that influencing people's perception of a country.

Jenes (2008) similarly, though more succinctly, indicates that country image is formed on the basis of experience and opinions about the nation and, primarily, information received through the various channels that include politics (internal affairs and foreign policy), telecommunication, entertainment (movies) and rumor.

In marketing research, the extensive use of mass media is considered the most effective way to promote the country/national image. Therefore, some researchers, particularly Morgan & Pritchard (2000), have considered the extent to which the mass media affect consumers' decision making when purchasing a particular product, including a tourist destination, from a specific country.

The powerful influence of mass media on the country/destination image reminds us of the discussion in Chapter 2 about the importance of a media communication strategy to effective crisis management and an affected destination. It is worth noting that whether or not a tourism destination is affected by a crisis, media communication has always played a vital role in the maintenance and improvement of the destination's positive image. Under normal circumstances, a good country / destination image provides tourists with a positive impression on the destination which, in turn, will to a great extent influence their destination choice. However, in some exceptional cases, such as when a destination suffers a crisis, a quick recovery or repositioning of the tourism destination image becomes the key for the re-development / new development of the affected destination.

#### **3.2.4 The measurement of country image**

Since the early 1970s, various measurements of country image have been developed (Han 1989; Han, Lee & Ro 1994; Jaffe & Nebenzahl 1984; Jenes 2008; Lala, Allred & Chakraborty 2008; Li & Mizerski 2006; Lu 2008; Martin & Eroglu 1993; Nagashima 1970; Papadopoulos, Marshall & Heslop 1988). Among these measurements, however, Martin & Eroglu's (1993) multi-dimensional scale has been most widely adopted in later country image studies (Li, Fu & Murray 1997; Mort, Winzar & Han 2001). Based on previous studies, Martin & Eroglu (1993) developed a 14-items scale to assess country image, which cannot be used to assess product image (see Table 3.1).

Martin & Eroglu (1993) emphasize that, traditionally, there were four dimensions used to define the construct's domain: political, economic, technological and social desirability. However, they only used first three dimensions to measure country image in the research, as they considered the fourth dimension could be captured by the first

three dimensions. Then in order to reduce complexity and ensure to obtain a reliable and valid result, they eventually extracted 14 scale items out of 29 items through various tests for the measurement of country image (see Table 3.1).

Reviewing research on country image scale development over the last two decades, Lala, Allred & Chakraborty (2008) identify that there has been a lack of consensus as to the definition, number of dimensions, and appropriate measures of country image. They also reveal that many studies that attempt to develop a scale share some common limitations (see Figure 3.2 overleaf).

**Table 3.1** A 14-item scale to measure multidimensional construct of country image

<b>Dimensions used to define the construct's domain</b>	<b>Description for 14-items scale</b>
Factor One: Political Dimension	Democratic versus dictatorial system
	Capitalist versus communist system
	Civilian versus military system
	Pro-western versus pro-communist
	Free market versus centrally planned system
Factor Two: Economic Dimension	Level of standard of living
	Stability of economic environment
	Quality of products
	Existence of a welfare system
	Level of labor costs
Factor Three: Technological Dimension	Level of industrialization
	Level of technological research
	Level of literacy
	Mass produced versus handcrafted products

**Source:** Adapted from Martin & Eroglu (1993)

Lala, Allred & Chakraborty (2008) consider that ‘a good scale of country image must capture how a country is perceived along multiple dimensions. A good measurement of country image is a prerequisite not only for valid estimation of country image’s impact on behavioral outcome variables but also for effective country brand strategies’. As a result, they develop a new scale that captures broader aspects of country image by redefining country image as ‘the overall beliefs and feelings a person has towards a

country' (Lala, Allred & Chakraborty 2008) and propose nine dimensions of country image: political appeal, social appeal, cultural appeal, people agreeableness, economic competence, investment desirability, product appeal, athletic competitiveness and tourism appeal.

Through analysis and testing, the new country image scale developed by Lala, Allred & Chakraborty (2008) is valid and applicable across countries, contributing to not only the development of general marketing strategies, but also academic research on tourism markets.

**Figure 3.2** Common limitations in the development of a scale for measuring country image

- Use deductive or author-driven measures without considering consumer-sourced measures. Many scales directly borrow items from previous scales that have not been formally validated or derive from what the researchers consider to be related to country image. However, researchers' perception of country image can be different from that of consumers;
- Survey a limited number of countries, especially North American countries;
- Use student samples;
- Use specific product categories and brands;
- Focus on respondents' views as consumers (i.e., overlooking respondents' views as tourists, immigrants, investors, etc.);
- Undertake a limited examination of scale psychometric properties; and
- Fail to account for (or make a limited evaluation of) cross-cultural measurement equivalence (e.g., extreme and acquiescent response styles, conceptual equivalence of the construct, factorial, metric, and scalar invariance of the scale).

**Source:** Adapted from Lala, Allred & Chakraborty (2008)

It is evident, then, that to establish a complete measurement of a country's image is a complex process, that image comprising many elements and embracing numerous

fields. Having provided this brief introduction to country image, however, for the purposes of this thesis it is now necessary to focus specifically on the concept of destination image. In so doing, a theoretical framework will be established for the research into visitors' perceptions of China, the new Three Gorge environment and the Three Gorges Dam itself following the completion of the Three Gorges project, this being one of the principal aims of this thesis.

### **3.3 Studies of destination image**

Some researchers (for example, Kleppe & Mossberg 2001; Nadeau, Heslop, O'Reilly & Luk 2008) argue that country image and destination image are two different fields of research. That is, research into the former is usually published in marketing and international business journals whilst destination image studies can more usually be found in tourism-specific journals. Additionally, Lee & Lockshin (2011) observe that 'a country's image may stem from characteristics, such as its history, people, or even its military and political involvement in the world stage; but destination image focuses narrowly on what interests temporary visitors to a country, such as the standards of its hotels and its places of interests'.

Nevertheless, studies of country image and destination image have some similarities. For example, the definitions of both country and destination image are relevant whilst the structure of destination image overlaps and connects with the country image constructs (Kleppe & Mossberg 2001; Lee & Lockshin 2011). The level of a destination 'can be classified at the country level, because it is the country that contains these characteristics of a place to many tourists' (Nadeau, Heslop, O'Reilly & Luk 2008). Moreover, according to Kurgun's (2010) research, 'there is a positive relation between the country's image and any destination's brand equity in the country. Because of this relation, touristic destinations cannot be thought to be independent from the country's image'.

Studies of destination image, as an element of tourism research more generally, can be traced back to the early 1970s, although increasing academic attention has been paid to this construct since the 1990s (Hosany, Ekinici & Uysal 2007; Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil 2007). To date, a wide range of studies focusing on or related to destination image have been published, addressing issues such as: *the relationship between country image and destination image* (Kleppe & Mossberg 2001; Kurgun 2010; Nadeau, Heslop, O'Reilly & Luk 2008); *the impacts of mass media on destination image*

(Castelltort & Mäder, 2010; Fesenmaier & Mackay 1996; Govers & Go 2003; Stepchenkova & Eales 2011); *destination branding* (Dioko, Harrill, & Cardon 2010; Ekinci 2003; Hosany, Ekinci & Uysal 2007; Morgan, Pritchard & Pride 2004; Morgan & Pritchard 2010; Pike 2010; Qu, Kim & Im 2011; Tasci & Kozak 2006); *the effects of destination image* (Chen & Tsai 2007; Chon 1990; Prayag 2009; Tasci & Gartner 2007); *the process of destination image formation* (Bigné Alcañiz, Sánchez García & Sanz Blas 2009; Andsager & Drzewiecka 2002; Baloglu & McCleary 1999; Beerli & Martín 2004; Beerli, Meneses & Gil 2007; Kastenholz 2010; Kim & Richardson 2003; Prebensen 2007; San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque 2008;); *destination marketing and destination image management* (Day, Skidmore & Koller 2002; Govers, Go & Kumar 2007a; Di Marino 2008; Molina, Gómez & Martín-Consuegra 2010; Selby & Morgan 1996); and *the concept and measurement of destination image* (Echtner & Ritchie 2003; Gallarza, Saura & García 2002; Govers, Go & Kumar 2007b; Jenkins 1999; Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil 2007).

To review all of these is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, in exploring the concept of destination image, an important first step is to consider the structure or composition of destination image.

### **3.3.1 The structure of destination image**

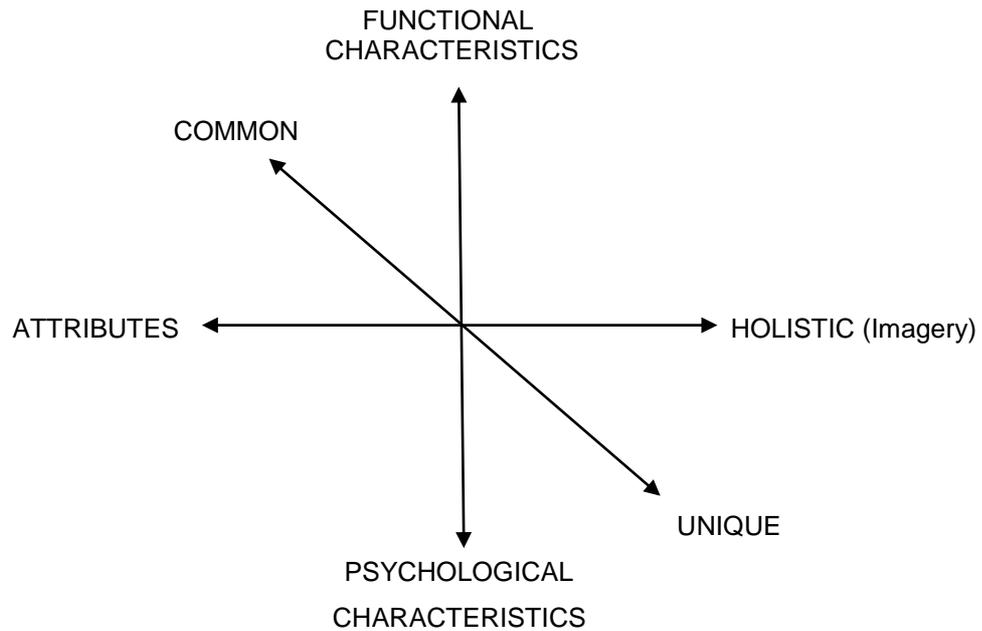
Similar to those concerned with the study of country image, tourism academics also typically introduce their research into destination image by offering a definition of the concept. San Martín & del Bosque (2008) usefully identify those who have contributed to the destination image concept in the tourism literature between 1977 and 2003. Key definitions include that of Crompton (1979), who proposes that destination image consists of two components, namely, the cognitive and affective and, therefore, destination image is defined as 'the sum of beliefs, ideas, impressions that a person has of a destination'. However, Crompton's definition relates only to the individual and neglects those images that can also be shared by groups of people (Jenkins 1999). Thus, Jenkins (1999) adopts Lawson & Baud-Bovy's (1977) definition of destination image, considering it to be more comprehensive: 'the expression of all objective knowledge, impressions, prejudice, imaginations, and emotional thoughts an individual or group might have of a particular place'. Nevertheless, Baloglu & McCleary (1999) concur with Crompton's taxonomy of destination image and expand on it to suggest that, 'an overall image of a place is formed as a result of both cognitive and affective evaluations of that place. The cognitive evaluations refer to the beliefs or knowledge about a destination's attributes whereas affective evaluation refers to feelings towards

or attachment to it'. As a result, Baloglu & McCleary (1999) define destination image as 'an attitudinal construct consisting of an individual's mental representation of knowledge (beliefs), feelings, and global impression about an object or a destination'. Additionally, Echtner & Ritchie (1991) define destination image as 'the perceptions of individual destination attributes and the holistic impression made by the destination', whilst MacKay & Fesenmaier (1997) claim 'a destination's image is a composite of various products (attractions) and attributes woven into a total impression'.

Again similar to the notion of country image, in tourism studies there remains no consensus on the definition of a destination's image (Baloglu & McCleary 1999; Beerli & Martin 2004; Echtner & Ritchie 1993; Pike 2002; Prayag 2009; Tasci & Gartner 2007). Indeed, Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil (2007), reviewing a substantial number of destination image definitions proposed by different researchers since 1990, came to the conclusion that 'these concepts are different stages related to the destination image construct rather than to its definition...each one of the mentioned definitions is actually defining a particular aspect of destination image. They are not comprehensive definitions in which all image components are given the same weight'.

Generally, however, and following Crompton's (1979) initial study, an increasing number of commentators agree that destination image comprises three components: (i) cognitive, (ii) affective, and (iii) conative (Beerli & Martín 2004; Gallarza, Saura & García 2002; Gartner 1993; Nadeau, Heslop, O'Reilly & Luk 2008; Pike & Ryan 2004; Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil 2007). The conative component is 'analogous to behavior and evolves from cognitive and affective images' (Gartner 1993). It refers to how an individual acts based on knowledge of the two previous components, which may be described as the likelihood of visiting a destination within a certain time period (Pike & Ryan 2004). Also, it 'includes beliefs about the aspects of landscape or destination elements, while the evaluative is representative of destination appraisals, and the conative can include the decision' (Nadeau, Heslop, O'Reilly & Luk 2008).

**Figure 3.3** The components of destination image



**Source:** Echtner & Richie (1991)

More specifically, Echtner & Richie (1991) developed a conceptual framework for destination image (see Figure 3.3 above). This framework consists of three dimensions: attribute-holistic, functional-psychological, and common-unique, which 'provides deeper insight into how each of the components is internalized' (Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil 2007).

Echtner & Richie explain the framework in details, as summarized in Figure 3.4 overleaf:

**Figure 3.4** Further explanations of the components of destination image

- ***The attribute-holistic dimension:*** the images of the tourism destination should be composed of perceptions of individual attributes, including climate, accommodation facilities, and friendliness of the people, as well as more holistic impressions, either mental pictures or imagery, of the place.
- ***The functional and psychological characteristics*** may be perceived as individual attributes or as more holistic impressions. On the attribute side are the numerous perceptions of the individual characteristics of the destination, ranging from functional to psychological. On the holistic side, functional holistic images are based on physical or measurable characteristics, such as a mental picture or imagery of the physical characteristics of the destination, while psychological holistic images concern feelings about the overall impressions of the atmosphere or mood of the place.
- ***The common-unique dimension*** highlights the idea that images of destination can range from those perceptions based on 'common' characteristics to those based on 'unique' features or auras.

**Source:** Adapted from Echtner & Ritchie (1991, 1993)

Therefore, they define destination image as:

the perceptions of individual destination attributes... [and] the holistic impression made by the destination. [It] . . . consists of functional characteristics, concerning the more tangible aspects of the destination, and psychological characteristics, concerning the more intangible aspects. Furthermore, [it] . . . can be arranged on a continuum ranging from traits which can be commonly used to compare all destinations to those which are unique to very few destinations. (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991: 8)

Building on the proposed destination image components referred to above, Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil (2007) create an interactive system of destination image components to illustrate how they interact with each other (see Figure 3.5 overleaf).

**Figure 3.5** Interactive system of image components



**Source:** Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil (2007)

Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil (2007) emphasize that every item in this interactive and reciprocal system 'could be both a cause and an effect of a change at any time, and factors cannot be comprehended in isolation; therefore, they should be studied in an integrated manner'. As a result, it can be concluded that 'a destination image is an interactive system of thoughts, opinions, feelings, visualizations, and intentions toward a destination' (Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil 2007).

### **3.3.2 The role of destination image and the factors influencing destination image**

A number of studies (Chen & Tsai 2007; Chon 1990; Gallarza, Saura & García 2002; Hunt 1975; Laws 1995; Pearce 1982; Pike 2002; Qu, Kim & Im 2011; Um & Crompton 1990) have been undertaken to discover the role of destination image. As Um & Crompton (1990) state, 'potential travelers generally have limited knowledge about the attributes of a destination, which they have not previously visited. Thus, their image and attitude dimensions of a place as a travel destination are likely to be critical elements in the destination choice process, irrespective of whether or not they are true representations of what that place has to offer'. Gallarza, Saura & García (2002) argue that, owing to the intangibility of tourism services, image becomes more important than reality. Indeed, images not only can establish a meaningful position for the destination in the consumers' mind as being a place that is different from other destinations offering similar primary attractions (Laws 1995), but also exert a significant role in influencing the traveler's buying behavior. Qu, Kim & Im (2011) stress 'destination

image plays a mediating role between the three image (cognitive, unique and affective images) components as the brand associations and the behavioral intentions'. Therefore, a strong and distinctive destination image 'should not only be a goal of branding practices in capturing consumers' minds but also as a mediator to influence consumer behaviors, directly related to the success of the tourist destination' (Qu, Kim & Im 2011). Ryan & Gu (2008) also observe that 'the image itself is the beginning point of tourist's expectation, which is eventually a determinant of tourist behaviors'. Pike (2002) reviews 142 destination image studies from 1973 to 2000 and argues that visitors' perceptions of a destination are more likely to influence a wide range of factors and behaviors, including top of mind awareness, length of stay, frequency of visits, and even perceived value of the destination. Thus, it can be concluded that, to a great extent, a strong and positive destination image can influence consumers' final destination choice, 'condition [the] after-decision-making behaviors of tourists' (Chen & Tsai, 2007) and, ultimately, increase the number of tourists visiting the destination.

'Due to this potential influence on tourist behavior, researchers have attempted to identify the factors that define, modify, and strengthen destination image to help destination authorities in their image management endeavors' (Tasci 2007). Baloglu & McCleary (1999) state that there are three major determinants influencing destination image in the absence of actual visitation or previous experience: tourism motivations, socio-demographics, and various information sources. According to them, and based upon their summary of previous studies, 'motivations are usually defined as socio-psychological forces that predispose an individual to opt for and participate in a touristic activity' (Baloglu & McCleary 1999). Two types of factors have been studied in tourism motivations: 'push' and 'pull' factors (Dann 1981). The former are defined as the factors that motivate or create a desire to travel, such as desire to escape, rest and relaxation, adventure, and health; and the latter guide the choice of a specific destination by satisfying those needs, which are usually relative to the tangible features, attractions or attributes of the destination, such as beaches, weather, accommodation and recreation facilities, and cultural and historic resources (Avraham & Ketter 2008; Baloglu & Uysal 1996; Chon 1990; Crompton 1979a; Dann 1981; Pearce 1993; Uysal & Hagan 1993). Thus, it can be argued that 'a grasp of the target public's push factors can assist destinations in creating better campaigns by emphasizing the relevant pull factors' (Avraham & Ketter 2008: 75). At the same time, many studies focus on the influence of tourists' socio-demographic characteristics, including age, gender, race, household status, education, income, and residence or geographic distance (Tasci 2007).

However, with regards to image, Baloglu & McCleary (1999) consider only age and education seem to be major determinants.

Information sources are considered another major determinant affecting destination image (Baloglu & McCleary 1999). Indeed, Beerli & Martin (2004) stress that information sources are primary forces influencing the forming of perceptions or cognitive evaluations. The information can be obtained from tour operators, travel agents, and mass media. 'Tour operators and travel agents have been suggested as significant information sources and distribution channels influencing the images and decisions of travellers' (Baloglu & Mangalolu 2001), as they are professional and 'have promotional as well as consultative function' (Konecnik 2002).

Nevertheless, nowadays the most powerful factor that influences a destination's image is considered to be the mass media, including TV series, films, radio, news media, travel brochures and advertisements, magazines, newspapers, travel guidebooks, Internet media and outdoor media. Consequently, an increasing number of researchers are turning their attention to the study of how the mass media influence consumers' perceptions of a destination. Fesenmaier & Mackay (1996) stress that 'since tourism is uniquely visual, with the development of science and technology, photographs and mass media are considered paramount to successfully creating and communicating an image of a destination'. Without mass media continuously generating the image of a destination, particularly a new non-famous destination, to the public, it will be difficult for the place to catch potential consumers' gaze and arouse their interests. As Urry (2002: 3) points out, places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is anticipation, especially through day-dreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered, which is constructed and maintained through various non-tourist technologies, including film, TV, literature, magazines, records and videos.

Films or TV series can contribute greatly to a place's positive or negative image; however, most places concentrate their efforts on obtaining positive coverage in the news media because of their enormous popularity and their major role in shaping public opinion (Weimann 2000: 8). Advertising, as a form of communication, also plays an important role in demonstrating what the destination can offer to tourists. Therefore, almost all destination marketers are keen to present the unique nature of a destination through advertising in order to attract potential tourists' attention. As Fesenmaier & Mackay (1996) indicate, the implications and impact of promoted images are

substantial as they can affect tourists through the creation of expectations and the desire for image verification. However, Morgan & Pritchard (2000: 4) argue that an advertising impact is 'difficult to judge and it usually takes a while before it has any influence on customers'.

In more recent years, of course, the Internet, as a more interactive medium of mass media, has received more attentions from destination marketers and tourism researchers. Cho & Fesenmaier (2000) emphasize that it is difficult for tourists 'to form a clear destination image without direct experiences. With the development of the Internet, tourists have become able to access interactive multimedia easily. Interactivity and multimedia are key factors to create virtual environments and provide virtual experience, which [enable the tourist] to form a more vivid and clear destination image'. Frías, Rodríguez & Castañeda (2008) also state that the Internet is considered as a new information source on the formation of the tourist's pre-visit image, as it is easy to access, convenient for updating, and allows communicating interactively, which make the Internet singular. Palmer (2010: 129) further suggests that 'the development of electronic commerce offers opportunities for collaboratively marketing tourism destinations. There is the potential to create 'virtual co-operation', whereby potential tourists can browse through websites of individual facilities at a destination and develop a coherent picture of the destination experience on offer'.

Certainly, there are also other factors influencing destination image, such as political and economic factors, social environment, atmosphere of the place, past travel experience and tourists' cultural background. Fesenmaier & Mackay (1996) point out that destination decisions may be based on the symbolic elements of the destination rather than the actual features. Conversely, Croy & Wheeler (2007) argue that real images, also known as real travel experience, are considered to have the highest credibility in the modification process of destination image. Research conducted by San Martín & Rodríguez del Bosque (2008) demonstrates that 'cultural distance is a factor that influences at least partially the perceived image of a tourist destination before visiting it. In particular, individuals might have more confidence in those tourist destinations with cultures similar to their own cultural values'. In addition, Kastenholz (2010) reveals that there are only few approaches considering 'the cultural background of tourists and their relationship with the culture of the host community as a relevant determinant'. Therefore, through the research, 'the factor 'cultural proximity' is suggested as a relevant aspect shaping destination image' (Kastenholz 2010).

However, in contrast to the views of those commentators referred to above, Knowles, Diamantis & El-Mourhabi (2004: 47) emphasize that:

Consumers are affected in their decision-making by numerous internal and external motivators and determinants when they decide on products, such as cultural factors, social factors, personal factors, and psychological factors. This means that it is very difficult to separate out how these many motivators and determinants affect the individual when it comes to make the actual choice.

Nevertheless, irrespective of these differing opinions with respect to the role of destination image in destination choice, it remains important to consider *how* destination images are formed.

### 3.3.3 Destination image formation

A number of commentators, such as Baloglu & McCleary (1999), Chon (1990) and Kim & Richardson (2003), agree that Gunn (1972: 120) was one of the first to conceptualize the image formation process. Principally, Gunn suggests that a destination image evolves at two levels: an organic image and an induced image. Organic images are those formed from various non-tourism-specific information sources, such as newspaper reports, geography books and movies. This implies, therefore, that a destination is unable to influence or change its organic image. In comparison, induced images derive from the conscious effort of marketers to develop, promote and advertise their destinations. As a result, a destination can to a great extent influence or change its induced image through its promotional and publicity activities.

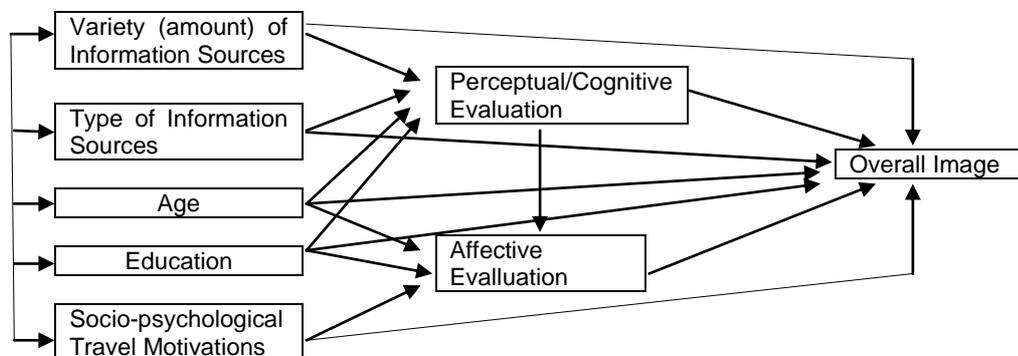
**Figure 3.6** A general framework of destination image formation



**Source:** Adapted from Baloglu & McCleary (1999: 870)

Baloglu & McCleary (1999) point out that many researchers across different fields and disciplines concur there are two major forces forming image: stimulus factors and personal factors. The former stems from the external stimuli and physical objects as well as previous experience, while personal factors are the characteristics (social and psychological) of the perceiver (see Figure 3.6 above). Thus, drawing on wider literature, they propose a model which not only provides a framework for studying the forces guiding the formation of destination image, but also identifies relationships between the different levels of evaluations within its structure (cognitive, affective, and global), and the elements determining these evaluations (see Figure 3.7).

**Figure 3.7** A path model of the determinants of tourism destination image before actual visitation



**Source:** Baloglu & McCleary (1999)

However, with regard to previous experience, Beerli & Martín (2004) consider that this should be classified as one of the personal factors influencing the perceived image. Since individuals tend to rely more on their previous experience than on other factors in the tourism context (Beerli & Martín 2004), past experience may be more important than any external information (Mazursky 1989). Additionally, Saenko (2010) argues that Baloglu & McCleary's model 'lacks a holistic approach as it shows somewhat linear relationships of some components of the image, leaving many other components unlearned'.

Some researchers (Beerli & Martín 2004; Castelltort & Mäder 2010; Mao, Zhang & Bao 2005) prefer Gartner's (1993) theory of the image formation process. Gartner (1993) identifies eight image formation agents (see Figure 3.8 overleaf), arguing that 'the image formation process can be viewed as a continuum of separate agents that act independently or in some combination to form a destination image unique to the individual'.

**Figure 3.8** Eight image formation agents

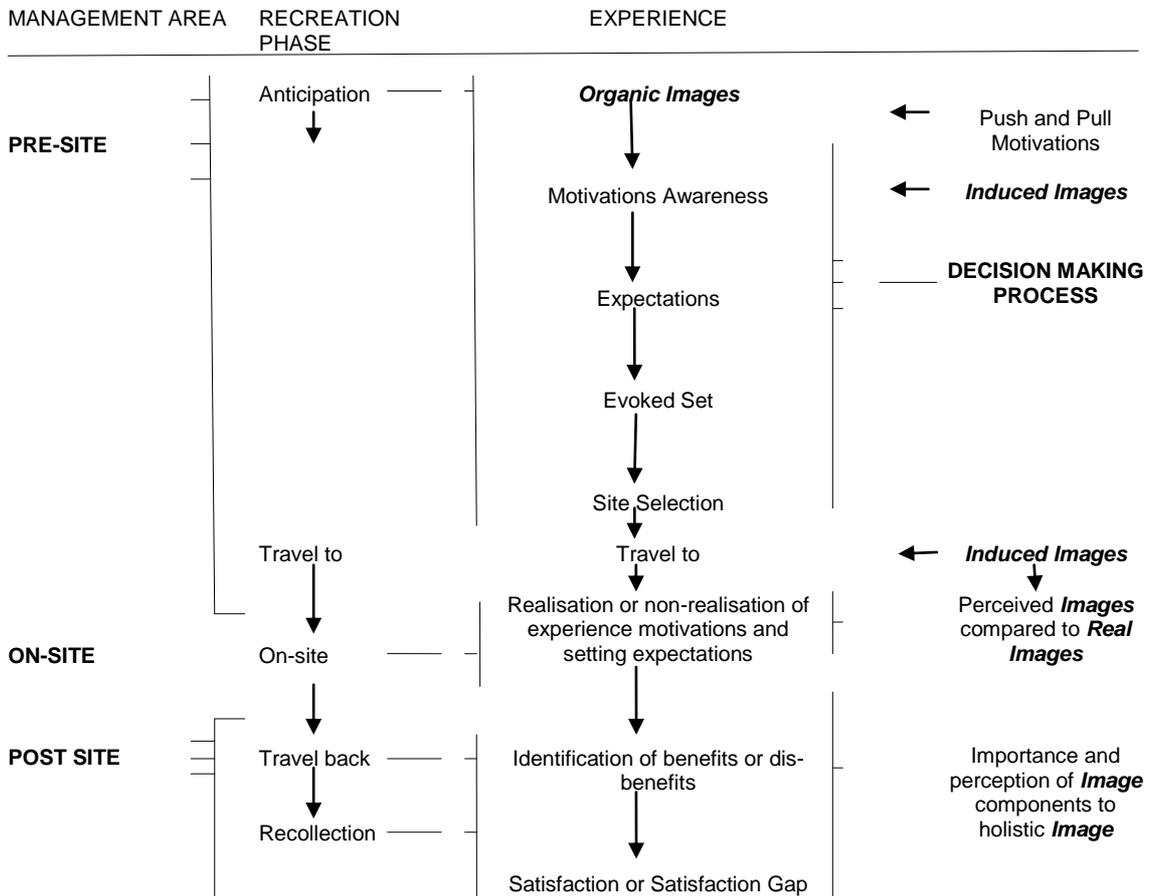
- **Overt Induced I:** consists of traditional forms of advertising. By using television, radio, brochures, billboards, and print media advertising, destination promoters can directly construct particular images in the minds of the targeted audience;
- **Overt Induced II:** consists of information received or requested from tour operators, wholesalers, and organizations, which have a vested interest in the travel decision process but which are not directly associated with a particular destination area;
- **Covert Induced I:** the images are supported and recommended by a known celebrity. Destination promoters rely on the credibility of the celebrity spokesperson to develop destination images;
- **Covert Induced II:** a particular place is objectively described in articles, reports, or stories, in which a person is not aware that destination promoters are involved in the development of the projected image;
- **Autonomous:** consists of news reporting, documentaries, and films;
- **Unsolicited Organic:** unrequested information received from individuals who have been to an area, or believe they know what exists there, constitute the Unsolicited Organic image formation agents. Such information can be gained by almost everyone on a regular basis, such as dinner with friends, and discussions during business meetings;
- **Solicited Organic:** requested destination information can be obtained from personal knowledge, and friends or relatives, also known as 'word-of-mouth' advertising;
- **Organic:** consists of information acquired about a destination based on previous travel to the area. This is the final end of the image formation continuum.

**Source:** Gartner (1993)

Subsequently, Croy & Kearsley (2002) proposed a new model that demonstrates not only the tourist's image formation, but also its role as the basis for satisfying tourism experiences (see Figure 3.9 overleaf). The model includes three image agents: organic image, induced image and real image. The role of organic image is identified as the

motivator to travel, whilst the induced image plays a role as destination specific information. Subsequently, the real image sources from experiences at the destination.

**Figure 3.9:** A model of tourist's image formation and role as the basis to the satisfying experience



**Source:** After Croy & Kearsley (2002)

The researchers discussed above tend to emphasize the role of destination image in the decision-making process, or 'how it relates to the immediate pre-visit phase of the visitor experience' (Croy & Wheeler 2007). On the one hand, however, some place greater emphasis on the role of the organic factors in contextualizing and informing image formation', particularly Gartner (1993) and Baloglu & McCleary (1999), whereas, on the other hand, Croy & Kearsley (2002) downplay the role of organic image in the formation of destination image. Either way, there is broad agreement that a combination of organic, induced and 'real' (experienced) factors contribute to destination image. The question then is: can destination image be measured?

### **3.3.4 The measurement of destination image**

In this research, primary data collected from international visitors addresses, in part, their image and perceptions of China, Three Gorges and the Three Gorges Dam. Therefore, having a general understanding of the measurement of destination image is necessary to frame this research.

Owing to the multidimensionality of tourism destination image, its measurement and assessment would appear to be a complex task. Nevertheless, in order to avoid the failure of achieving a complete understanding or picture of destination image, it is important to carefully choose appropriate measurement methods which can be applied to the complex nature of the image and capture many destination image components. Jenkins (1999), Gallarza, Saura & García (2002), and Echtner & Ritchie (2003) have all contributed to the destination image literature, particularly with respect to the understanding of destination image measurement. They provide not only general knowledge about what techniques can be applied to measure a tourist's destination image, but also demonstrate how validity and reliability can be achieved in such research.

There are two broad techniques most usually applied to measure destination image: structured and unstructured methods (Echtner & Ritchie 2003; Gallarza, Saura & García 2002; Jenkins 1999; Malhotra 2006).

A structured methodology requires specifying and incorporating various common images attributes into a standardised instrument, usually a set of semantic differential or Likert type scales (Echtner & Ritchie 2003). Echtner & Ritchie (2003) and Jenkins (1999) in their research find that previous studies on destination image have a strong preference for structured methodologies. Almost all have tended to use five- or seven-point Likert or semantic differential scaling techniques.

Quantitative structured measurement methods concentrate on the attribute components of destination image (Echtner & Ritchie 2003), are easy to administer and simple to code (Marks, 1976), and also facilitate the comparison of several products across each of the attributes (Echtner & Ritchie 2003). Therefore, such kind of methods has become the most popular of those used by researchers.

Depending on the questions designed by researchers, Likert scales are commonly used to ask the respondent to indicate a degree of agreement with each of the items covered in the questionnaire (Malhotra 2006: 185). Typically, the answers range from 'strongly agree' over five/seven steps to 'strongly disagree'. Semantic differential scales cover statements like 'high quality' on one side and 'low quality' on the other. 'Average ratings of importance are used to identify the factors influencing choice behavior or, alternatively, multidimensional scaling or factor analysis is used to reduce the semantic scores to a smaller number of independent underlying perceptual dimensions (Timmermans, Heijden & Westerveld 1982). According to Jenkins (1999), for respondents, there are two important aspects of the rating process: the evaluation perception and the construct preference. The former indicates that the respondent can evaluate the place according to a particular construct. The latter means that the respondent rates the salience or importance of the actual construct to himself or herself, which benefits destination market segments according to travel preferences. 'The combination of the two scales allows the researcher to understand individual tourists and to assign weights to those aspects of image that are considered important by a particular individual or group of individuals' (Jenkins 1999).

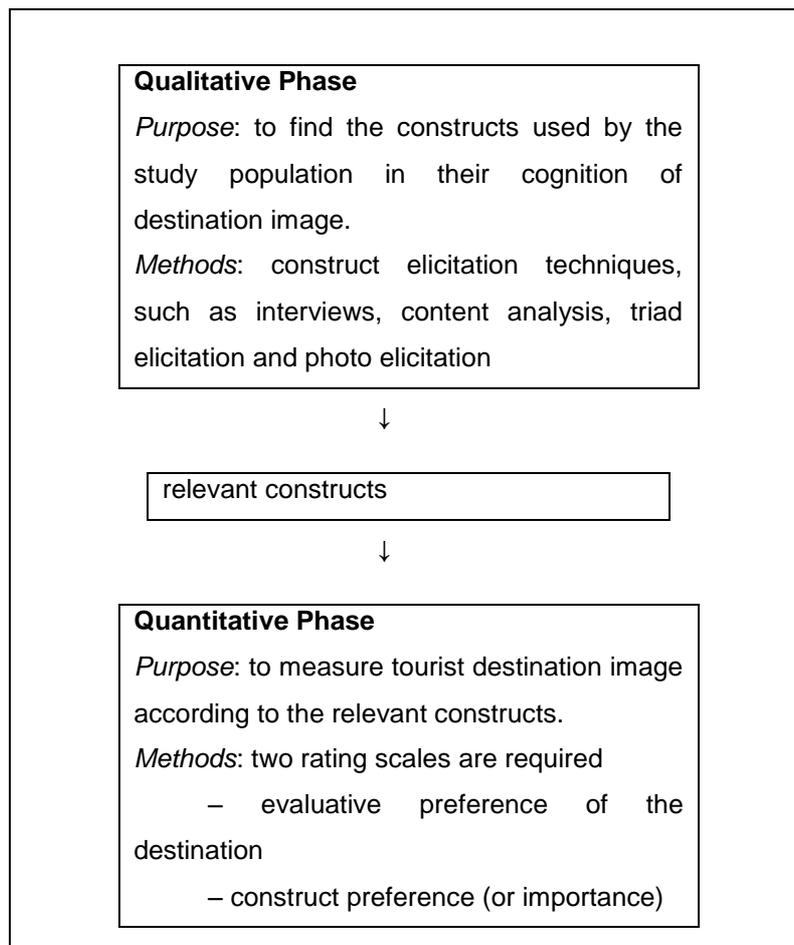
A structured question may also offer multiple-choices, as multiple choice questions are easier for respondents to answer and for researchers to analyze, and can reduce interviewer bias (Malhotra 2006: 184). Nevertheless, such kind of questions has some disadvantages. As Malhotra (2006: 184-5) emphasizes, 'it is difficult to develop effective multiple-choice options. In addition, when large numbers of respondents check the "other (please specify)" category, it indicates that the alternative list may be seriously flawed'.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, unstructured methodologies, as the alternate form of measurement, are also used in destination image research, which use free form descriptions to measure image (Boivin 1986). In other words, respondents are allowed to answer questions in their own words (Avraham & Ketter 2008: 21; Echtner & Ritchie 2003; Jenkins, 1999; Malhotra 2006: 182), or to describe the target stimulus in terms that are salient to the individual, rather than responding to the researchers' predetermined image dimensions' (Reilly 1990: 22). For example, respondents can freely describe their impressions of a specific destination without the bias. Therefore, Echtner & Ritchie (2003) believe 'unstructured methodologies are more conducive to measuring the holistic components of product image and also to capturing unique features and auras'.

Data is gathered from a sample of respondents through various methods, such as content analysis, focus groups, open-ended survey questions, and so on (Echtner & Ritchie 2003; Jenkins 1999). Open-ended questions, namely unstructured questions or free elicitation, in the form of word-association, have been used widely in the field of marketing research (Jenkins 1999). Such questions 'offer a spontaneous 'window' on the image held by tourists' (Jenkins 1999), can 'help the researcher interpret their responses to structured questions' (Malhotra 2006: 182), and are able to 'measure whether the image of a destination is lacking or weak, that is, if respondents are unable to provide responses' (Jenkins 1999). Therefore, Jenkins (1999) suggests 'when combined with other techniques, the free elicitation technique is best used first.' Malhotra (2006: 182) also agrees that 'unstructured questions are good as first questions on a topic'. Although unstructured questions have some disadvantages relating to recording error, data coding, and the added complexity of analysis, in general, open-ended questions are useful in exploratory research (Malhotra 2006:183). Echtner & Ritchie's (1993) study has been widely adopted by many other researchers (Beerli & Martín 2004; Gallarza, Saura & García 2002; Govers, Go & Kumar 2007b; Jenkins 1999; Tasci, Gartner & Cavusgil 2007), as they propose a combination of structured and unstructured methodologies to measure destination images. According to Echtner & Ritchie (1993), 'a series of open-ended questions, semi-structured questionnaires and a structured 8-factor scale are developed, which not only effectively capture holistic components and more distinctive or unique features of the image, but also successfully measure the common and attribute-based components of image'.

Many researchers consider that a combination of structured and unstructured methods in image research may contribute to the achievement of valid results (Echtner & Ritchie 2003; Gallarza, Saura & García 2002; Jenkins 1999; Malhotra 2006). Specifically, Jenkins (1999) proposes a model for destination image research (see Figure 3.10 overleaf), in which two phases of research are incorporated. In a qualitative phase, unstructured methods are used to find the constructs relevant to the group being studied. Then the second phase draws upon the results of the first phase and measures the image quantitatively according to the constructs.

**Figure 3.10** A model for destination image research



**Source:** Adapted from Jenkins (1999)

Gallarza, Saura & García (2002) recognize that the methodologies used in destination image research are in generally complicated, but most researchers prefer quantitative methods rather than qualitative methods, and there is a combination of multivariate and bivariate techniques. Multivariate techniques predominate in much research because 'they allow for determination of the latent multidimensional structure of the destination image, as well as average scoring as a numeric instrumentalization of image' (Gallarza, Saura & García 2002). Conversely, very few studies use qualitative methods as the main technique, and there are only a few studies, such as those undertaken by Echtner & Ritchie (1993), and Baloglu & McCleary (1999), that employ a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Since the nature of the tourism product is complicated and diverse, Echtner & Ritchie (2003) suggest that the development of more specific and more complex conceptual frameworks and methodologies will be beneficial to reliably and validly measure

destination image. Also, Beerli & Martín (2004) point out that most studies have failed to establish the validity and reliability of the scales for the measurement of image; therefore, it is necessary to propose a framework for incorporating every aspect of a destination that could potentially be used as an instrument of measurement.

Nevertheless, with the wide use of computer and the Internet, methodologies for measuring image have been further developed. Govers, Go and Kumar (2007b: 980) reveal that in an earlier study undertaken by Govers & Go (2003), 'the traditional multi-attribute system measurement device, used in destination image literature, failed to detect significant image differences among different groups of consumers that show unequal levels of preference'. Therefore, Govers, Go & Kumar (2007b) develop an alternative methodology to measure image:

The study utilizes enabling Internet and computerizes content analysis technologies to measure destination image from a phenomenographic post-positivist perspective. In an online survey, respondents were asked to describe their image of one of seven case study destinations that they had never visited before, in a narrative format. The large amount of qualitative data was content analyzed by using artificial neural network software. The results produce a vivid three-dimensional picture of the differences and commonalities among the images of selected destinations. It is concluded that an interactive narrative approach presents an alternative measurement technique that can contribute significantly to future image research. (Gover, Go & Kumar 2007b: 977)

Having considered destination image, for the purposes of this thesis it is worthwhile exploring briefly the concept of destination branding, as this plays a crucial role in 'helping bridge any gaps between destination's strengths and potential visitors' perceptions' (Morgan & Pritchard 2010: 65), so as to establish a positive image of a destination to visitors.

### **3.3.5 Destination branding**

According to Pike (2010), the topic of branding in general first appeared in the marketing literature more than fifty years ago. However, published research relating to destination branding in particular only began to appear in the late 1990s. Pritchard & Morgan (1998) and Dosen, Vranesevic & Prebezac (1998) both published early works on destination branding, stimulating increasing academic interest in the subject. Nevertheless, Pike (2010) observes that 'the destination branding literature still

remains significantly underreported. Although the published case studies now provide a destination brand development resource for destination marketing organizations and academics, there has been little reported on the performance of destination brands over time'.

What is destination branding? Ritchie & Ritchie (1998: 103) define a destination brand as:

A name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination; furthermore, it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience.

However, Blain, Levy & Ritchie (2005) insist that the definition of destination branding should include the concepts of 'destination image' and 'competitiveness', which not only essentially reflects the seller's point of view but also demonstrates an understanding of the buyer's perspective. Thus, Blain, Levy & Ritchie (2005) refine and enhance concept of destination branding, based on Ritchie & Ritchie's (1998) definition, as follows:

The marketing activities (1) that support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates a destination; (2) that convey the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; and (3) that serve to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience, all with the intent purpose of creating an image that influences consumers' decisions to visit the destination in question, as opposed to an alternative one.

This modified definition emphasizes the importance of branding in influencing the consumer's decision process regarding the choice of a destination to visit (Blain, Levy & Ritchie 2005). Nevertheless, after undertaking a survey of a particular subset of Destination Management Organizations, Blain, Levy & Ritchie (2005) eventually provide an improved definition of destination branding, as follows:

Destination branding is the set of marketing activities that (1) support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that readily identifies and differentiates a destination; that (2) consistently convey the

expectation of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; that (3) serve to consolidate and reinforce the emotional connection between the visitor and the destination; and that (4) reduce consumer search costs and perceived risk. Collectively, these activities serve to create a destination image that positively influences consumer destination choice.

Baker (2007: 26) also proposes a definition for destination branding:

It is an organizing principle that involves orchestrating the messages and experiences associated with the place to ensure that they are as distinctive, compelling, memorable, and rewarding as possible.

This definition indicates that destination branding establishes a link between the destination, the destination's marketers and potential tourists. Here, 'messages' and 'experiences' represents destination marketers and visitors, respectively.

Avraham & Ketter (2008: 16) state that 'place branding of tourist destinations in particular is a combination of place characteristics and of added value, functional and non-functional'. As a result, 'in the world of brands, the product image and positioning may be much more important than the place's actual characteristics' (Avraham & Ketter 2008: 16). Qu, Kim & Im (2011) similarly suggest that 'destination brands exert two important functions: identification and differentiation. The meaning of "identification" involves the explication of the source of the product to consumers ... while "differentiation" means that a destination brand differentiates itself from its competitors based on its special meaning and attachment given by consumers'. More generally, 'empirical research has demonstrated that branding enhances destination image among visitors and assists Destination Management Organizations in measuring achievements' (Blain, Levy & Ritchie 2005).

Of course, the tourism industry can bring enormous economic benefits to a country and, therefore, as long as there is a place with abundant tourist resources, it can be exploited and developed as a tourist destination. Moreover, even 'if there are too few natural attractions existing, the country can still attract tourists through undertaking investment marketing to build attractions or to promote events' (Kotler & Gernter 2010: 48). Consequently, there are innumerable tourist destinations worldwide and many places offer the same products; therefore, how to make the destination more distinctive and impressive to tourists remains a significant challenge.

There is a consensus (Baker 2007: 26; Blain, Levy & Ritchie 2005; Glaesser 2006; Morgan & Pritchard 2010; Qu, Kim & Im 2011) that, whether the destination is a specific site, a city or a country, as long as it can boast strong and unique characteristics and is able to satisfy people's various demands, it will always be able to attract a large number of tourists. For example, those who are attracted by opportunities for design, fashion and clothing shopping are more likely to choose Paris, Milan, London, and New York as their destinations. Conversely, those who are interested in exotic history and culture may choose to visit countries such as Egypt, China, Thailand and India, whereas people who are keen on the natural landscapes and adventure activities might travel to Australia, New Zealand, and Africa. Moreover, people who pursue romance and enjoy spiritual relaxation may choose to go to Greece, Spain, Italy or France. The point is, in each case tourists will be drawn by the brand of the destination.

Qu, Kim & Im (2011) argue that 'creating a differentiated destination image has become a basis for survival within the competitive market place. A positive, strong and unique image is the essence of destination positioning for its ability to differentiate a destination from competitors, to increase repeat visitors and to attract new tourists to the destination'. Glaesser (2006: 137) similarly proposes that a destination should develop its competitive advantages for its long-term success:

The competitive advantages must be considered from the customer's point of view, embody a meaningful customer benefit, which ensures that the product permanently and clearly distinguishes itself from its competitors. Competitive advantages have, in order to be strategically significant, to fulfil three basic requirements: they must provide an important performance feature for the customer; actually be perceived by the customer; and be sustainable, that is, difficult for competitors to imitate.

Baker (2007: 26) puts forward a similar view and emphasizes that 'successful destination brands reside in the customer's heart and mind, clearly differentiate themselves, deliver on a valued promise, and simplify customer choices'. Morgan & Pritchard (2010: 61) state that for destination marketers, the value of a successful brand lies in its potential to reduce substitutability. Additionally, Baker (2007: 26) proposes that 'the brand's value is built at every point of contact with customers through exceptional experiences, not by relying on the physical characteristics of the place alone. Each experience before, during and after the visit has a vital role in defining and delivering the promise that is inherent within the brand'.

Certainly, in order to attract tourists, a destination cannot only rely on its own natural features, but also requires the assistance of destination marketing through building a destination brand. According to Morgan & Pritchard (2010: 59):

A destination brand can be developed in a variety of ways, most obviously in advertising, through direct marketing, personal selling, on websites and in brochures, but also through public and media relations, and through the co-operation of destination marketing organizations with journalists, event organizers and film-makers. Moreover, place promotion encompasses 'flagship' developments and 'spotlight' events in the arts, media, leisure, heritage, retailing or sports industries.

As a result, Morgan & Pritchard (2010: 74) suggest that 'successful destination brands usually have consistent, relevant appealing advertising, characterized by high production values: advertising that is often cutting-edge and extremely creative'.

In practice, consistency of core identity is critical for the success of long-term oriented destination branding practices; therefore, tourism destination should monitor the destination image regularly to examine if the projected image is well adopted by tourists (Qu, Kim & Im 2011). In order to avoid the development of a destination that is burdened with an inappropriate brand, destination managers should conduct extensive research before initiating any branding programmes (Tasci & Kozak 2006). On the one hand, 'the effectiveness of image management techniques depends on an understanding of potential visitors' interests and attitudes towards the destination' (Laws, Scott & Parfitt 2002). Thus, 'tourist managers must undertake research to understand the values that tourists seek as users (performance, social and emotional values), as buyers (convenience and personalization) and as payers (price and credit)' (Kotler & Gernter 2010: 48). More importantly, cultural differences should also be taken into account which, together with 'varying geographical distance to a certain destination can cause significant variations in knowledge, attitudes and behavior towards that destination' (Prebensen 2007). Therefore, destination managers should 'examine the differences between images among people from different nations representing different cultures, in order to understand potential tourist's images of a place and in choosing the right names and attributes for the goal market' (Prebensen 2007). On the other hand, the competitive environment must be meticulously analyzed (Kotler & Gernter 2010: 48). As Knowles, Diamantis & El-Mourhabi (2004: 42) emphasize, 'the success of marketing planning is dependent to a large part on the strength of a competitive analysis, whatever the state of competition'.

In addition to the points discussed above, Morgan & Pritchard (2010) raise another important issue: successful destination branding must be able to resist the political dynamic (which is exerted at all levels of the political scene). They explain this further (Morgan & Pritchard 2010: 63-64), as follows:

Nowhere is the paradox of public policy and market forces more sharply defined than in destination branding. Political considerations have compromised many a creative execution; ..... (Therefore,) successful destination branding is about achieving a balance between applying cutting-edge solutions to a marketing problem and the real politick of managing local, regional and national politics.

From a different perspective, Nielsen (2001: 207-208) discusses the relationship between tourism and the media, and how the media affect tourists' decision-making:

Promotion of a destination in normal circumstances is a difficult task, but promoting a destination that faces tourism challenges - whether from negative press, or from infrastructural Damage caused by natural or man-made disaster – is an altogether more arduous task.

Kotler & Gertner (2010: 47) also realize that:

Confronting a negative image can be an arduous challenge. The brand manager has no control over environmental factors that may keep tourists and investors away, such as natural disasters, political turmoil and economic downturns. Even more difficult can be controlling how the media and the press disseminate a country's problem, often creating or perpetuating stereotypes.

Under such situations, marketing managers should first address the problems that gave rise to the negative image, prior to advertising or publicizing that the place is safe for tourists. As Kotler & Gertner (2010: 47) observe, 'no amount of advertising or public relations will make an unsafe place safer'. Unfortunately, however, some destination managers fail to follow this process, potentially encouraging visitors and to 'badmouth' the country and worsen its image. In some cases, therefore, Kotler & Gertner (2010: 47) suggest that to improve a country's or a destination's image, it may be easier to create new positive associations than trying to refute old ones.

To summarize the above discussion, researchers propose a diversity of plans about how to successfully brand a destination. However, destination marketers or managers

in destination organizations face peculiar branding challenges. De Chernatony & Dall’Olmo Riley (1999) claim that differences between branding of products and services exist at the operation level owing to the unique characteristics of service brands, including inseparability of production and consumption, intangibility, perishability, heterogeneity, and the current inconsistency of delivery of services brands. Morgan & Pritchard (2010) list a number of other challenges, as identified in Figure 3.11:

**Figure 3.11** Challenges for branding a destination

- Local government/most Destination Management Organizations have very limited budgets and yet have to market globally, competing not just with other destinations, but also with other global brands.
- Tourism is vulnerable to a diversity of disasters/crises. In addition, the consequent negative media coverage can cause long-term Damage to a destination’s image.
- Destinations are a composite of a bundle of different components; therefore, destination marketers have almost no control over these different aspects and a diverse range of agencies and companies are stakeholders in the marketing of a place.
- Political considerations have compromised many a creative execution. It is difficult to achieve a balance between applying cutting-edge solutions to a marketing problem and the real politick of managing local, regional and national politics for most destinations.

**Source:** Adapted from Morgan& Pritchard (2010: 62-64)

Nevertheless, no matter how significant the challenges may be, it is incumbent on destination marketers and managers in destination organizations to identify the most appropriate means of producing a positive image to the public. Thus, the process of building or refreshing a destination brand needs to be taken into account. Morgan & Pritchard (2004: 69) present five phases in destination branding building (see Table 3.2 overleaf). The first stage in the process is to ‘establish the core values of the destination and its brand’ (Morgan & Pritchard 2010: 68), according to the current

situation of the destination, through market investigation, extensive in-depth analysis and strategic recommendations. Morgan & Pritchard (2010: 68) suggest that the core values should be durable, relevant, communicable, and hold saliency for potential tourists; therefore, how contemporary or relevant the brand is to today's tourism consumer and how it compares with its key competitors should be analyzed at this stage.

**Table 3.2** The five phases in destination brand building

Phase one	Market investigation, analysis and strategic recommendations
Phase two	Brand identity development
Phase three	Brand launch and introduction: communicating the vision
Phase four	Brand implementation
Phase five	Monitoring, evaluation and review

**Source:** Morgan & Pritchard (2004: 69)

Once the market investigation is completed, the next step is to develop the brand identity, which can be achieved through the analysis and identification of brand personality and brand architecture. 'Destination marketers should underpin and imbue every component of the brand identity to ensure that the brand values are cohesively communicated. A brand design style guide that ensures consistency of message and approach should also reinforce the brand values at this stage' (Morgan & Pritchard 2010: 69).

Then, the brand is launched and communicated through a diversity of promotional channels and campaigns. Since a brand is about creating communication with a consumer, its vision is expected to inspire consistency and trust to consumers (De Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley 1999). Morgan & Pritchard (2010: 70) also suggest that 'the vision should be clearly expressed in the brand's core values, which are consistently reinforced through the product and in all marketing communications, both above and below the line, every execution in all media contributes to maintaining branding presence'.

Having been fully prepared, the plans then need to be implemented and, subsequently, the brand's effectiveness and performance in the marketplace should be monitored, evaluated and reviewed regularly, thereby ensuring that the brand personality is continuously evolved, enriched and reasonably adjusted.

At the phase two, Morgan & Pritchard (2010: 70) emphasize that brand personality is an important part of the brand identity. They further explain that destination brand building is all about developing a rich and relevant brand personality. "Developing" is a key word for brand personality, which implies that successful brands reflect and respond to changes in consumers' lives. While the brand's core values remain the same, its personality will continue to evolve. A brand's personality has both a head and a heart: its head refers to the logical brand features, while its heart refers to its emotional benefits and associations.

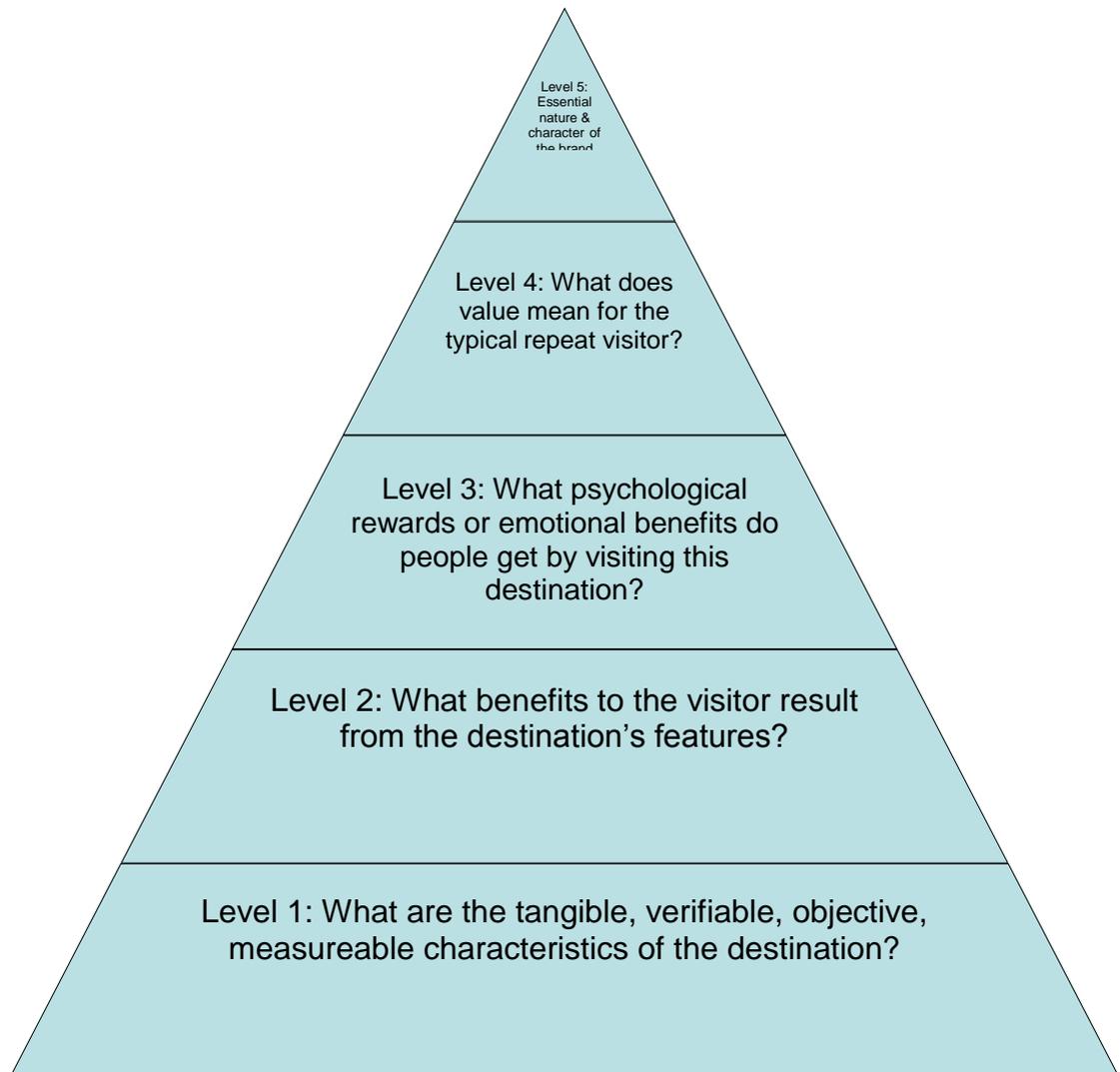
On the one hand, Morgan & Pritchard (2010: 71) have proposed the destination brand benefit pyramid (see Figure 3.12 overleaf) as a means of summarizing the essential elements of a strong brand personality. This not only demonstrates how a brand personality is constructed, but also how that brand personality can be evaluated. According to Morgan & Pritchard (2010: 70), the pyramid presents a relationship between consumers and a brand. In the process of building the pyramid consumers have to answer several questions, like what features a destination offers, and what the place means to them. Therefore, 'the benefit pyramid can be instrumental in helping to distil the essence of a destination brand's advertising proposition. This refers to the point at which consumer's wants and the destination's benefits and features intersect' (Morgan & Pritchard 2010: 70-1).

On the other hand, the establishment of brand architecture also plays an important role in brand identity development. As Morgan & Pritchard (2010: 71) suggest, 'brand architecture should reflect all the key components of a destination brand with its brand personality. A brand's architecture is in essence the blueprint that should guide brand building, development and marketing, and is a device that can be used by all destination brand managers'.

Brand identity reflects the contribution of all brand elements to awareness and image (Keller 1998: 166). It also provides a direction, purpose, and meaning for the brand and is central to a brand's strategic vision and the driver of brand associations (Aaker 1996). 'Consumers build a destination image in their minds based on the brand identity projected by the destination marketers' (Qu, Kim & Im 2011). Therefore, the development of brand identity needs to receive more attention. As Avraham & Ketter

(2008: 16) suggest, 'the only way for destinations to survive in the competitive international market is by developing a unique identity'.

**Figure 3.12** The destination brand benefit pyramid



**Source:** Morgan & Pritchard (2010: 71)

Indeed, the establishment of brand reputations and the building a powerful destination brand are challenges that require long-term effort and attention. Therefore, how to successfully create an emotional attachment will depend on whether or not a destination brand is credible, deliverable, differentiating, conveying powerful ideas,

enthusing for stakeholders and partners, and resonating with the consumer (Morgan & Pritchard 2010: 70).

Branding professionals suggest that whatever the chosen brand is, every project, activity, sight and attraction the place has to offer should support the preferred brand; the place's decision makers should also give support to attractions and activities that promote the brand in budgets, infrastructure and marketing (Avraham & Ketter 2008: 16). Thus, in the following section, and as a basis for the subsequent research, western perceptions of China are explored in order to suggest how China, as a destination, might develop and build its image to the world.

### **3.4 Western perceptions of China and China's image building**

Changing the world's perceptions of a place/country is neither easy nor quick; after all, its brand image has often evolved over many centuries, shaped by wars, religion, diplomacy, international sporting triumphs or disasters, famous and infamous sons and daughters, and latterly by the brands it exports, as long as the brand is prepared to be explicit about its country of origin. .... (However, in some special cases,) perceptions of places can also change far more quickly and more completely than might be expected. Anholt (2010: 34)

In western eyes, China is mysterious because of its long history and culture, its political system and its unique market-economy mode. Differing from the situation in most Western countries, governance in China is based upon a multi-party cooperation and political consultation system. The Chinese model (also called the Beijing Consensus) is founded on economic development based on China's specific qualities and characteristics (Ramo 2004).

'Western understandings of China date from ancient times, and foreign travelers have played a central role in shaping Western perceptions of China' (Wang 2003: 35). As early as the Yuan Dynasty, China was famous in Europe for its abundant precious minerals, natural resources and customs, in particular following the experiences of Marco Polo, an Italian, who traveled to China in the late 13th century and wrote a book '*The Travels of Marco Polo*' to describe his experiences in Asia. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the late years of the Qing Dynasty, the invasion of the Eight-Power Allied Forces dramatically changed the western perception of China. They began to see its weaknesses and the less edifying aspects of its civilization. During this period, China's

sovereignty was threatened, leading to social instability. In order to address the situation, Dr. Sun Yat-sen, known as 'the father of modern China', played a crucial role in the eventual overthrow of the Qing Dynasty in 1911 and the establishment of the Republic of China in 1912.

Nevertheless, the final destiny of China was determined by Mao Zedong, also well known as Chairman Mao. His dramatic personal life, military talent, artist poems, political skills, famous Third-World classification theory and dictator's leadership have influenced generations of Chinese. A series of actions, such as setting up the Red Army, taking part in the anti-Japanese War in the Second World War and later the civil war, establishing the People's Republic of China and raising the Great Cultural Revolution served to enhance his worldwide fame. The West saw Chairman Mao as a symbol of China. However, Communist China's international image was still negative at this time and many neighboring countries were in fear of dealing with People Republic of China and becoming a 'tributary' of China (Li & Worm 2011). As Li & Worm (2011) argue, on the one hand the hostile external environment during the Cold War caused served to enhance China's negative international image. On the other hand, China under Mao's leadership did not pay much attention to the reaction of the outside world and neglected the importance of building and maintaining a positive international image.

Since 1978, economic reform and the gradual opening up of the country have underpinned China's rapid economic development and the country has gradually become integrated into the international community. As a consequence, China's image has also been improving. However, during much of this period, particularly in the early 1990s, China was preoccupied with domestic economic development and deliberately kept a low profile on global stage, especially after the Tiananmen Incident of 1989. Indeed, Deng advised his fellow leaders to 'hide our capacities and bide our time, remain free of ambition, and never claim leadership' and so, under his leadership, China maintained a relatively more inward-looking image internationally (Li & Worm 2011).

After the 1997-1998 Asian financial crises, however, China's international image was improved as 'China announced not to devalue the Chinese currency in order to help stabilize the financial situation in East Asia and help those crisis-hit victim countries to recover' (Li & Worm 2011). Such an action was thought to help China gain much 'soft power' in East Asia in contrast to the USA's loss of such influence in the region (Li & Worm 2011). In Jiang's era (1993-2002), China adopted a foreign policy emphasizing 'peace, wealth and safety in good neighbor relationships' and successfully solved the

border disputes with all neighboring countries except India and Bhutan (Li & Worm 2011; Yu 2008). In addition, China also started to build good relationships with Africa governments through officially setting relations on a non-ideological footing with an emphasis on resource acquisition (Alden 2006). Therefore, according to Pew's polling, Kohut (2007) analyzes that supporters of China, or those holding the most positive image of the country, are most prevalent in neighboring Asian countries, as well as in most African countries.

Entering the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Chinese government under the leadership of Hu and Wen has helped improve the country's image both at home and abroad through adopting and promoting the idea of 'putting people first' and 'building harmonious society' (Li & Worm 2011). From the quick response to the SARS epidemic to the efficient rescue action in the Sichuan earthquake, from the success of hosting the Beijing Olympic Games and Shanghai Expo to granting foreign journalists free rights to interview and report in China, the image of the Chinese government and, indeed, China's international image have become more positive than before. In contrast, 'considerably more people around the world have an unfavorable view of the America. The rise of anti-Americanism in recent years has given China a decided image advantage over the United States' (Kohut 2007). More importantly, China's economy has continuously and rapidly developed and since 2010 has become the second largest after the economy of the United States. This has also contributed to the improvement of China's international image. The contributions to the enhancement of China's international image can be demonstrated as follows:

- Encouraged by the 'go out' strategy of the Chinese government, more and more large Chinese corporations, such as Haier and Tsingtao Brewery, have started investing overseas, which, to a certain extent, has changed the perceptions of foreign people that Chinese companies lack international competitiveness (Li & Worm 2011). Additionally, 'industrial products "made in China" and traded on a global scale have aroused people's interest from around the world to know more about the success that lies behind the "made in China" brand, and about its source, which originates in Chinese culture' (Zhao & Huang 2010).
- According to Nye's (2005) observation, 'the enrolment of foreign students in China has tripled to 110,000 from 36,000 over the past decade, and the number of foreign tourists has also increased dramatically in recent years'. This indicates that, with the rapid development of China's economy, more and more foreign people have visited China for study, tourism and business. Their

impressions and perceptions of China and Chinese people have, as a consequence, gradually changed (Li & Worm 2011).

- With the steady expansion of China's middle class and the increase of personal disposable income, more and more Chinese are travelling abroad for education and for travel, not only allowing Chinese people to improve their understanding of the rest of the world and to facilitate international cooperation, but also contributing significantly to the education and tourism economies of destination countries, thereby increasing China's economic temptation and soft power (Li & Worm 2011).
- China's economic power is changing attitudes towards Mandarin Chinese worldwide (Zhao & Huang 2010). Learning Chinese has become popular amongst many foreigners. The establishment and rapid growth of overseas Confucius Institutes, particularly in western countries, has facilitated those non-Chinese to learn Chinese language and culture, which may further shape foreigners' attitudes towards China.

However, China's rapidly expanding economy can sometimes lead to a series of problems that may affect the national image, such as 'Made in China' product quality scandals in 2007 and the toxic milk scandal in 2008. In particular, the 'Made in China' product quality scandals in 2007 seriously affected China's export industry, with many western countries, including the U.S, Canada, the European Union, Australian and New Zealand, uniting against products manufactured in and exported from China (Cai, Lee & Augustine 2009). As Kohut (2007) stresses, 'perceptions of China's increasing power – both military and economic – could boost anti-Chinese sentiment in years to come. And in fact, this has already begun to occur in Western Europe where worries about China's economic power are on the rise'. As a result, on the one hand, the Chinese government has to learn how to improve its international image through public relations campaigns (Cai, Lee & Augustine 2009). On the other hand, Chinese companies should adopt strict corporate social responsibility principles in order to self-regulate their business conduct overseas, and to pay close attention to product quality and food safety. It is also argued that Chinese people should behave 'nicely' at home and abroad, and try their best to correct those apparent misunderstandings about China when communicating with foreigners (Li & Worm 2011).

In practice, apart from historical, cultural, economic and political factors, the Western media also play an important role in influencing Western people's attitudes towards China. As Li & Worm (2011) reveal, 'although China has made much improvement in

its international image, Westerners still have some negative images about China, as there exists a lack of understanding and stereotype image of China based on prejudice, which is shaped by Western media'. Arguably, many people in the West today still maintain out-dated images of China and the Chinese people acquired before 1980s (Li & Worm 2011). For example, it was reported (CNTA Report 2001) that the Chinese government organized a large-scale group to promote China as a tourism destination in the USA in 2001. It appeared that American citizens were very interested in China, but knew little about the country, so they always asked, 'China is a socialist country, can American citizens travel to China?' or 'My knowledge about China was from what I learnt in middle school or from newspapers and TV; so is China completely different from in the past?' From this example, it can be presumed that many people from other western countries may still hold similar views about China.

The media may strengthen people's beliefs through continuously generating a series of news and reports. Although there are many news articles and reports about China in Western countries, many focus on the dark or negative side of China, such as alleged human rights abuses, its large population, low-qualified education, pollution, the problem of food hygiene, the protection of intellectual property, and the lack of religious freedom, all of which could lead to misunderstandings and even Damage China's international reputation. According to Nadeau, O'Reilly & Heslop (2011), 'China's status as a developing country suggests that its image would be similar to other developing countries where a poor image is associated with its products'.

Luo (2010) undertook research into the American public's perceptions of China through an analysis of international news coverage in the U.S. media. This research revealed that 'the U. S. press was more concerned with broader economic issues of China due to China's achievements in economic development and the increasing China-U.S. trade. The political issues of China were still a great concern in the U.S. press, because of China's communist political system and human rights record'. The research also identified that 'although China has received significantly more attention from the U.S. media, the news coverage of China tends to be negative. The U.S. press seldom promoted a favorable image of China, but constructed negative images of China in anti-Communist frames. China was more often to be viewed as an adversary than an ally, a competitor than a partner'. When the media in the U.S. reported the demonstrations at Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989, for example, it emphasized the legitimacy of the demonstrators' goals and described the government as 'cruelly repressive'. The report of the outbreak of SARS in 2003 highlighted the negative economic consequences of the epidemic and attributed the spread of SARS to the

Chinese leaders. 'Since average American people have no direct experience of visiting other countries, they have to rely on the news media for information about the outside world. As a result, American people have much more negative views of China than other countries. They are more negative toward the rise of China, more afraid of China as a critical threat to the interest of the U.S., more against free trade with China, and more convinced that China's military power can become a potential threat to international security' (Luo 2010). Nevertheless, American people with higher levels of education have more positive views of China and the Chinese, as they are considered to be more critical of international news coverage and more likely to get information from other sources, such as Internet, to construct less-distorted images of China (Luo 2010).

In recent years, increasing numbers of scholars (Barr 2012; Ding 2008; Ding & Saunders 2006; Fan 2008; Li & Worm 2011; Nye 2004a, 2004b, 2005; Van Ham 2011; Yu 2008) and Chinese politicians have paid much attention to 'soft power', due to China's growing role as an economic, political and military force in the world. The term 'soft power' was first coined by Nye (1990) to represent co-optive power in contrast to hard power. It refers to the ability of a country to structure a situation through the attraction of one's values, culture and policies, so that other countries develop preferences or define their interests in ways consistent with its own (Nye 1990). Later, the definition of 'soft power' was further developed as 'the ability to get what you want through attraction, such as a country's culture, political ideals, and policies, rather than coercion or payments' (Nye 2004a); 'the ability to get others to want what you want' (Nye 2004a); 'the ability to shape the preferences of others' (Nye 2004b: 5); and 'the ability to attract, and attraction often leads to acquiescence (Nye 2004b: 6). Therefore, it can be argued that soft power plays a significant role in strengthening a nation's global status and improving a nation's international image.

China has been quick to acknowledge that the fear of a 'rising Chinese giant' could result in a negative backlash, and image management is essential to limit suspicions and worries (Van Ham 2011). Hence, Chinese leaders have gradually adopted a soft power strategy for a peaceful rise, in order to help China construct its ideal of international order for the establishment of a favored national image, and to exert its political influence on regional affairs for its domestic economic developments. As Barr (2012) emphasizes, soft power is important for China to create and manage its identity as orderly, prosperous and legitimate. Although Li & Worm (2011) suggest that China can build its soft power in the six areas, namely culture, political values, development models, international institutions, international image and economic temptation, it

seems that most scholars prefer discussing China's soft power from the perspectives of 'culture', 'political values', 'international image' and 'economy', particularly focusing on 'culture' and 'international image'.

There is a consensus that China's culture has enough power to influence foreign people's perception of China. Therefore, 'China's Culture Minister Cai Wu suggests that China should effectively use culture as a diplomatic platform to enhance its image and project its soft power' (Liu, Wang & Fu 2012). As Ding & Saunders (2006) state, culture attractiveness, as one of the most important components of a country's soft power, not only influences various aspects of people's lives and plays a vital part in social development within a country, but also has a direct impact on relations between countries and helps a country to achieve important foreign policy goals. Thus, 'policymakers believe the real key to soft power lies in bolstering cultural productions and expanding the global cultural footprint' (Liu, Wang & Fu 2012). According to Li & Worm (2011), Chinese culture is very important in influencing foreign people in a subtle way, as China owns many unique and attractive cultural resources, such as the Chinese language, Chinese philosophy, Chinese music, movies, arts, Chinese food, Chinese medicine and Chinatowns in major cities all over the world. A number of studies (Ding & Saunders 2006; Zhao & Huang 2010) have been undertaken to demonstrate how the Chinese government makes efforts to promote and popularize the Chinese language, Mandarin, through overseas Confucius Institutes, and to discuss if Chinese language can replace English as the dominant language in the future. According to the research, Ding & Saunders (2006) propose that, as the use of the Chinese language grows, there are increasing predictions that Chinese may even replace English as the dominant language by the late 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly if China continues its trajectory towards replacing the United States as the leading power in East Asia. Zhao & Huang (2010), however, disagree with this view, arguing that 'it is unlikely that Chinese will displace English as the world's most widely used language in the foreseeable future, but the opinion that the Chinese language is an important element in the future unity and harmony of the world has been voiced'. More importantly, the Chinese language and culture training opportunities are able to help deepen intercultural understandings and thus soften China's image as a threat as it grows stronger both economically and politically (Liu, Wang & Fu 2012).

Nevertheless, China has not fully developed its cultural resources and enhanced its capability to convert such resources into desired policy outcomes, as there is lack of strong cultural industries. For example, Liu, Wang & Fu (2012) criticize that film, as one of China's most important soft power ingredients, has not seen the kind of success that

policymakers envisaged nor has it made waves at the box-office. As a consequence, 'Chinese filmmakers need to learn proper story-telling languages that are accepted by the West' (Liu, Wang & Fu 2012). Certainly, soft power is not just about Chinese culture, but some Chinese officials seem to lack of a thorough understanding of the soft power concept so that they overemphasize Chinese culture when talking about China's soft power (Li & Worm 2011).

Many international relations theorists argue that national image is an important channel and exercises a country's soft power (Ding & Saunders, 2006). However, how to promote the national image relies on nation branding. Fan (2008) discusses the link between soft power and nation branding, as both concepts are concerned with a nation's influence on the world stage:

Many countries, particularly those developing countries, today suffer from image problems like little brand awareness or negative perceptions, which are caused internally by the dramatic changes taking place in the political-economic-social landscapes, and externally due to the effect of outdated stereotypes. Therefore, national branding can be an important tool in the development of a nation's soft power. Branding a nation requires the study of a nation's soft power sources in order to exploit them effectively to promote the national image.

Barr (2012) also believes that there is a relationship between soft power and nation branding. As Barr (2012) states, 'image and reputation are paramount in nation branding. They are built on perceptions of trust and customer satisfaction and in this way are similar to Nye's soft power resources: a country's brand is at least partly determined by its culture, political ideals and policies. Thus, branding is much about both power and identity'. According to the research, Fan (2008) proposes that nation branding is about how a nation as whole attempts to reshape international opinions. Therefore, a successful nation branding campaign can help create a more favorable and lasting image among the international audience and, consequently, further enhance a country's soft power.

Having recognized the importance of national image in developing its soft power, the Chinese government has attempted to promote its attraction through a series of branding exercises in recent years, such as 2010 Shanghai Expo, a series of national image films between 2009 and 2011, and the building of the Confucius Institute brand. However, Barr (2012) argues that these exercises do not just construct and manage China's reputation, but instill loyalty to the Party brand and strengthen Beijing's own

legitimacy, amongst both its domestic population and international audience. Barr (2012) provides further illustrations as follows:

- The 2010 Expo provided an opportunity for the host city, Shanghai, to brand itself as the future of global finance. Expo organisers sought a balance between combating negative stereotypes of China whilst reinforcing positive ones to help create a sense of familiarity amongst foreign visitors.
- One way Beijing has sought to enhance its image abroad is with two national publicity films, which have largely been targeted at U.S. audiences. The first, which aired internationally on CNN in late 2009, sought to highlight the way Chinese companies cooperate with overseas firms in producing goods. The film can be seen not only as a reaction to negative press over the Olympic torch relay but also stories of tainted toothpaste, lead-painted toys and poison pet food, which heightened global fears about the quality and safety of Chinese-made products. The second ad campaign was launched in late 2010 and early 2011 and called 'Perspectives', which featured the changes and challenges of Chinese society since the country opened to the world. It highlighted how China has 'preserved its own special character' whilst embracing the world.
- China's best-known branding exercise perhaps concerns Confucius. The Confucius Institutes represent one of China's clearest examples of soft power. The 2007 Confucius Institutes Conference report emphasizes its 'Efforts to Build the Confucius Institute Brand'. Confucius Institutes can be seen as a type of impression management, an effort by the Chinese government to craft a positive image of it. In this respect, they fit well with the notion of China's peaceful development, as exemplified by the official Confucius Institutes logo.

Certainly, such branding exercises mentioned above have had their limitations and some authors criticize their deficiencies. However, no matter what the outcome of China's nation building exercises is, it shows how China relies on the media and forms of popular culture as soft power to help polish its image of a unified and stable nation and to help boost its economic competitiveness (Barr 2012).

### **3.5 Chapter summary**

From the perspective of economy and politics, China's image may remain negative for Western people. However, from the perspective of tourism, China as a tourist

destination is becoming increasingly attractive to Western visitors, as is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four. However, from its thousands-year history and culture to economic modernization, from the Great Wall to the Three Gorges Dam, from feudalistic society to communist society, from Chairman Mao to President Xi Jinping, and from Beijing Olympic Games to Shanghai World Expo, people from the rest of world are witnessing a radical change of China. Their curiosity and spirit of exploration are prompting them to (re)discover the country. According to Wei (2003), 'WTO, an official organization, and WTTC organized by corporations, predict by 2020, China will receive 13.7 million inbound tourists and hopefully become the largest tourist destination in the world'. This prediction is not baseless. Indeed, as the next chapter now considers, China is rapidly emerging as a global force as both a market and destination in international tourism.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Tourism Policy, Inbound Tourism, Tourism Resources, and Tourism-Related Services in China**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The two preceding chapters (Chapters 2 and 3) have reviewed the literature on crisis management in tourism and on tourism destination respectively, the purpose being to establish a theoretical framework for the subsequent research in this thesis. Given the focus of that research on tourism in the Three Gorges region of China, the purpose of this chapter is to contextualize it through a consideration the contemporary state of inbound tourism in China. Based upon an analysis of China's tourism policies, its tourist resources and principal source markets, and the main tourism-related services, the chapter will demonstrate the importance of inbound tourism to China, explore how tourism policy, existing tourism resources and main tourism-related services contribute to China's tourism, and identify what the Chinese government has done to support and develop inbound tourism to the country. As a whole, this chapter contributes to an understanding of China's tourism industry.

#### **4.2 Tourism policy in China since 1919: principal developments**

It is generally accepted that, until relatively recently, socio-political instability in China had an inevitable negative impact of the development of the country's tourism (Intel Report 2010; Wen & Tisdell 2001: 15-18; Zhang 2003; Zhang, Pine & Lam 2005: 14-17). Nevertheless, over the last century the Chinese government has increasingly recognized the importance of the tourism sector and, as a consequence, has undertaken to develop it as pillar of the country's economy. For convenience and brevity within the context of this thesis, the main developments in Chinese tourism policy since 1920 are summarized in Table 4.1 overleaf. More information related to China travel services can be found in Section 4.5.2.

**Table 4.1:** Developments in tourism policy in China since 1920

Period	Main changes of tourism policy
1921 – 1948	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following the establishment of the Republic of China by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the political situation became relatively stable and the tourism industry was brought on the national development agenda.</li> <li>• China Travel Service was founded in 1923 and became a landmark of China's travel business.</li> <li>• From late 1930s, following the commencement of the Second World War and the subsequent civil war, tourism collapsed until the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.</li> </ul>
1949 – 1976	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The travel business was treated as a form of special political activity.</li> <li>• In 1953, the Beijing Overseas Chinese Travel Service was set up to receive the overseas Chinese who came back to the mainland to meet their relatives or friends, or to tour the country.</li> <li>• China International Travel Service was founded in 1954 to provide services only for foreigners with special permission to visit the country. Tourism in China at that time, therefore, was essentially a 'diplomatic activity', serving political rather than economic goals. And there is no doubt that domestic tourism and outbound travel occurred only on a very limited basis.</li> <li>• In the early 1960s, China was ready to increase its tourism to a larger scale.</li> <li>• In order to better develop tourism, the Overseas Chinese Travel Service was set up in 1963, and the China Bureau of Travel and Tourism, directly under the State Council, was established a year later, in 1964.</li> <li>• With the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, China's tourism was hit heavily again. Further development of the sector was until 1971, when China resumed exchanges in the field of tourism with Romania, Yugoslavia and other East European countries, but the number of foreign tourists was limited.</li> <li>• In 1974, the China Travel Service, with its head office in Beijing, replaced the General Overseas Chinese Travel Service and took responsibility for organizing overseas Chinese, compatriots from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, and other foreigners with Chinese origins to visit the mainland of China. During this period, tourism developed slowly and could not be considered as an industry or as an economic activity.</li> </ul>
1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1978 is considered to be a year of great significance for China. Economic reconstruction and the Open Door Policy brought China's tourism alive, so that the development of tourism flourished more than ever.</li> <li>• In this year, the China Bureau of Travel and Tourism was upgraded to the State General Administration for Travel and Tourism, which became a government organization at ministerial level.</li> <li>• Also, the number of places open to international visitors was increased to 122. This provided foreigners with more opportunities for a better understanding of China. For example, reflecting the country's rich tourist resources, a diversity of tour programmes was offered to international visitors, including cruising on the Three Gorges</li> </ul>

	<p>of the Yangtze, cruising on the Yellow River, the Silk Road tour, and so forth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relations between the Chinese and peoples of other countries were further enhanced. It was only from this year that tourism became seen as a distinctive economic sphere and managed / promoted as an area of economic activity, due to the rapid increase of the number of international visitors to China.</li> </ul>
1982	The China Bureau of Travel and Tourism, previously established in 1964, was re-named China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) in 1982. It is the agency in charge of tourism and is directly affiliated to the State Council.
1986 – 1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tourism in China made a significant contribution to the national economy. With the deepening reform, tourism, as a part of service industries, enjoyed priority in the national industry policy.</li> <li>• At that time, many projects invested in and supported by the state and local governments, were undertaken for renovation and development, such as scenic areas along the Three Gorges section of the Yangtze River, a Song Dynasty Street in Kaifeng, and so on. Also, tourist facilities in many areas were further improved.</li> </ul>
1992 – 1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• China's tourism market developed rapidly, as the country pushed ahead in implementing capitalist-led reform.</li> <li>• With the return of Hong Kong in 1997 and Macao in 1998, the development of China's inbound tourism was further consolidated.</li> <li>• The increase of foreign investments brought many opportunities to China, not only in commercial trade but also in the tourism industry. For example, Wen &amp; Tisdell (2001: 7-8) claim that 'economic growth in China has definitely stimulated the development of its tourism industry in recent decades, and China's tourism industry has benefited from world economic growth, and particularly substantial economic growth in East Asia'. The tourism industry was identified as a new growth point of the national economy in the years to come.</li> <li>• By the end of 1998, the governments of many municipalities, provinces, and autonomous regions in China had established the tourism industry as one of pillar industries in their locality.</li> </ul>
Entering the 21 <sup>st</sup> century	<p>At the turn of new century, China has produced its strategic plan for tourism development for the next 20 years, the overall goal being to become the world's leading tourism destination. An increasing diversity of government policies and activities advance the development of China's tourism. Some examples are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the national campaign for the development of western China proposed at the end of the year 2000, tourism has been made a priority among industrial sectors.</li> <li>• In 2001, Premier Zhu Rongji, in his report on the '10<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan for the National Economy and Social Development', stressed that the development of the service sector should be sped up, and more effort should be given to the service industries directly related to resident consumption such as real estate, travel and tourism, catering, entertainment and recreation, and health. Subsequently, more preferential government policies have been worked out to support tourism development at both central and local levels, including the increase of public holidays, which not only contributes to the development of domestic tourism, but also stimulates domestic consumption.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• China's entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001 has provided more opportunities for its tourism development, particularly for its inbound tourism development.</li> <li>• CNTA implemented a number of new regulations to support the further development of tourism in 2009: Regulation on Travel Agencies, Regulation on Tour Guides, and Measures for Administration of Outbound Tours by Chinese Citizens.</li> <li>• On 4<sup>th</sup> June 2013, the Tourism Law of the People's Republic of China was formally established.</li> </ul>
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**Source:** Gao & Zhang (1983), Hotel Mule Report (2011), Li (1998: 84-96), Mintel (2010), Wen & Tisdell (2001: 15-18), Zhang (2003), and Zhang, Pine & Lam (2005: 14-17)

However, although significant advances have been made in the promotion and development of tourism in China, as summarized above in Table 4.1, the legal framework to support or regulate tourism remains limited (Li 2011). Indeed, although some policies referred to above have been established in order to adjust tourism structures, regulate tourism markets, solve tourism conflicts, and to protect rights of tourists, they have failed to solve many 'deep-rooted problems' regarding the travel sector. 'The absence of basic tourism law makes the legislation of tourism in China in a rudderless state' (Li 2011) and has resulted in a chain of reactions. For example, as Li (2011) states, in the absence of basic tourism laws, local tourism development and policy-making activities have no principles to follow, resulting in disorder in the tourism market. In addition, the lack of a unified service standard may greatly influence tourists' travel experience.

Fortunately, however, and after a long wait, in 2012 the Chinese government finally decided to develop a comprehensive and systematic legal framework to promote and regulate the development of China's booming travel industry. It was reported that on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2012 Chinese legislators started the first round of deliberations on a draft law for tourism (Xinhua News 2012). The draft includes not only operating standards for travel-related businesses and scenic areas, but also a clause prohibiting travel agencies from forcing tourists to purchase goods. Through the establishment of the tourism law, China aims to regulate the country's tourism sector, including the improvement of the quality of travel services, to foster its healthy and sustainable development and to transform it into a pillar of economic growth.

On 4<sup>th</sup> June 2013, the Tourism Law of the People's Republic of China was formally published on the China National Tourism Administration's website (<http://en.cnta.gov.cn/html/2013-6/2013-6-4-10-1-12844.html>), finally providing China with its own tourism law to secure the healthy development of its tourism industry.

### **4.3 Inbound tourism in China**

The development of China's tourism sector is inseparable from China's broader economic development. That is, the increase in foreign investments experiences in recent decades has brought many opportunities to China, not only in commercial trade in general but also to the tourism industry in particular. Thus, both central and local governments promote foreign investment in order to develop tourism. As Wen & Tisdell (2001: 7) claim, 'economic growth in China has definitely stimulated the development of its tourism industry in recent decades, and China's tourism industry has benefited from world economic growth and particularly substantial economic growth in East Asia'. Certainly, the development of China's tourism is a major contributor to its economic growth.

Director of the China national tourism administration, Qiwei SHAO, states, tourism has become an important industry in the national economy, which plays a more prominent role in boosting the economy. Its contribution to national economy can be summarized as follows: first, it stimulates economic growth. According to estimates, China's tourism industry has accounted for more than 4% of GDP. The tourism-related industries have been more than 110. The development of tourism leads to social investment and promotes the development of other related industries. Among them, the contribution of tourism to the lodging industry is more than 90%, and to civil aviation and rail passenger transport industry is more than 80%. Second, it promotes social consumption. In 2010, the domestic tourism consumption from Chinese residents reached 1.258 trillion Yuan, accounting for 9.4% of total household consumption expenditure. Third, it promotes social employment. At present there are more than 13.5 million people directly working in the tourism industry, and about 80 million people working in tourism-related industries. (Qian 2012)

Additionally, according to the WTTC's survey and predictions, as reported by Xinhua News (2003), 'by 2013, China's travel and tourism will create the domestic productive aggregate value to approximately 84 billion RMB, provide 65 million job positions, attract more investment and be ranked fourth in the world'. The prediction is not baseless, as abundant tourism resources and a wide market endow the development of China's tourism with significant potential.

Compared with domestic and outbound tourism, the development of China's inbound tourism has drawn greater attention from the Chinese central government, as 'tourism in China started with inbound tourists' (Zhang, Pine & Lam 2005: 9), and 'inbound tourism occupies a crucial position in international tourism' (Zhang 2002). On the one hand, Zhang, Pine & Lam (2005: 9) state that 'due to China's long history, civilization, large population and distinctive political and economic systems, tourist services were first provided for visitors from abroad, either overseas Chinese or foreign tourists'. On the other hand, the Chinese government has realized the fact that 'the number of inbound tourists who stay over in a country and the foreign exchange revenue of international tourism are not only important targets in measuring a country's tourism strength, but also a principle approach of earning foreign exchange and increasing chances of obtaining employment' (Zhang 2002). As a result, the development of inbound tourism in China takes priority over domestic and outbound tourism, although it should be noted that domestic tourism in China is also of significant economic and social importance. Not only is China's domestic tourism market the largest in the world – an unsurprising fact, perhaps, given the size of the country's population – but also it is estimated to be growing at some 10% each year, contributing significantly to regional economic growth and development (Travel China Guild 2013). More precisely, in 2011 an estimated 2.61 billion domestic tourism trips were made, generating expenditure of 1,930.5 billion Yuan (National Bureau of Statistics 2013).

Despite a number of challenges in recent years, including the SARS outbreak in 2003, the Wenchuan Earthquake in 2008, and the Global Financial Crisis between 2008 and 2009, China's inbound tourism has maintained a healthy and steady increase over the last decade (See Table 4.2). At the same time, the country has enjoyed an ever-increasing share of global international arrivals; in 1999, for example, China attracted 27 million international arrivals, or 4.1% of total global arrivals, ranking the country the world's sixth most visited in terms of number of international visitors. By 2012, it had risen to third place, attracting almost 58 million international visitors, or 4.7% of global arrivals (UNWTO 2013). Moreover, according to Wei (2003: 92), 'by 2020 China will receive 137 million inbound tourists and hopefully become the largest tourist destination in the world'.

Owing to the particular context of China's history and politics, 'China's international tourism is usually divided into two inbound markets, foreign tourists and compatriots. 'Compatriots' is the special term used to describe people from Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, and overseas Chinese' (Zhang, Pine & Lam 2005: 26). For the purpose of this

thesis, however, only the 'foreign tourists' category of inbound tourism will be considered in the research.

As can be seen in Table 4.2 overleaf, China's inbound tourism has developed healthily and the number of foreigners has increased steadily as a whole from 2002. The total inbound tourist arrivals were about 97.9 million in 2002.

There are two reasons for the growth besides the marketing initiatives made by the Chinese Government and the industry: firstly, safety concerns have led to the changes in the choice different destination. Because of terrorism, more tourists would choose China as a destination for its political stability and safety instead of some well-visited destinations, such as the US and Europe. Secondly, the sustained growth of China's economy has encouraged the increase of inbound tourists, especially business travelers. (Zhang & Han 2004)

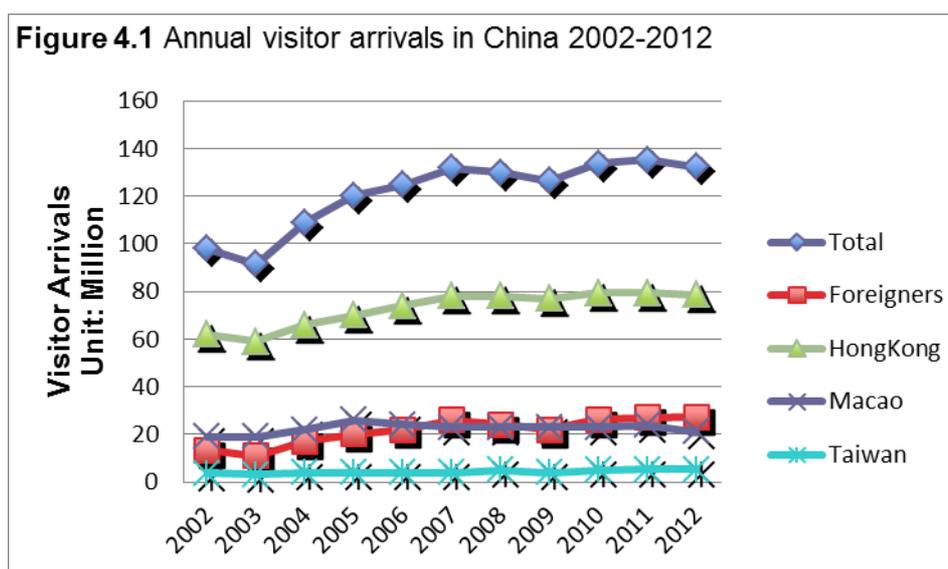
It is noticeable, however, that the total number of foreigners to China experienced a dramatic decline from 13.4 million in 2002 to 11 million in 2003, and then another decrease from 26 million in 2007 to 22 million in 2009. There were three vital events hitting China's inbound tourism in these periods: the outbreak of SARS in 2003, the Sichuan Earthquake in 2008, and global financial crisis from 2007 to 2009. More recently, the number of foreigners to China started to increase in 2010 (see Figure 4.1 overleaf).

Nevertheless, it is noticeable that in 2012 the total number of inbound tourists to China was 132.4 million, having a 1.7% fall compared with 2011. Huang (2013) states that the number of visitors from Hong Kong and Macao to China decreased in 2012; therefore, the total number of inbound tourists to China declined slightly. Lu (2013) provides other figures to show the developmental circumstance of China's inbound tourism in 2012: 'the tourism trade deficit increased to more than \$50 billion. The income of inbound tourism declined 0.3 percent compared with 2011'. It is suggested (Lu 2013) that two main factors, including the slowdown of the global economy and the appreciation of the Yuan, and other factors, such as low service quality provided at Chinese destinations and poor promotions, significantly affected the development of inbound tourism.

**Table 4.2:** China's inbound tourist arrivals in 2002 – 2012 (Unit: million)

Year	Total	Foreigners	Hong Kong	Macao	Taiwan
2002	97.9	13.4	62	19	3.7
2003	91.6	11	59	19	3
2004	109.0	17	66	22	4
2005	120.3	20	70	26	4
2006	124.9	22	74	24	4
2007	131.8	26	78	23	4
2008	130.0	24	78	23	5
2009	126.4	22	77	23	4
2010	133.7	26.1	79.3	23.1	5.1
2011	135.4	27.1	79.3	23.7	5.2
2012	132.4	27.2	78.7	21.2	5.3

**Sources:** Adapted from China National Tourism Administration (2003-2013)



More specifically, the outbreak of SARS in 2003 in particular had a significant negative impact not only China's economy as a whole but also its inbound tourism:

'In the SARS period that peaked from late April to July 2003, the tourism industry was seriously affected, as it was a major point of potential vulnerability. .... Affected by SARS, tourist arrivals in May, June and July 2003 were predicted to drop by around one million compared with the same period last year'. Lee & Warner (2006)

Owing to the dramatic decrease of the number of foreign visitors, tourism receipts fell by 14.6% and in the world ranking of tourism receipts China fell from fifth in 2002 to seventh in 2003 (see Table 4.3 overleaf). According to Zhang & Han (2004), 'after the ban was lifted on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2003, recovery was first seen in domestic tourism, and then outbound tourism. Inbound market was slow in building up confidence and recovery'. Nevertheless, China's inbound tourism recovered rapidly in 2004. 'According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), in 2004 China took over Italy's traditional position as the world's fourth most visited destination, and with US \$25.7 billion tourism receipts the same year, ranked seventh in the world (Intel Report 2006). As can be seen from Table 4.2, China enjoyed a spectacular 27% increase in international tourism in 2004, achieving a record 42 million arrivals. Tourism receipts also rose 32.4% (see Table 4.3 overleaf). Compared with 2004, tourist arrivals and tourism receipts in 2005 increased steadily and slowly, by 10.8% and 12.1% respectively (see Table 4.3 overleaf).

In 2008, the Wenchuan earthquake in Sichuan Province similarly had a major impact on all industries in the quake-hit areas, the local tourism sector being no exception (Yang, Chen & Wang 2008; Yang, Wang & Chen 2011). 'Home to five World Heritage Sites, tourism was Sichuan's major sources of income. .... [However] the quake has meant a loss of nearly \$10 billion.' (United Nations Development Program Report 2008).

According to Guo (2011), following the earthquake the recovery period for domestic tourism was ten months, whilst inbound tourism was still (in 2010) recovering. Indeed, up to May 2010, the fall in the number of international visitors to the region totaled 2.7 million, whilst the economic loss of foreign exchange earnings amounted to \$706.8 million.

It was also during this period that China's tourism industry was impacted upon by the outbreak of the global financial crisis. The 2007-2012 global financial crises are widely considered to be the worst such crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s. A downturn in economic activity led to a global recession at the same time as contributing to the European sovereign-debt crisis (Wikipedia 2012). Global tourism was also heavily affected by the global financial crisis, particularly between 2008 and 2009. Nevertheless, 'after a significant contraction in 2009, tourism rebounded strongly in 2010' (Kapiki 2011) and, since then, both arrivals and receipts have increased substantially; between 2010 and 2011, global arrivals and receipts grew by 4.8% and 4.7% respectively, whilst a growth rate of 4% for both was recorded in 2012 (UNWTO

2013). Similarly, China's inbound tourism also started to recover in 2010. The number of inbound tourists (overnight visitors) has maintained slow growth since 2010 and reached 57.7 million in 2012, ranking third in the world. China's international tourism receipts, in addition, were \$50 billion, ranking fourth in the world (see Table 4.3).

**Table 4.3:** Rank of China's tourist arrivals and tourism receipts in the world, 2002-2012

<b>Year</b>	<b>Tourists (Overnight Visitors) (Millions)</b>	<b>World Rank</b>	<b>Tourism Receipts (Billions. US\$)</b>	<b>World Rank</b>
<b>2002</b>	36.8	5	20.4	5
<b>2003</b>	32.9	5	17.4	7
<b>2004</b>	41.8	4	25.7	5
<b>2005</b>	48.9	4	29.3	6
<b>2006</b>	49.9	3	33.9	5
<b>2007</b>	54.7	4	41.9	4
<b>2008</b>	53.0	4	40.8	5
<b>2009</b>	50.9	4	39.7	4
<b>2010</b>	55.7	3	45.8	4
<b>2011</b>	57.6	3	48.5	4
<b>2012</b>	57.7	3	50.0	4

**Source:** Huang (2013), Jiang & Xu (2012), UNWTO (2013)

Owing to its geographical position, China's main international tourist source markets are Asian countries, Eastern Europe and North America. The establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Japan and Korea in 1962 and 1987 respectively 'facilitated a pattern of increasing arrival numbers with these two neighboring markets being the largest foreign source markets for China' (Intel Report 2004). As can be seen in Table 4.4 overleaf, China's top four tourist-generating markets are Japan, Korea, Russia and the USA. As a long-haul market, the USA has been China's largest foreign source market since 2002. In Western Europe, the UK was the largest market for China between 2002 and 2009, followed by Germany and France. However, since 2010, Germany has replaced the UK as the largest source market. Nevertheless, the number of UK tourists visiting China has continued to increase slowly but steadily. In Oceania, Australia showed the strongest growth in 2007 and 2010 and became the 10<sup>th</sup> leading international tourist market for China after Canada in 2011. It is interesting that Indonesia has replaced France to become one of top fifteen foreign tourist-generating countries to China since 2009. In 2012, Vietnam

entered the list of top 15 foreign tourist-generating countries to China, ranking 6, instead of India.

**Table 4.4:** Top 15 foreign tourist-generating countries to China 2002-2012 (Unit: Thousand)

Country	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Japan	2,926	2,255	3,334	3,390	3,746	3,978	3,446	3,317	3,731	3,658	3518
Korea	2,124	1,946	2,845	3,545	3,924	4,777	3,960	3,197	4,076	4,185	4070
Russia	1,272	1,381	1,792	2,224	2,405	3,004	3,123	1,743	2,370	2,536	2426
USA	1,121	823	1,309	1,556	1,710	1,901	1,786	1,709	2,009	2,116	2118
Malaysia	592	430	742	900	911	1,062	1,040	1,059	1,245	1,245	1236
Singapore	497	378	637	756	828	922	876	889	1,003	1,063	1028
Philippines	509	458	549	654	704	833	795	749	828	894	962
Mongolia	453	418	554	642	631	682	705	576	794	994	1010
Thailand	386	275	464	586	592	612	554	542	635	608	648
UK	343	288	418	500	553	605	551	529	575	595	618
Australia	291	245	376	483	538	607	571	561	661	726	774
Canada	291	230	348	430	499	577	535	550	685	748	708
Germany	282	222	365	455	501	557	529	518	608	637	660
India	*	219	309	357	405	463	437	449	549	606	*
France	222	156	281	372	402	463	430	*	*	*	*

**Sources:** China National Tourism Administration (2003-2012), Jiang & Xu (2012)

**Note:** \* means that those countries were not one of top 15 foreign tourist-generating countries to China in a certain year.

The World Tourism Organization lists the top ten countries as the most visited by international travelers, as shown in Table 4.5 overleaf. Compared with 2009, China surpassed Spain to become the third most visited country 2010, a position it has continued to hold. Most of the top visited countries continue to be on the European continent, followed by a growing number of Asian countries (see Table 4.5 overleaf).

The development of tourism, including inbound tourism, in China is dependent on the government's support. In other words, the 'Chinese government has played a very important role in the process of development of China's tourism, and most aspects of tourism development have been addressed through a variety of policy initiatives and measures' (Zhang & Han 2004). Zhang & Han (2004) point out that government involvement in national tourism development has become a common experience of many developing countries. China, as a developing country, employs a government-leading mode to develop its tourism.

**Table 4.5:** World's top ten international tourism destinations (2012)

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>UNWTO Regional Market</b>	<b>Arrivals (millions)</b>
<b>1</b>	France	Europe	83.0
<b>2</b>	United States	North America	67.0
<b>3</b>	China	Asia	57.7
<b>4</b>	Spain	Europe	57.7
<b>5</b>	Italy	Europe	46.4
<b>6</b>	Turkey	Europe	35.7
<b>7</b>	Germany	Europe	30.4
<b>8</b>	United Kingdom	Europe	29.3
<b>9</b>	Russia	Europe	25.7
<b>10</b>	Malaysia	Asia	25.0

**Source:** UNWTO (2013)

#### **4.4 Existing tourism resources in China**

Tourism resources are the basis of tourism development (Tourism Research Centre, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences 2011: 22). However, the definition of tourism resources has always been controversial. Pančić Kombol (2000) defines tourism resources as 'the means which can be utilized for the tourism sector in a given area'. More specifically, they may be considered to 'include attractive and cultural resources and goods, that is, elements in the spatial system that have a stimulating effect on the tourism movement by satisfying a wide range of tourist needs and creating a tourism product' (Gjorgievski, Kozuharov & Nakovski 2013). Without providing a precise definition, The Tourism Research Centre, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (2011: 22) suggests that tourism resources should have the following characteristics: first, they must be related to tourism demand; second, they are unlimited; third, they can only be judged from tourism attraction capability aspects.

Tourism resources can be divided into natural and anthropogenic resources (Gjorgievski, Kozuharov & Nakovski 2013). The former is created by nature and exist in geographical spaces independent of tourist demand and need, such as geomorphological resources, climate-based resources, hydrographical resources, bio-geographical resource, and protected natural heritage; conversely, the latter is created by humans and can also be used for recreation, including cultural assets, ethno-social

resources, artistic resources and environmental resources (Gjorgievski, Kozuharov & Nakovski 2013).

China is 'the third largest country in the world in terms of area and the largest in terms of population' (CNTA 2000a). Thanks to its vast territory and long history, China has abundant tourism resources, including globally famous attractions and historical sites, spectacular landscapes, and rich and colourful national customs. Countless tourist attractions focus on China's history, its ancient culture and extraordinary landscapes (Mintel Report 2012). Such rich resources attract millions of international visitors to travel to China each year. Nevertheless, 'the majority of first-time visitors tend to stick to tried-and-tested itineraries, taking in the key cities and sites for which China is famous – Beijing, Shanghai, Guilin, the Silk Road, and so forth' (Mintel Report 2012). According to China Net (2000), there are two major tour routes in China: one is the 'S'-shaped traditional tour route, including famous political and cultural cities, such as Beijing, Xi'an, Shanghai, Suzhou and Hangzhou; the other one is the crescent-shaped tour route including coastal open regions, such as the Liaodong and Shandong peninsulas and the Yangtze and Pearl river deltas.

China Net (2000a), China's official gateway to news and information, provides a wide and comprehensive introduction in China's existing tourism resources, including physical geography, history, population and ethnic groups, and so forth. The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) provide an integrated presentation about world heritage sites in China. It is reported (UNESCO 1992-2013) that been 45 world heritage sites have been designated in China to date (see Table 4.6 and more detailed information can be found in Appendix 1). China VR (2012) further offers a panoramic virtual tour of world heritage in China and uses pictures to show the distribution of China's world heritage sites and tourism resources. This information makes China's tourism resources be more easily understood.

Conversely, Henderson, Teck, Ng & Tan (2009), Oakes (1998), Wang (2003), and Yu (2001) focus on a specific area to study China's tourism resources, which are helpful to further understand the characteristics of China's tourism resources. For example, Yu (2001) introduces the distribution of natural resources, explains the importance of the exploitation and development of forest resources in China's tourism, and analyzes the advantages of these resources. Wang (2003) discusses the importance of famous national historical and cultural towns and cities in the development of China's tourism industry. In his research, Wang (2003) not only states the distribution of these towns

and cities in China, but also analyzes their values, significant position and the effects on tourism. In their articles, however, the lack of case studies reduces its reliability and persuasion. Oakes (1998), in his book, explores how the experience of modernization is revealed in China's newly constructed tourist landscapes, and discusses that in China's burgeoning ethnic tourist villages and theme parks all the contradictions, debasement, and liberating potentials of Chinese modernity can be seen. In particular, Oakes emphasizes the contentious issue of the development of tourism amongst ethnic minority groups:

This subversion of the dominant ethnic tourist experience – where the native is put on display for the tourist to gaze upon and fantasize about – marks a local subjectivity that subtly disturbs assumptions about the colonizing powers of tourism in the Fourth World Oakes (1998: 4)

Similarly, drawing on a case study of tourism in two Miao Villages in China, Henderson, Teck, Ng & Tan (2009) state the importance of ethnic cultures and their various guises as tourist attractions, and emphasize that excessive commercialization could threaten their authenticity and sustainable development. The analysis in their research sheds some light on the significance of minority ethnic cultures as natural tourism resources in China.

In recent years, many researchers have started paying more attention to the study of heritage tourism. Timothy & Boyd (2006) contribute to the study in this field, noting that 'heritage tourism, which typically falls under the purview of cultural tourism, is one of the most notable and widespread types of tourism and is among the very oldest forms of travel.' They further observe that 'heritage is a complex and highly political phenomenon. Heritage tourism is commonly used to build patriotism at the domestic level and spread propaganda to international visitors' (Timothy & Boyd 2006). Therefore, as one of the largest forms of tourism, heritage tourism not only promotes the development of local economy, but also contributes to the global economy. 'China is one of the cradles of world civilization, has a glorious history and splendid culture, and is rich in historical and cultural heritage' (Sun & Zhu 2010). Hence, cultural and historical heritage sites, as one of China's tourism resources, play an important role in China's tourism industry. Most international visitors travel to China each year because of their interests and curiosity in China's historical heritage sites and exotic culture.

China's tourism resources, then, can be briefly summarized as follows:

- National Historic and Cultural Cities and Towns

There are hundreds of famous national historic and cultural cities and towns in China each with its own long history and rich cultural background. According to Wang (2003: 83), these towns and cities can be divided into eight categories in terms of their developed track record and cultural characteristics. These are dynasty and imperial capitals, regional political, economic and cultural centres, towns of military importance, commercial cities and traditional commercial ports, traditional landscape showplaces, characteristic cultural towns, the centres of national zones and revolutionary places. In the North and East of China, the developed regions of the economy, there are 39 famous national historic and cultural cities and towns, including Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai and Chaozhou. In the midland of China, the relatively developed regions, there are 29 national historic and cultural cities and towns, such as Kaifeng, Nanchang and Wuhan. In the West of China, the developing regions, the number of such famous cities and towns is around 32, including Chongqing, Chengdu, Xi'an and Lhasa.

- Natural Resources

Thanks to its large geographic longitude and complicated geology, China has abundant forest resources, a varied biomass and different geological phenomena. For example, as Yu (2001: 51) states, in forest regions, 'there are 32-thousand types of high plants, over two-thousand types of trees, around two-thousand types of wild animals and uncountable esculent fungus, potherbs, Chinese herbs and wild flowers. From the tropical rain forest in the Southwest to the frigid-temperate-zone Taiga in the Northeast, from the mangrove forest in the coastal areas to the Taijia forest in the North of Mount Tian, these differences can provide tourists with different visual impressions'. In addition, China has various geological attractions, including fossils, gorges and glaciers, volcanic relic sites, hot springs and natural fountains, stone forests and caves with varieties of stalactites, rivulets, springs, waterfalls, multi-coloured pools, monstrous stones, sheer cliffs, grassland and deserts, and so on. In particular, Karst, as a geomorphological resource, can be found in China, which 'represents a set of relief forms occurring in rocks subject to chemical erosion' (Knezevic 2008).

- Ethnic Groups

'China is a united multi-ethnic nation of fifty-six ethnic groups' (CNTA 2000b). The Han ethnic group is the largest group in terms of the population; therefore, China's other ethnic groups are defined as the national minorities. According to CNTA (2000b), 'the Han people can be found throughout the country. Although the national minorities are

also scattered over a vast area, most of them are distributed in the border regions from northeast China to north, northwest and southwest China'. Of the 55 national minorities, five of them have their own autonomous region due to their relatively large populations: the Mongols in Inner Mongolia, the Hui nationality in the Ningxia autonomous region, Tibetans in Tibet, Uigur in the Sinkiang autonomous region and the Chuang nationality in the Guangxi autonomous region.

Each national minority has its own historical background, cultural customs and spoken and written languages, which can be represented in the unique structure of their houses, eating habits, festivals, national costumes and adornments and folk songs. Most people in these ethnic groups are talented in music, singing and dancing, which is inseparable from their forthright and simple characters. The culture of each national minority has unique regional and national characteristics, which not only enrich Chinese culture, but also, as a tourism resource, add a new and exotic view for tourists.

- Forty-five World Heritage Sites and their Distribution in China

As noted above, to date, 'forty-five cultural and natural heritage sites have been selected as World Heritage Sites' (UNESCO 1992-2013). As can be seen from Table 4.6 overleaf (see also details in Appendix 1), these forty-five heritage sites can be classified into three types: world cultural heritage sites, world natural heritage sites, and mixed (cultural and natural) heritage sites. Of China's sites, thirty-one are cultural heritage sites; ten sites belong to natural heritage category, and four to the mixed heritage category. In addition, according to China VR (2012), most of the forty-five world heritage sites are located in the northeast, east, middle, and southeast of China and a few are in the south, southwest and northwest of China. UNESCO (1992-2013a) provides a map to show the distribution of China's heritage sites (see Figure 4.2 on Page 124).

**Table 4.6: 45 World Heritage Sites in China**

<b>World Cultural Heritage Sites</b>			
Imperial Palaces of the Ming and Qing Dynasties	1987	Beijing	and
in Beijing and Shenyang	2004	Shenyang	
Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor	1987	Shanxi Province	
Mogao Caves	1987	Gansu Province	
Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian	1987	Beijing	
The Great Wall	1987	Beijing	
Ancient Building Complex in the Wudang Mountains	1994	Hubei Province	
Historic Ensemble of the Potala Palace, Lhasa	1994	Xizang	
	2000	Autonomous	
	2001	Region	
Mountain Resort and its Outlying Temples, Chengde	1994	Hebei Province	
Temple and Cemetery of Confucius and the Kong Family Mansion in Qufu	1994	Shandong Province	
Lushan National Park	1996	Jiangxi Province	
Ancient City of Ping Yao	1997	Shanxi Province	
Classical Gardens of Suzhou	1997	Jiangsu Province	
	2000		
Old Town of Lijiang	1997	Yunnan Province	
Summer Palace, an Imperial Garden in Beijing	1998	Beijing	
Temple of Heaven: an Imperial Sacrificial Altar in Beijing	1998	Beijing	
Dazu Rock Carvings	1999	Chongqing	
Ancient Villages in Southern Anhui – Xidi and Hongcun	2000	Anhui Province	
Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties	2000	Liaoning Province	
	2003		
	2004		
Longmen Grottoes	2000	Henan Province	
Mount Qingcheng and the Dujiangyan Irrigation System	2000	Sichuan Province	
Yungang Grottoes	2001	Shanxi Province	

Capital Cities and Tombs of the Ancient Koguryo Kingdom	2004	Liaoning Province and Jilin Province
Historic Centre of Macao	2005	Macao
Yin Xu	2006	Anyang City
Kaiping Diaolou	2007	Guangdong Province
Fujian Tulou	2008	Fujian Province
Mount Wutai	2009	Shanxi Province
Historic Monuments of Dengfeng in 'The Centre of Heaven and Earth'	2010	Henan Province
West Lake Cultural Landscape of Hangzhou	2011	Zhejiang Province
Site of Xanadu	2012	Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region
Honghe Hani Rice Terraces	2013	Yunnan Province

#### World Natural Heritage Sites

Huanglong Scenic and Historic Interest Area	1992	Sichuan Province
Jiuzhaigou Valley Scenic and Historic Interest Area	1992	Sichuan Province
Wulingyuan Scenic and Historic Interest Area	1992	Hunan Province
Three Parallel Rivers of Yunnan Protected Areas	2003	Yunnan Province
Sichuan Giant Panda Sanctuaries	2006	Sichuan Province
South China Karst	2007	Yunnan Province
Mount Sanqingshan National Park	2008	Jiangxi Province
China Danxia	2010	Guizhou Province
Chengjiang Fossil Site	2012	Yunnan Province
Xinjiang Tianshan	2013	Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region

#### World Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites

Mount Taishan	1987	Shandong Province
Mount Huangshan	1990	Anhui Province
Mount Emei Scenic Area, including Leshan Giant Buddha Scenic Area	1996	Sichuan Province
Mount Wuyi	1999	Fujian Province

**Source:** UNESCO (1992-2013)

**Figure 4.2:** The map of China's Heritage Sites



#### **4.5 Other main tourism-related services in China**

There are several other service industries closely related to the tourism sector, including accommodation, travel services, tourist transportation, tourism-related education and training services, restaurant and catering, and so forth. Indeed, 'the travel agency and hotel sectors have long served as key barometers of general tourism development in China' (Qiu Zhang, Yan & Ye 2008). Here, hotels, travel services, tourist transportation, and tourism-related education and training services are considered briefly in order to demonstrate how they contribute to the development of China's tourism industry.

##### **4.5.1 Hotels in China**

Accommodation is one of the most important elements of the tourism 'product'. In China, the rapid development of tourism industry, including both international and domestic tourism, has stimulated the growth of the hotel industry (Zhang, Pine & Lam 2005: 161). More specifically, with the implementation of the open door policy in 1978, 'China's hotel industry ...[grew]... from a base of only 137 hotels with 15,539 rooms in 1978 to a 2000 level of 10,481 hotels and 948,182 rooms' (Zhang, Pine & Lam 2005: 161). Subsequently, between 2000 and 2011, the number of star-rated hotels has increased from 6,029 to 11,676 and the total revenue of 2011 was 35,462 times that of 2000 (see Table 4.7 overleaf). A significant reduction of the number of 1-star hotels and a corresponding large increase of the number of 3-star and above hotels resulted in the big difference of total revenues between 2000 and 2011. By the end of 2011,

there were 615 5-star hotels, 498 more than in 2000; 2,148 4-star hotels, an increase of 1,796 hotels; 5,473 were 3-star hotels, a rise of 3,574 hotels; 3,276 2-star hotels, only increasing 215 hotels; and 164 1-star hotels, reduced 436 hotels.

**Table 4.7:** Comparison of hotel growth in China in 2000 and 2011

Star Rating	2000			2011		
	No. of Hotels	No. of Rooms (Unit: thousand)	Total Revenue (RMB: million)	No. of Hotels	No. of Rooms (Unit: thousand)	Total Revenue (RMB: million)
5 Star	117	45.2	1.29	615	217.6	73094
4 Star	352	84.9	1.41	2,148	424.6	78848
3 Star	1,899	231.2	2.16	5,473	610.6	65844
2 Star	3,061	205.1	1.06	3,276	214.4	13394
1 Star	600	28.2	0.10	164	7.7	303
Total	6,029	594.6	6.02	11,676	1,474.9	213,483

**Source:** Adapted from the Yearbook of China Tourism Statistics, CNTA (2001: 92-93; 2012)

In order to solve the problem of China's hotel shortage after the open door policy, a diversification and decentralization policy of hotel investment was implemented in 1978, which resulted in a wide variety of different types of hotel ownership (Zhang, Pine & Lam 2005: 172). Ownership types in 2000 were listed as state-owned, collective, private, alliance, foreign-invested and Hong Kong-, Macau-, and Taiwan-invested, shareholding cooperative, limited liability, limited liability shares, and others (CNTA 2001). However, in 2011, there were more categories listed in the ownership types (see Table 4.8 on Page 127).

As can be seen from Table 4.8, in 2011 there were 3,646 state-owned star-rated hotels, collectively comprising 47,102 rooms, in China. These generated total 71,309 million business income during that year. The second- and the third-largest categories of hotel ownership type were private limited-liability and private-owned enterprises, comprising 1,637 and 1,623 star hotels respectively. However, Sino-Foreign Equity Joint Venture hotels had the highest room occupation rate, 65.26%, followed by hotels owned by Foreign-Funded Joint Stock Companies Limited, and the joint-venture hotels owned by Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan. The high occupation rates achieved by these hotels reflect the fact that they enjoy comparative advantages in financial and management expertise and in business concepts and techniques (Ball, Horner & Nield 2007: 69).

In contrast, the state-owned hotels demonstrated weaker performance in room occupation rate, having a lesser or no concern for profits, but a greater interest in social

responsibility (Wang 2003). At the same time, traditional administrative systems, central planning, excessive bureaucracy, and a lack of sensitivity to the changing market and environment also contributes to lower occupation rates (Muxlow 2006).

Generally, this complicated ownership pattern has resulted in a lack of coordination of decision making in hotel construction (Tisdell & Wen 1991) and 'creates unique problems for expansion and growth' (Zhang, Pine & Lam 2005: 172).

**Table 4.8:** Comparative statistics of China hotels by ownership type, 2011

Sort by ownership type	Number of Star Hotels	Number of Rooms (Unit: thousand)	Number of Beds (Unit: thousand)	Room Occupation Rate (%)	Business Income (RMB: million)
Total	11,676	1,474.9	2,586.3	61.07	231,482
State-owned	3,646	4,710.2	874.6	60.86	71,309
Collective-owned	475	48.2	88.5	57.66	5,776
Joint-equity Cooperative Enterprise	250	28.9	51.4	61.88	3,955
State Joint Ownership Enterprise	10	0.9	1.7	53.98	100
Collective Ownership Enterprise	20	1.8	3.4	58.30	129
State and Collective Joint Ownership Enterprise	10	1.1	2.0	53.30	125
Other Joint Ownership Enterprise	6	0.5	0.8	61.03	62
Wholly State-owned Enterprise	373	55.6	89.4	62.27	11,430
Other Limited-liability Enterprise	1,289	189.4	318.6	62.16	32,109
Joint Stock Company Limited	602	80.8	139.5	61.18	13,024
Private-owned	1,623	133.0	236.7	59.79	13,812
Private partnership	349	34.9	59.0	62.36	4,371
Private Limited-liability Enterprise	1,637	195.7	342.7	61.35	26,064
Private Incorporated Enterprise	203	24.7	44.2	59.64	2,694
Other Enterprises	691	85.1	145.0	62.07	12,777
Joint Venture with HK, Macao and Taiwan	133	37.3	55.6	63.67	10,407
Co-operative Venture with HK, Macao and Taiwan	32	8.5	12.9	62.72	2,699
HK-Macao-Taiwan Sole Proprietorship Enterprise	78	18.4	29.2	63.45	5,186
HK, Macao and Taiwan Investment Joint Stock Companies Limited	23	4.9	8.2	57.47	1,202
Sino-Foreign Equity Joint Venture	108	25.4	39.2	65.26	7,415
Sino-Foreign Cooperative Joint Venture	29	8.0	12.0	58.95	1,779
Foreign-invested enterprise	71	16.8	25.6	63.55	4,126
Foreign-Funded Joint Stock Companies Limited	18	3.8	6.2	65.08	933

**Source:** Adapted from the Yearbook of China Tourism Statistics, CNTA (2012)

China's open door policy, its entry to the World Trade Organization in 2001, the rapid development of inbound tourism and a flourishing domestic tourism market have attracted a large number of hotel investments from many global hotel groups.

Along with India, China is the foremost market for hotel investment and expansion in the Asia Pacific region. The world's top ten hotel chains all have an extensive presence in China at present, and recognizing the opportunities offered by this growing market many are seeking to expand over the next few years. (Business Monitor International (BMI) 2013: 36-7)

The performance of world's top ten hotel chains in China can be seen in Table 4.9 overleaf. According to BMI (2013), from an historical perspective, the Intercontinental Hotel Group was the first international brand to enter China. Numerically, however, the Wyndham Group has the highest number of hotels in China, having expanded its hotel listing to over 200.

Compared with those global hotel groups, 'Shanghai Jin Jiang International Holdings is the largest hotel operator in China with over 900 properties operating or under development offering over 116,000 rooms' (BMI 2013: 40). As BMI (2013: 40) states, 'its hotels are spread across 133 cities in 27 provinces, with a particular focus on the finance centre, Shanghai, and tourism centre, Beijing. Its brands include Jin Jiang Hotels, Peace Hotels and the Jin Jiang Inn Budget Hotels'.

These data indicate that there is a lack of developing budget hotels in China, which are required to satisfy the demand of domestic tourism. According to Reportlinker.com (2013), 'the budget hotel industry started late in China, compared with developed countries. The proportion of budget hotel is less than 30% in China's hotel industry, but the proportion has exceeded 70% in U.S'. Thus, there exists significant potential for the development of budget hotels in China.

**Table 4.9:** Top ten global hotel groups present in China, 2012

Global Hotel Group	Presence in China	Hotel Brands present in China
Accor Hotels	It has 141 hotels across 23 locations, including remote areas, accounting for almost half of all its hotels in the Asia Pacific region.	Sofitel, Pullman, Novotel, Grand Mercure, Mercure, Ibis
Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group	It has 33 hotels in 8 locations in operation or under development, including three hotels added to the portfolio in 2012 and is focused on further expanding its presence in the country.	Radisson Blu, Park Plaza
Choice International Hotels	It only has a small presence in China at the moment, limited to two hotels in Beijing	Comfort Inn, Comfort Suites
Best Western (Four Seasons)	There are 38 Best Western hotels in China, at 26 locations. At the luxury end of the market the group has 6 Four Seasons offering a variety of high end spa and resort options	Best Western, Four Seasons
Hilton	It has 30 hotels in China, including the 5* Waldorf Astoria and several Hilton and Doubletree hotels at several locations	Hilton, Double tree, Conrad, Waldorf Astoria
Hyatt	It has 20 hotels in China at a range of locations, and is expanding with the opening of Grand Hyatt Shenyang in 2013	Park Hyatt, Grand Hyatt, Hyatt Regency
Intercontinental Hotels Group	It has more than 160 hotels in more than 60 locations and plans to expand to 100 cities in the next 15 year.	Crowne Plaza, Hotel Indigo, Intercontinental, Holiday Inn
Marriott	It has 61 hotels in China, including the newly opened Shanghai Marriott Hotel Pudong East and The OCT Harbour Shenzhen Marriot Executive Apartments catering to business travelers.	Ritz Carlton, JW Marriott, Renaissance, Coutyard
Starwood	It has 104 group hotels in China but the group is expanding rapidly and has 80 hotels due to open by 2016	W, Sheraton, Westin, Four Points, Aloft, Le Meridian, St Regis
Wyndham	The group has over 200 hotels and 33,000 rooms in China, the majority through low budget motel group Super 8, but is rapidly expanding its reach into the luxury market with the opening of high end hotels as part of the Wyndham Grand collection.	Howard Johnson, Ramada, Super 8 Motels, Days Hotel, Wyndham Grand Plaza

**Source:** Adapted from BMI (2013: 35-6)

To date, Home Inns is the market leader of China's budget hotels and has experienced rapid expansion in recent years. However, as a whole, 'the Chinese budget hotel market remains quite fragmented, with one third of capacity controlled by small operators, each with less than a 1.5% market share' (Intel Report 2012) (see Table 4.10 overleaf).

**Table 4.10:** Economy hotel market share, by operator, 2011

<b>Budget chain</b>	<b>Share of total budget rooms (%)</b>
Home Inns/Motel 168	23.6
7 Days Inn	12.1
Jin Jiang	9.5
Hanting	9.5
GreeTree	5.3
Super 80	3.5
Vienna Hotels	1.6
Ibis	1.4
Others	33.5
Total	100.0

**Source:** Mintel Report (2012)

By the first half of 2012, the number of budget hotels in China has reached 8,313, and the number of room has increased to 837,220, growing 360 times and 257 times respectively compared with 2000. At present, the number of budget hotel brand is 419; the market share of Home Inns Group, Hanting Inns and Hotels and 7 Days Group Holdings has reached more than 47%. (Reportlinker.com 2013)

Most of these chains prefer to target second- and third-tier cities, as the supply of budget hotels in first-tier cities, such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou, has become saturated (BMI 2012, Reportlinker.com 2013). Nevertheless, 'the WTTC suggests that the segment must be restructured, reorganized and refocused so that it provides low-cost, quality accommodation' (BMI 2012: 31).

#### **4.5.2 Travel services in China**

The historical development of travel services in China has been introduced briefly in Section 4.2 above. In this section, more detailed information related to China's travel services is provided by focusing on its developmental circumstances since 1978, and scale of travel service industry.

Similar to the tourism industry, the travel service industry in China also experienced significant changes in recent decades, and policies related to travel services have been improved continuously. Zhang, Pine & Lam (2005: 121-2) summarize the development of travel service industry since 1978 below (see Table 4.11 overleaf).

**Table 4.11:** The development of travel service industry in China since 1978

Year/Period	Main changes for the development of travel service industry
From 1978 to early 1980s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The travel service business in China was dominated by the three largest government travel agencies: China International Travel Service (CITS), China Travel Service (CTS), and the China Youth Travel Service (CYTS).</li> <li>• Due to deepening economic reform and rapid growth of tourism demand, the oligopoly of these three travel agencies was gradually broken up.</li> <li>• More and more funds were allocated to provinces and municipalities for their own tourism development, which provided the basis for them to establish their own travel and tourism bureaus.</li> <li>• Local tourist corporations were formed to build tourist facilities and allowed to provide travel services at the local and provincial levels.</li> <li>• The business of travel agencies, at that time, was not limited in only receiving inbound tourists any more. They could serve both inbound and domestic travelers.</li> </ul>
In 1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Provisional Regulation on the Administration of Travel Agencies’ was issued allowing collectives and private citizens to operate travel agencies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Privately owned travel agencies were classed as Category Three Agencies, and could only handle domestic tourist.</li> <li>◆ Collectively owned travel agencies could register either as Category One agencies, which were permitted to receive all types of tourists and conduct direct sales and marketing overseas, or as Category Two agencies, which were restricted to handle only Chinese tourists and also to provide ground service for overseas visitors.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The provisional regulation loosened government restrictions on the travel service business and increased demand for travel services, which benefited the fast development of the industry..</li> </ul>
On 1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995	<p>CNTA adopted international practices and implemented a Quality Guarantee Deposit System (QGDS) to regulate the travel service industry, including protecting the lawful rights of tourists, and enhancing business quality.</p>
Since 1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Regulation on the Administration of Travel Agencies’ issued in 2001 replaced the provisional regulation issued in 1985 to re-categorize travel agencies in China. International Travel Agencies were to handle inbound and outbound tourism or inbound tourism only. Domestic Travel agencies were to handle domestic travel business only.</li> <li>• ‘Regulation on the Administration of Tour Guide’ was also issued by the government to guarantee the service quality provided by tour guides.</li> </ul>
After 2001	<p>‘The Interim Provisions on the Establishment of Foreign-Controlled and Wholly Foreign-Funded Travel Agencies’ was issued in 2003, in order to adapt to the new situation after China’s accession to the World Trade Organization, further expand the opening up of tourism to the outside world, and promote the development of tourism agencies and business.</p>

**Source:** Adapted from Qiu Zhang, Yan & Ye (2008); Zhang, Pine & Lam (2005)

By the end of 2000, there were 8,993 travel agencies in China, including 1,268 international travel agencies and 7,725 domestic travel agencies. The total assets of travel agencies in China reached 36,592 million yuan (Zhang, Pine & Lam 2005: 128). Compared with 2000, the number of the travel services was 23,690 by the end of 2011, more than double the total in 2000. Total assets increased from 36,592 million yuan in 2000 to 71,117 million yuan in 2011. Gross income of operation of 2011 was six times that of 2000. By the end of 2011, the number of inbound tourists received by travel agencies reached 22.8 million (see Table 4.12).

**Table 4.12:** A comparison of the performance of China travel service industry in 2000 and 2011

Items	2000	2011
Total number of travel Agencies	8,993	23,690
Total assets (million yuan)	36,592	71,117
Gross income of operation (million yuan)	46,995	287,177
Inbound tourists received by travel agencies (million)	11.44	22.80

**Source:** Adapted from the Yearbook of China Tourism Statistics, CNTA (2001; 2012); Mintel Report (2004; 2012)

#### 4.5.3 Tourist transportation

Transportation, as an integral element of the tourism industry, plays an essential role in China's tourism development. Similar to other tourism-related service industries, the development and improvement of China's transportation system is synchronized with its tourism development. In order to speed up the development of China's tourism, since 1978, 'major efforts have been made to improve the country's international and domestic transportation system' (Mak 2003: 165). 'Upgrading and expanding transport infrastructure is an ongoing priority for the Chinese government' (Mintel Report 2012a).

There are, of course, three basic transport modes: air, land (road and rail), and water (shipping). Most foreign visitors to China usually travel by air for lengthy trips within the country, using rail or coach for shorter trips (Mak 2003: 176). As Mintel Report (2004) claims, 'nearly 60% of all inbound visitors arrive via air transport'.

- Air

Compared with other modes of transport, China's air transport in recent decades has developed fairly quickly. Its historical development can be seen as below (see Table 4.13).

**Table 4.13:** The historical development of China's aviation industry

Year/ Period	The development of China's aviation industry
Between 1949 and 1979	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beijing airport, as the first airport of China, was opened in 1958.</li> <li>• Only one airline was available: the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC), which was also responsible for aviation licensing and regulation.</li> </ul>
Between 1980s and 1990s	CAAC bought more Western-made planes to modernize its fleet. China's airlines also spent more money on buying foreign-made wide-body passenger aircraft to meet the demands of rising international and domestic traffic.
In 1983	CAAC started to use computers for seat reservations, but only for international flights.
Between September 1984 and June 30, 1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CAAC had administrative reorganization in order to increase competition and separate government regulatory functions from commercial operations.</li> <li>• The national airline was divided into six nonprivatized regional airline companies: Air China, China Eastern, China Southern, China Northwest, China Southwest, and China Northern.</li> </ul>
September 1985	The Chinese State council issued regulations confirming CAAC's role as a regulatory agency with jurisdiction over civilian air operations.
Since 1985	The new airlines were allowed to operate regionally within China, as well as on some international routes, and to borrow at home and overseas in order to finance fleet expansion.
In 1987	The Air Traffic Management Department of China was established to assume responsibility for all domestic aviation movements.
Between 1988 and 1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 1988, seventeen regional and local airlines had been approved by CAAC to operate passenger and/or cargo routes. By 1999 that number had grown to thirty-four.</li> <li>• In 1999, a second airport in Shanghai (Pudong Airport) was opened.</li> </ul>
After 2001	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After entering WTO in 2001, foreign airlines were allowed to participate in joint ventures in aviation engineering, sales and marketing, computerized reservation systems, and investment in air transportation. Therefore, China's airline industry was further integrated internationally.</li> <li>• Globalization is also a major force for change in China's airline industry.</li> <li>• In August 2004, Guangzhou New Airport was opened to replace Baiyun Airport.</li> </ul>

**Source:** Adapted from Mak (2003)

There are three principal air gateways in China: Beijing Capital International Airport, Shanghai Pudong International Airport and Guangzhou International Airport. Beijing Capital International Airport is the busiest, handling 77.4 million passengers in 2011. Guangzhou Baiyun and Shanghai Pudong International Airport handled 45 million and 41.4 million passengers respectively (Mintel Report 2012a).

According to Mintel Report (2012a), China's airline industry is booming and there have been more than 45 home-grown airlines in the country. In 2011, Chinese carriers accounted for half of all global airline profits because of more investment in modern aircraft, the launch of new routes and the establishment of alliances and code-share agreements with international carriers.

Nevertheless, China's airline industry will face more challenges during the next decade. In particular, the competition from international airlines may cut into Chinese carriers' profits (Mintel Report 2012a).

- International and domestic railways and road

Unlike the railway system in Europe, international railway services in China are more limited due to various physical barriers, such as mountains, deserts, and seas, and the unstable political relationship in the past between China and some of its neighboring countries, such as Vietnam and Russia (Mak 2003: 174). As a result, by the end of 2001, there were only three countries were connected to China by railway: Russia, Mongolia, and North Korea (Mak 2003: 174). Although there have been some expansions in international rail links, their development has not been as fast as that of domestic railways.

Railways, as the major means of transportation in China, are available in all major cities and tourist centers. Compared with other forms of medium- and long-haul transportation, travelling by train used to be the popular. However, between 1978 and 1999, dependence on the railways declined dramatically in China commensurate with the rapid development of the country's road transport system (Mak 2003). Nevertheless, investment in rail network continues to increasing. According to Mintel Report (2012a), 'since 2007, China's rail network has expanded by 10,562km, bringing it up to a total of 86,000km. In 2010, the government spent US\$110.7 billion on new railway construction – much of it for high-speed trains', as such trains are eco-friendly and most importantly they cut the travel time. China has the longest network of high-speed railway (HSR) in

the world and the first high-speed services were used in the mid-2000s between Beijing and Shanghai (Mintel Report 2012a).

As observed above, road transport has become the major means of travel in China. Nevertheless, Mak (2003: 179) points out 'for economic purposes, funding for road improvements at the national level has tended to focus on motorways leading to major ports. Rural areas have been expected to improve their road systems largely on their own with support from government subsidies'. As a consequence, road travel in rural areas generally is more difficult than in the developed tourist areas. This is not to say that, the central government has not made efforts to develop the road system in rural areas. For example, the implementation of the Western Development Strategy between 2000 and 2009 'helped underdeveloped western region catch up with the more prosperous eastern region' (China Daily News 2009). 'The combination of local level infrastructure investment, mainly in road building and poverty alleviation, has had the most visible effect to date. Local roads connecting county towns and townships have a huge effect on local economic activity and living standards in urbanised areas' (Hendrischke 2010).

According to Mintel Report (2012a), 'by the end of 2011, China's road network stretches for 3,860,800km – double its length in 2007 – and construction continues apace. The National Expressway Network Plan, launched in 2005, will eventually connect the capitals of all China's provinces and autonomous regions, creating links between 200 cities. The multi-lane expressways will cover 85,000km. Of those, 65,000km is already in operation'.

- Water

Water transport can be divided into two sectors: international sea transportation and domestic water transportation.

China has more than 18,000 km of mainland coast and rivers totaling 220,000km in length rivers, representing opportunities for developing inland river transport and ocean shipping (China Net 2000b). For international sea transportation, however, the ocean-cruise sector in China is developing slowly and 'is still in its infancy' (Mintel Report 2012a). According to Mak (2003), a number of sea transport services are available in China (see Figure 4.3 overleaf). Moreover, according to Mintel (2012a), there are several cities that are being promoted as homeports for major cruise companies, including Shanghai, Tianjin, Xiamen and Qingdao. The CCYIA was founded in 2006 to

promote China's cruise industry. By the end of 2011 mainland China welcomed 262 cruise ships, indicates that the cruise sector is on the up.

**Figure 4.3:** The development of international sea transportation in China

- High-speed hovercraft services are provided between Hong Kong and many coastal destinations in Guangdong Province. They mostly accommodate the demand from the compatriot and overseas Chinese markets from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia.
- Since 1985, Journeys by sea have been available from Hong Kong to Xiamen in Fujing Province and Shanghai.
- There are scheduled passenger ferry services from Shanghai to Kobe and Osaka in Japan, and from Dalian in China to Inchon in Korea.
- Many world cruise liners feature shore excursions in northeast and south China, including Hannan, as highlights of their regional and transworld voyages.

**Source:** Mak (2003: 175-6)

Nevertheless, for domestic water transportation, riverboat cruising (centred on the Yangtze River) is well established in China (Mintel 2012a). Although 'since ancient times, inland water transport has played a major role in moving goods and commodities from production sources to consumption destinations' (Lieberthal 2013), they no longer play a prominent role today (Mak 2003: 181). As China has more than 75,000 miles of navigable inland waterways, some principal waterways have been opened to navigation since 1961, including the Yangtze, the Pearl, Huaihe, the Heilongjiang, the Qiantang, the Minjiang, the Huangpu, the Grand Canal, and so forth (Lieberthal 2013). With the development of tourism industry, inland water transport has been playing a new role in serving visitors. For example, as Mak (2003: 182) states, 'most foreign visitors take water-based trips on the Grand Canal waterway system in Jiangsu and Zhejiang Provinces and through the Three Gorges of the Yangtze River between Chongqing and Wuhan. The Lijiang River cruise is popular with both domestic and international visitors. Tourist boats also ply the built-up waterfronts of the Huangpu in Shanghai or the Pearl River in Guangzhou'.

Overall, then, although challenges still remain for the development of China's tourist transportation, travel to and within China now has become much easier than previously.

#### **4.5.4 Education and training in travel and tourism**

China's higher education in tourism studies has a short history..... It came into being after China's opening-up in 1978 and implementation of economic reform, and has developed with the sustained growth of China's economy and the strengthening of its tourism industry. Today, China's higher education in tourism has made considerable achievements, not only in the number of schools and students, but also at different levels and in mechanisms for running programmes. (Zhang & Fan 2005)

The development of China's higher education in tourism studies can be summarised as follows (see Table 4.14 overleaf):

In 2000, there were only 1,195 tourism education institutions in China, serving a total of 3,279,000 students. However, by the end of 2011, the total number of tourism education institutions reached 2,208 with 108.32 million students (see Table 4.15 on Page 139). Thus, both number of universities and colleges offering tourism programmes or specialties and the number of students enrolling in such institutions has increased rapidly. In comparison, secondary vocational tourism schools have developed slowly. The growth in tourism education in China reflects recognition of the fact that the rapid development of tourism has resulted in the growing demand for appropriately qualified professionals. Therefore, for those people wanting to enter the tourism industry, the need to receive relevant training and to develop professional knowledge from higher tourism education institutions has become more important than ever. 'Since talent is the essential element in market competition, there is no doubt that the education of qualified tourism professionals should come first among all the factors affecting the development of tourism industry' (Du 2003). This is why the number of higher tourism education institutions and of enrolment of students increased dramatically in recent years.

**Table 4.14:** The historical development of China's higher education in tourism studies

Year/Period	Important events effected the development of higher education in tourism studies
1970	Shanghai Institution of Tourism, China's first tourism institution was founded, which marked the beginning of China's higher education in tourism studies.
The early 1980s	CNTA provided several universities funds to help establish tourism programmes in order to meet the urgent needs for higher education for tourism professionals and to speed up the development of tourism higher education in China.
The late 1980s	The initial pattern of China's higher education in tourism took shape with CNTA acting as the steering body and Nankai University, Northwest University and Zhongshan University playing the key roles.
1990s	China's tourism higher education entered a period of fast development, due to the rapid growth of China's tourism industry and the growing demand for tourism professionals with higher education.
From 1995 to now	<p>China's higher education in tourism had acquired a considerable scale and entered the stage of quality development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since 1997, China's higher education in tourism in the scale of development, hierarchy of programmes, quality of teaching and research, and distribution of schools have experience a great increase.</li> <li>• Entering 21<sup>st</sup> century, China's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO) created new opportunities, as well as challenges, for the development of tourism industry and of higher education in tourism studies in China. Since higher educational institutions are the main body of tourism education in China, it is important and urgent to re-evaluate tourism education in the country and explore possible ways to further reform and develop it.</li> <li>• In recent years, more and more domestic universities have established cooperation and exchange programmes with tourism institutions abroad, which further promote the development of internationalisation of China's higher education.</li> </ul>

**Source:** Du (2003); Zhang & Fan (2005); Zhang, Lu, Hu & Adler (2010)

**Table 4.15** A comparison of the development of education and training on travel and tourism in 2000 and 2011

Items	2000	2011
Total number of tourism institutions	1,195	2,208
The number of higher tourism institutions and ordinary institutions with tourism departments	252	1,115
The number of secondary vocational tourism schools	943	1,093
Total number of students (thousand)	327.9	1083.2
The number of students in higher tourism institutions and ordinary institutions (thousand)	73.6	599.8
The number of students in secondary vocational tourism schools (thousand)	254.3	483.4

**Source:** Adapted from the Yearbook of China Tourism Statistics, CNTA (2001; 2012); Mintel Report (2004; 2012)

By the end of 2011, in the tourism industry, there was a total of about 4.36 million in-service staff attending training courses. In comparison there were only 0.78 million in-service staff receiving training in 2000.

#### 4.6 Chapter summary

It is evident from the brief overview in this chapter that abundant tourism resources, the healthy development of inbound tourism and the constant improvement of the legal system for tourism have contributed to the rapid development of China's tourism industry. However, given the size and diversity of the country, it is perhaps inevitable that the development of tourism in each region has its own characteristics. Therefore, the specific characteristics of the Three Gorges tourism and its developmental challenges and prospects are considered in detail in Chapter 5.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Three Gorges Tourism**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

As considered in Chapter One, the overall aim of this thesis is to identify appropriate strategies, within a conceptual framework of crisis management and tourism policy development, for rebuilding Three Gorges tourism in China following the completion of the Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River. More specifically, it seeks to identify visitors' perceptions of and attitudes towards the Dam and its impacts on the Three Gorges as a tourism destination as the basis for adding an additional and, arguably, essential dimension to tourism policy and planning as a response to the unfolding tourism 'crisis' resulting from the construction of the Dam. Fundamental to this is the need to identify and critically appraise the development of tourism in the Three Gorges and, in particular, past and present policies for the region. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to consider the Three Gorges as a tourism destination, focusing on tourism resources in the region and the impacts of the Dam on those resources, the development of the region's inbound tourism and, in particular, and drawing on secondary data accessed during initial field research at the Three Gorges, tourism policy in the region and the promotion of new Three Gorges tourism. In so doing, it provides a framework for the research and its implications for developing Three Gorges tourism as considered in subsequent chapters.

#### **5.2 Introduction to the Yangtze Three Gorges**

The Yangtze Gorges is one of the key national scenic locations in China (in 1982). ..... The history of the scenic and historical sites in the Three Gorges area dates back to ancient times and it is the site of many important recorded historical events. The mountains and water in Three Gorges take various forms, creating a mysterious natural gallery. The Three Gorges has become world-famous for its large and precipitous valleys and its rich historical and cultural attractions which are used for sightseeing, sporting activities, exploration, archaeological studies and scientific investigation. In this area, the terrain rises and falls. Most of bedrock is limestone and rainfall is abundant, so the flow of water has made deep cuts in the strata, creating dramatic karst landscapes, with

numerous valleys, deep gullies, unusually formed peaks and peculiar rocks and waterfalls to be seen everywhere. (UNESCO 2001)

The Three Gorges Scenic Area on the Yangtze River is not included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS). However, since 2001 it has been categorized for potential designation as a WHS by UNESCO, which also provides one the most comprehensive and authoritative description of the Yangtze Three Gorges Scenic Area with respect to its geological structure and to the characteristics of its tourist resources.

As introduced in the first chapter of this thesis, the Yangtze River (6,418Km) is the longest river in Asia and the third longest in the world. Along with the Yellow River, the Yangtze River has played a significant role in the history, culture and economy of China whilst, in particular, the Three Gorges section of the Yangtze is considered to most representative of the historical civilization of the River.

The Three Gorges commence at Baidicheng Town (White King Town) in Fengjie County and end at the Nanjin Pass in Yichang. With a total length of 193km, the Three Gorges comprise Qutang Gorge, Wuxia Gorge and Xiling Gorge each connected by wider valleys (Li 2009:10; UNESCO 2001) – see also Chapter 1, Section 1.2. The first two gorges are located in Chongqing Municipality and the third Gorge belongs to Hubei Province (see Table 5.1 overleaf). The Three Gorges are often described as a natural art gallery thanks to various formations of the mountains and water, whilst each gorge is notable for its unique characteristics. According to Li (2009: 14, 34, 66) and UNESCO (2001), Qutang Gorge is the shortest of the Three Gorges and is celebrated worldwide for its magnificent, unusual and precipitous scenery. It boasts one of the most spectacular sights of the Three Gorges, Kuimen (Gate of Kui), which fully reveals Qutang Gorge's magnificence. Wuxia Gorge is more serene, secluded and mysterious, and presents a panorama of beautiful scenery, whilst Xiling Gorge is famous for numerous dangerous rugged shoals and turbulent waters. Again as noted in Chapter 1, given the variety and spectacular beauty of the landscapes along the Yangtze Three Gorges, numerous historical and contemporary intellectuals and poets, including three great poets of the Tang Dynasty – Li Bai, Du Fu and Bai JuYi – several famous poets of Song Dynasty – Su Xun, Su Shi, Su Zhe and Lu You – and indeed contemporary poets, including Chairman Mao, have written memorable poems to praise the beauty and fantasy and the region.

**Table 5.1:** The Yangtze Three Gorges

Location of each gorge	The Name of Gorges	The length of each gorge	Range
Chongqing Municipality	Qutang Gorge	8km long	From Baidicheng (Fengjie) to Daxi
	Wuxia Gorge	42km long	From Wushan to Guandukou (Badong)
Yichang, Hubei Province	The Xiling Gorge	66km long	From Zigui to Nanjin Pass (Yichang)

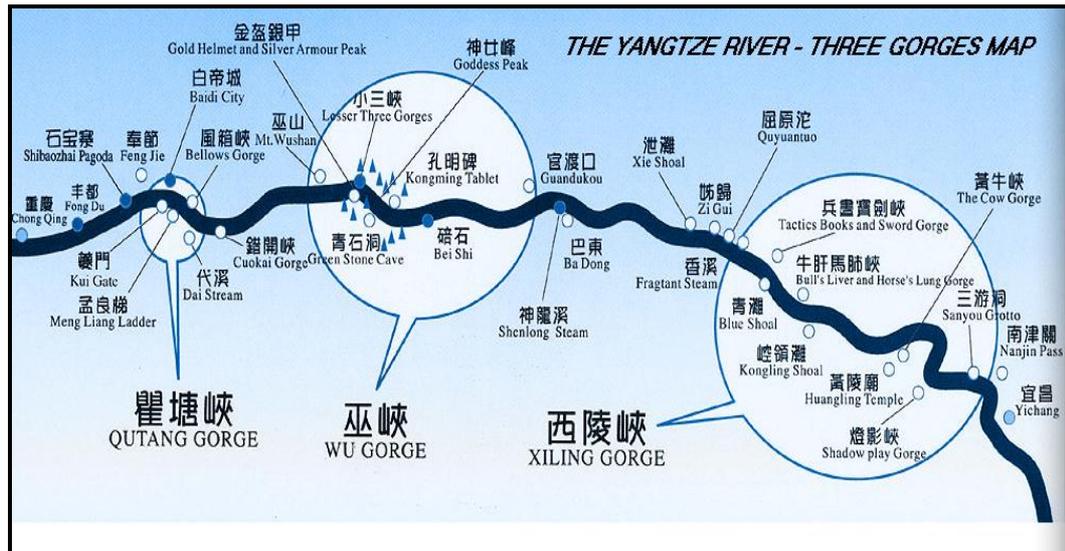
**Source:** UNESCO (2001)

In addition to the natural characteristics, along the length of the Yangtze Three Gorges there is an abundance of historical and cultural resources. There are not only a large number of historical sites, such as engraved inscriptions from the Song Dynasty onwards on white cliffs, the Shibaozhai Pagoda, the Ancient Pathway, Baidicheng (White King Town), the Ancient Coffins, the Ancient Dachang Town, Huangling Temple, and the Ancient Residence, but also the Gorges continue to host various local customs and cultural events, including the Dragon Boat Festival, the Crying Wedding of the Tu ethnic group, and the traditional Chinese Ghost Festival at Fengdu – Ghost Town (see Figure 5.1 overleaf).

### **5.3 The development of Three Gorges tourism**

‘Due to its magnificent scenery, the Three Gorges has been a source of inspiration for poets and artists, and one of the hottest tourist destinations for centuries. It was designated one of the first Key National Scenic Spots by the Chinese government in 1982’ (People’s Daily News 2013). Along with the Forbidden City in Beijing, the karst landscape of Guilin, and the Terracotta Warriors in Xi’an, the brand of the Yangtze Three Gorges Tourism was world famous. But later, following political and economic reforms, the opening up of the country and subsequent economic growth and development, many new tourist attractions and destinations emerged and developed rapidly. As a consequence, the development of tourism in the Three Gorges tourism tended to lag behind.

**Figure 5.1: The map of Yangtze Three Gorges**



**Source:** <http://www.china-tour.cn/China-Maps/Yangtze-Three-Gorges-Map.htm>

### 5.3.1 A brief background to the factors that obstructed the development of Three Gorges tourism

There is general consensus (He & Ling 2006; Kan & He 2007; Wu 2004; Zhang & Hu 2001) that several factors obstructed the healthy and rapid development of tourism at the Three Gorges tourism. Firstly, from an objective perspective, travelling through the Three Gorges is a long journey; therefore, tourists require a relatively high degree of comfort and the provision of good services during the journey. However, prior to the construction of the Three Gorges Dam, geographical factors, the dense population and the weak economic foundation in the Three Gorges region impacted significantly on standards of comfort and services; from the limited infrastructure at tourist attractions to the low quality of food, accommodation and transportation, the level of tourist services in the region was relatively poor.

Secondly, as already observed, the Yangtze Three Gorges scenic area crosses Hubei Province and Chongqing Municipality. As a result of this administrative division, Wuxia Gorge and Qutang Gorge fall within Chongqing, whilst Xiling Gorge, a section of Yangtze River to Badong, and two Dams, the Gezhou Dam and now the Three Gorges Dam, fall within Hubei Province. Thus, tourism in the Three Gorges is managed separately by these two administrative regions and, as a result, there has always been the lack of a unified tourism management system in the Three Gorges region. This, in turn, has long resulted in a series of problems with respect to the development of the

Three Gorges tourism. The consequences of this decentralized management can be summarized as follows:

- A lack of coordinated development between cities and counties along the Three Gorges undermined the integrity and heterogeneity of the Three Gorges tourism products. Typically, tourism products in the region tended to lack diversity and individual characteristics, and suffered low quality.
- Tourism resources in the Three Gorges region could not be integrated effectively. As a result, the optimal allocation and effective utilization of tourism resources could not be achieved.
- The division of the administration resulted in an unusual phenomenon: each administrative area saw the other as a competitor in the process of 'seizing opportunities and speeding up development'. Irrational and disordered competition, such as the imposition of high entrance fees to tourist attractions, varying pricing by local travel agents for the Three Gorges Cruise tour, and the excessive exploitation of tourist resources served to seriously damage the overall image of the Three Gorges.
- The ecological environment has always played a significant role in the development of Three Gorges tourism. There have, however, always been contradictions in the investment in and compensation for the protection of environment and ecology along the Three Gorges. Following the building of the Dams and subsequent water storage, the capacity of the Yangtze River for environmental self-purification capacity becomes weaker; therefore, significant manpower and financial resources are needed to protect the environment in the Three Gorges reservoir area. However, a problem then arises: ecological protection and soil and water protection tasks usually need to be undertaken in the upstream area, but the benefits accrue to the middle- and downstream areas. Since the administration of the upstream and downstream areas is the responsibility of different provinces and regions, some issues related to compensation are difficult to be coordinated.
- Prior to the completion of the Three Gorges Dam, Three Gorges tourism market did not benefit from an established and holistic sales network and unified

promotion channels. Therefore, the brand of the Yangtze Three Gorges tourism lost its international recognition

In practice, some tourism experts suggested that the integration of the Three Gorges tourism resources and the development of operations for the whole region are imperative for the development of new Three Gorges tourism following the construction of the Dam. However, these appeals received limited attention from the local governments at that time (Xiong & Zhang 2003).

### **5.3.2 The developmental status of the Three Gorges inbound tourism between 1991 and 2011**

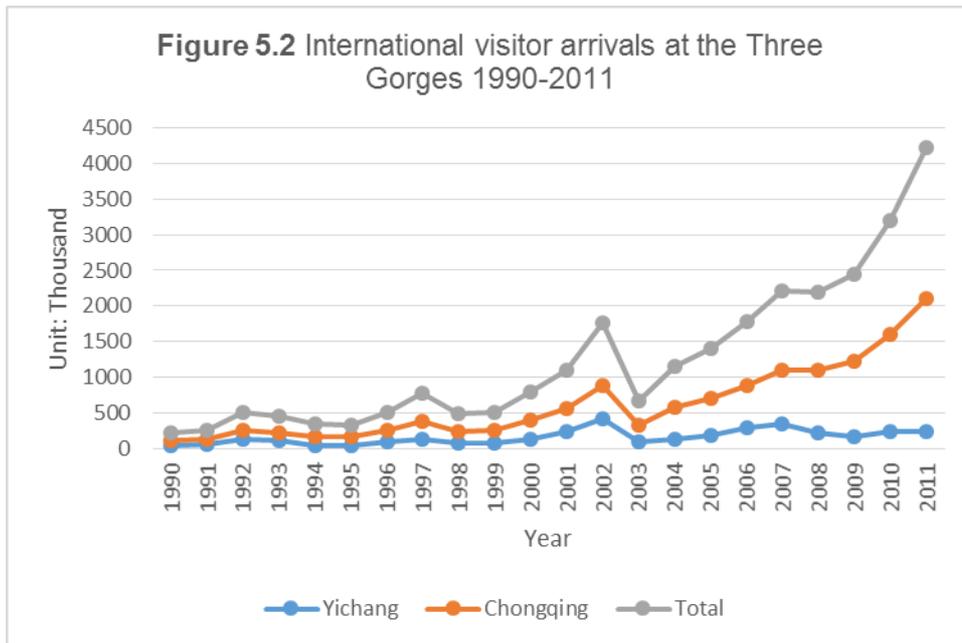
In addition to its fascinating natural scenery, including its large and precipitous valleys, the Three Gorges is also world-famous for its rich historical and cultural resources and traditions (UNESCO 2001). Consequently, the region attracts many thousands of international visitors each year (see Table 5.2 overleaf and Figure 5.2 on Page 147). Moreover, many international celebrities and well-known organizations, such as Microsoft founder Bill Gates, Former U.S. Secretary of State Dr. Henry Kissinger, the board of AOL Time Warner, the World President Organization, the Young President Organization, the and Aspen Institute have made well-publicized visits to the Three Gorges (China Hourly News 2011; China Travel 2011; Wang 2010).

The main tourism source markets for Three Gorges tourism are Japan and the USA, followed by the UK, Germany and France. In addition, Canada and Australia, as new tourism source markets, have demonstrated their significant potential for the development of Three Gorges inbound tourism. Reflecting the special geographical environment of the region, most tourists, particularly international visitors, travel to the Three Gorges by participating in a Yangtze River Gorges Cruise tour. According to Mintel Report (2008), 'most foreign visitors to China (90%) come in groups, following prescribed routes that take in the attractions for which the country is famous'. The Three Gorges is, of course, one such attraction and, consequently, most travel itineraries to China include cruising through the Three Gorges (Discover Yangtze Tours 2004–2013; RT Holidays 2013; STA Travel 2013; Voyages Jules Verne 2013).

**Table 5.2:** Annual international visitor arrivals at the Three Gorges 1990-2011 ('000)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Yichang</b>	<b>Chongqing</b>	<b>Total</b>
1990	48.6	62.6	111.2
1991	56.7	73.1	129.8
1992	130	124.6	254.6
1993	109	117.5	226.5
1994	50	124.9	174.9
1995	40.1	124.9	165
1996	99	156.2	255.2
1997	124.6	261.2	385.8
1998	81.6	163.4	245
1999	71.1	184.9	256
2000	129.6	266.1	395.7
2001	243.3	313.3	547.6
2002	420.2	461.5	881.7
2003	101.7	234.5	336.2
2004	140.2	434.4	574.6
2005	181.9	523.9	705.8
2006	289.8	603.2	893
2007	340.5	761.7	1102.2
2008	222.5	871.9	1094.4
2009	174.9	1048	1222.9
2010	232.3	1370.2	1602.5
2011	248.6	1864	2112.6

**Source:** Adapted from Chongqing Tourism Administration (2012); Kan, Deng & Mou (2010); Yichang Tourism Administration (2012)



**Source:** Adapted from Chongqing Tourism Administration (2012); Kan, Deng & Mou (2010); Yichang Tourism Administration (2012)

Regardless of where the trip starts from, classic travel itineraries designed for international visitors in the Three Gorges region include the following attractions: Qutang Gorge, Fengdu Ghost Town, Wuxia Gorge, Lesser Three Gorges, Xiling Gorge. Other attractions, such as White Emperor City (also known as Baidi Town), Zhangfei Temple, Shibao Village, and Shennongxi (also known as Shennong Stream) are sometimes included as optional destinations.

As can be seen from Table 5.2 and Figure 5.2 above, up to 1992 the annual number of international visitors visiting the Three Gorges was less than 130,000 and had experienced steady but slow increases. In the following years, however, between 1992 and 2009, the number of international visitors fluctuated significantly. In particular, in the years 1992, 1997 and 2002, the number of international visitors increased sharply within a short time, and then reduced dramatically and recovered slowly in next few years (Bao, Xu & Dai 2002; Kan, Deng & Mou 2010; Zhou & Jin 2006). There were a few factors and a number of events causing the fluctuation as follows (see also Table 5.3 on Page 150).

Firstly, and as referred to previously, the actual construction of the Three Gorges Dam significantly impacted on the number of international visitors to the Three Gorges region. For example, once the Chinese government had announced that the construction of the Dam would start in 1992, the Taiwan media immediately released a

series of misleading news reports about the disappearance of the breathtaking scenery of the Three Gorges. Consequently, in order to profit from these alarmist but inaccurate reports, a large number of domestic travel agents as well as some international travel agents launched a promotional programme, 'The Farewell Tour of Three Gorges', establishing, albeit temporarily, the Three Gorges as one of the 'hottest' tourist destinations at that time. Later, in 1997 and 2002 when the construction of the Dam approached a new stage, a similar promotional programme appeared again and was popular in Southeast Asia and Europe, again resulting in a boom in inbound tourism to the Three Gorges region (Bao, Xu & Dai 2002; Kan, Deng & Mou 2010).

Fear that much of the natural beauty of the Yangtze River could be lost forever with the construction of the mammoth Three Gorges Dam has triggered a surge in visitor interest. .... Shrewd travel agents soon found a sentimental slogan to promote boat tours on this section of the Yangtze. The slogan 'Farewell to the Three Gorges' plays on the fear that time is running out on the scenery long cherished by visitors. The pitch worked. Tourists from all over the world flocked to Chongqing, one of port cities, to get what could be the final glimpse of the breathtaking scenery on the Yangtze River.

Zhang & Li (1996)

Secondly, until the development of Three Gorges tourism experienced a serious setback in 1998, the local governments of Chongqing and Yichang took few if any effective actions to stop the risky promotional programmes launched by travel agents. Without a doubt, the Farewell Tour of Three Gorges induced a large number of potential tourists to visit the Three Gorges within a short time period. However, owing to limited service capacity, undeveloped public infrastructure and the vigorous, non-regulated competition at that time, the image of Three Gorges tourism became seriously damaged, leading directly to a decline of the number of repeat tourists and new potential tourists in the following years. Although local governments, such as the Chongqing Tourism Administration, recognized that the boom in Three Gorges tourism was 'sudden and transient' because promotion for Three Gorges tours tended to be 'overheated', they were concerned that the over-promotion of the Three Gorges tours might lead to a sudden drop in tourism in future years and so did not take timely action to stop the misleading promotion from travel agents until the following year. Therefore, Bao, Xu & Dai (2002) criticize that delayed government actions served to accelerate

the vicious cycle of the decline of Three Gorges Tourism after the implementation of these promotional programmes.

Thirdly, several important external events, such as the Qiandao Lake Incident<sup>1</sup> in 1994, 1997-98 Asian Financial crisis, the 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001, the outbreak of SARS in 2003, the 2008 Wenchuan Earthquake, and the 2007-08 Global Financial crisis also affected the Three Gorges tourism (see Table 5.3).

**Table 5.3:** Main factors/events affecting the Three Gorges tourism

<b>Year of the Events</b>	<b>Name of Events</b>	<b>Type of Event</b>	<b>Property of Factors/Events</b>
1992	The Start of Three Gorges Project	Specific event	External incentive
1994	Qiandao Lake Incident	Tourist crime	Internal incentive
1997	First Time for River Close-Off	Specific event	External incentive
1998	“Farewell Tour of Three Gorges” Promotional Programme	Vicious competition	Internal incentive
	The Outbreak of Asian Financial Crisis	Economic disaster	External incentive
2001	9/11 Terrorist Attack	Political disaster	External incentive
2002	The Close-Off of Diversion Channel	Specific event	External incentive
2003	The Outbreak of SARS	Public Health	External incentive
2007–2008	Global Financial Crisis	Economic disaster	External Incentive
2008	Wenchuan Earthquake	Natural disaster	External Incentive

Source: Adapted from Zhou & Jin (2006)

Having experienced these initial frustrations, the development of Three Gorges tourism adopted a more positive trend and the number of international visitors rose from 1.09 million in 2008 to 2.11 million in 2011. The completion of the Three Gorges Dam in 2009 and successful water storage to 175 meters in Three Gorges reservoir in 2010 marked the beginning of the new Three Gorges tourism.

Nowadays, the Yangtze Three Gorges is arguably becoming more well-known than before as a result of the construction of the Three Gorges Dam. Located at Sandouping,

<sup>1</sup> The Qiandao Lake Incident refers to the 1994 kidnap and murder of Taiwanese tourists and local guides and staff in the Qiandao Lake scenic area, in Zhejiang, People's Republic of China. Insensitive treatment by the local government and police force after the event, including censoring information and unprofessional criminal investigation procedures, led to a public backlash in Taiwan against the China government. This led to increased support in Taiwan for Taiwan independence (Russell & Cohn 2012).

in Yichang City in Hubei province, the Dam has not only become one of the new ten Three Gorges Landscapes, but also the Dam itself has become the first series national 4A class scenic area of China, which attracts millions of visitors each year. Nevertheless, in addition to its own advantages, the development of the new Three Gorges tourism still needs the support from both central and local governments.

### **5.3.3 Developmental strategies for the new Three Gorges tourism**

Within the academic research field, many domestic Chinese tourism experts and researchers have directed their attention to the prospects for the new Three Gorges tourism, and have proposed various strategies for future improvement of tourism in this region (Kan & He 2009; Li & Ye 2001; Li, Guan & Liu 2009; Liang 2010; Luo 2012; Wang 2002; Wang, Xie & Qiu, 2006; Wu 2004; Yan & Kan 2006; Yin & Lv 2004). For example, Kan & He (2009) discuss how to promote the new Three Gorges tourism and to establish the Three Gorges as a famous international tourist destination. Specifically, close co-operation between Hubei Province and Chongqing municipality is thought to be one of the most important and effective ways to promote the overall development of the new Three Gorges tourism.

At the same time, both during and after the construction of the Three Gorges Dam, central and local governments alike have set out various plans and taken a series of actions to develop local economy and promote the new Three Gorges tourism. The main plans and influential activities may be summarized as follows:

- In order to ensure local residents' resettlement to be implemented efficiently as possible, the Chinese government established the Regulations on Residents-Resettlement for the Yangtze River Three Gorges Project Construction in 2001. The Regulations also formulate that the residents-resettlement work for the Three Gorges Project construction shall be integrated with the construction of the Three Gorges reservoir area, the opening-up of the riverine regions, water and soil conservation and environmental protection (The State Council 2001). In addition, related to the resettlement of residents in Three Gorges regions is the issue of employment as it can 'affect the stability and development of the whole reservoir area and the country' (Yang 2014). With respect to employment, Chongqing municipality has already issued a series of measures, including strengthening vocational education and job training, providing free six-month training for some unemployed resettled residents in order to improve their work skills, and guiding and encouraging support for employment in urban areas

(Yang 2014). Working in the tourism industry is considered to be the best choice for those unemployed resettled residents, primarily because the tourism industry enjoys a close relationship with many other industries and is able to provide more opportunities for employment (Peng 2009).

- In order to promote the healthy development of the New Three Gorges tourism, six Ministries and Commissions (the National Tourism Administration, the State Council Three Gorges Office, the National Development and Reform Commission, the State Council Western Development Office, Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Water Resources) united four provinces and a municipality (Hubei, Hunan, Guizhou, Sichuan and Chongqing municipality) to jointly prepare 'The Compendium for Three Gorges Regional Tourism Development Plan', which was officially promulgated on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2004. The Compendium comprised eleven sections (see Table 5.4 overleaf) representing China's first national planning for a regional tourism economy – the tourism development planning of the Three Gorges region – to enter the implementation phase (Zhang 2004).

**Table 5.4:** Details of ‘The Compendium for Three Gorges Regional Tourism Development Plan’

<b>Parts</b>	<b>Details</b>
Part 1: The Nature, Scope and Duration of the Compendium	The nature: a document that guides the overall development of the Yangtze Three Gorge tourism. The scope: the Plan Compendium covers the core area in the Three Gorges reservoir and the associated radiation zone. Duration: between 2004 and 2010
Part 2: The basic principles for tourism development	Tourism development is based on the basic principles of developing “New Three Gorges tourism”, and insists the unity and integrity of the Three Gorges brand in order to develop the Three Gorges tourism as a whole.
Part 3: The goal for the development of the Three Gorges tourism industry	To make the Three Gorges a world-class tourist destination
Part 4: The image positioning of the regional tourism	“Eternal Legacy, Tremendous Changes of the Landscape”
Part 5: The spatial layout of tourism development framework	“Two poles, three axes, three districts, four belts”: two poles refer to Chongqing urban tourism growth pole and Yichang, Hubei growth pole; three axes represents the Three Gorges tourism development as main axis, “Hunan, Hubei, Shanxi” tourism development and “Sichuan, Chongqing, Guizhou” tourism development as two minor axes.
Part 6: The exploitation of tourism products	According to the characteristics of different regions, to make efforts to promote four quality tourist routes of the reservoir and cultivate six regional tourism routes
Part 7: Tourism marketing plan	According to different types of marketing demand, particularly from domestic tourist market, European and American tourist markets, Australian tourist market, Southeast Asian tourist market, and Hongkong, Macao and Taiwanese tourist markets, to formulate differentiated marketing planning as a whole.
Part 8: The transport plan for the Three Gorges tourism	To make an overall deployment for the Three Gorges tourism transport
Part 9: Reservoir resettlement plan	To provide a large number of employment opportunities and further expand resettlement channels through the development of tourism in the reservoir area
Part 10: The regional division of labor and collaboration for the Three Gorges tourism	To integrate the Three Gorges tourism resources, to exploit new tourism resources and promote tourism products as a whole, and to eliminate regional separatism
Part 11: The ecological and environmental protection during tourism development	To make efforts to protect ecosystem and environment.

**Source:** Zhang (2004)

- It is reported that according to the 'Three Gorges Regional Tourism Development Plan', the Planning and Statistics Division of the National Tourism Administration will establish the Three Gorges area tourism division and cooperation Coordination Committee to implement the joint conference system related to tourism division of labor and collaboration. Meanwhile, the country's first regional and periodic tourism development management regulation, 'Tourism Development Management Regulations of Three Gorges Region' will be developed. The Regulations will have legal effect, which can guarantee the implementation of the joint meeting of Three Gorges region's tourism division of labor and collaboration (Dingxi Radio and TV University News 2006).
- The State Council executive meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2011 discussed and adopted the 'Three Gorges Follow-Up Planning' and 'Yangtze River Basin Water Pollution Control Plan'. The former put forward three goals to be achieved by 2020. Firstly, the ecological deterioration in the Three Gorges reservoir area should be effectively curbed. Secondly, a long-term mechanism for geological disaster prevention should be further improved. Thirdly, a system of disaster prevention and mitigation should be established. The later provided a series of strategies to protect drinking water sources and aquatic ecosystems (State Council News 2011).
- China's Three Gorges Dam region will receive 26.9 billion yuan (US\$3.5 billion) from 2007 to 2020 to develop tourism that can provide jobs for people relocated for the project. The investment aims to realize the government's plan to build tourism into a pillar sector in the Three Gorges Dam region, in order to generate 20 billion yuan, or 24.7 percent of the area's GDP by 2020. The Three Gorges tourism development plan has been approved by a group of experts in tourism and city planning organized by the government. The fund, financed by government allocations and outside investments, will be used to upgrade the tourist ferries along the valley, build roads and docks forming a traffic network, improve tourist facilities and traffic infrastructure such as accommodation and catering, preserve historic sites and to develop culture-oriented attractions (Xinhua News 2007a).
- Chongqing Municipality and Hubei province realized the importance of cooperation between two regions for the development of the new Three Gorges tourism; therefore, they issued the 'Three Gorges Regional Tourism

Cooperation Declaration' in 2009 and decided to work together for the development of Three Gorges tourism (China Hospitality News 2009).

- Chongqing Municipality and Hubei province have been alternately holding China Yangtze Three Gorges International Tourism Festival each year since 2010, which aims at promoting the new Three Gorges and its related products (CNTA 2010).
- The 'Yangtze River Three Gorges Tourism Cooperation: 2011 Presidency Conference' was held in Yichang, Hubei. Two governments, Chongqing Municipality and Hubei Province, affirmed the success of tourism cooperation during the previous year, and agreed to continue to promote the "Big Three Gorges" brand. The main issues discussed in this conference were about the exploitation and promotion of tourism products of the Three Gorges region, the improvement of local transport, marketing management, the integration of tourism resources and so forth. During the meeting, the two governments agreed to strengthen the cooperation of tourism projects through information exchange and the sharing of experience in order to avoid repetitive construction and to achieve differentiation of tourism products. Tourism projects must focus on the promotion of the Three Gorges' natural beauty and cultural characteristics (Xia 2011).
- Two governments, Chongqing Municipality and Hubei Province, signed the '2012 Memorandum about Three Gorges Regional Tourism Cooperation', which proposed that in order to make the Yangtze Three Gorges tourism become one of the most popular international destinations and help the two regions to rapidly develop their tourism industry, these two regions must further cooperate, such as using various marketing means to strengthen the Three Gorges brand, developing incentive policies, improving joint law enforcement, promoting regional planning, creating barrier-free tourism zone, and so on (CNTA 2012a).
- Between 21<sup>st</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> May 2012, "2012 China Yangtze River Three Gorges Special Products" promotional campaigns, organized by China National Tourism Administration, were held in Los Angeles and San Francisco, USA and Vancouver, Canada, respectively. The purpose of the events was to promote the new Three Gorges, and to familiarize local tourism wholesalers and agents, media, and airlines with China's Three Gorges destination (CNTA 2012b).

- Chongqing Municipality and Hubei Province successfully held “China Yangtze Three Gorges – Chongqing and Hubei Tourism Product Promotion Conference” on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2012 in Los Angeles, USA, and 15<sup>th</sup> November 2012 in Vancouver, Canada, respectively. The cross-regional joint promotion allowed attendees to understand the diversification of Three Gorges products and helped to shape the overall image of the Yangtze Three Gorges tourism (Chongqing Hechuan Tourism Administration 2012).

The tourism planning and promotional activities referred to above were almost all based on the principle of co-operation between Chongqing Municipality and Hubei Province. To some extent, this cooperation between the two local governments has resulted in some significant achievements, underpinning the development of the new Three Gorges tourism. For example, the increasing number of inbound tourists to the Three Gorges region, as shown in Table 5.2, is evidence of the progress being made. The development of tourism in this region, however, also embraces other important issues, such as the quality of life for displaced people, the contribution of local residents, including displaced people, to the tourism industry, economic development, environmental protection, and so on. The complexity and particularity of these issues represent significant challenges to the successful implementation of regional tourism cooperation.

Overall, since 1992, the development of the Three Gorges tourism, including the fluctuation in the number of inbound tourists, the establishment of regional tourism policies, and the implementation of local tourism development strategies, has been directly related to the Three Gorges Dam. It can, therefore, be argued that the construction of the Dam has significant impacts, both positive and negative, on tourism in the Three Gorges.

#### **5.3.4 The development of Yangtze Three Gorges cruise**

As observed in Chapter 4, there is a long established system of water transportation on the Yangtze River. In particular, the development of Three Gorges cruise ships has a long history (see Table 5.5 overleaf).

**Table 5.5:** The historical development of Three Gorges cruise ships

<b>Year/period</b>	<b>The development of Three Gorges cruise ships</b>
In ancient times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The emperors took the wooden cruise ships for their inspection tour to southern China. Such ships were the oldest form of cruise ship in China, propelled by wind force and human labour.</li> <li>• Upstream of Three Gorges, cruise ships on the Yangtze could only be propelled by trackers who stood along the riverbank to pull the ship whilst singing desolate work songs.</li> </ul>
Before the founding of P. R. China	Chongqing was established as a trade port in Beijing Treaty in 1890. A British businessman manufactured a steam ship called Lichuan in Shanghai. Lichuan was the first cruise ship of Three Gorges. Its main function was to transport goods.
Between 1978 and 1991	<p>The transportation industry shrunk gradually while more cruise ships were available for travel and sightseeing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In 1979, Linde Brett travel agent of United States chartered a cruise ship, named 'Kunlun', and used it to serve people who want to travel to the Three Gorges. Kunlun became the first cruise ship to be used for the Three Gorges tourism.</li> <li>• Subsequently, more cruise ships were used for regional tourism. The Yangtze River Cruise Ships operated in 1983 was a mark that the pattern of Yangtze tourism became more diversified and Yangtze tourism stepped into a new stage of development. Three Gorges travel routes; scenic spots and ship schedule were designed and standardized. The cruise tour was limited between Chongqing and Shanghai. The main source market was inbound tourism.</li> </ul>
Between 1992 and 2002	<p>With the development of Three Gorges tourism and the construction of the Three Gorges Dam, the development of Three Gorges cruise ships fluctuated and could be divided into three stages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between 1992 and 1995: the start of the Three Gorges Dam construction triggered the boom in the Three Gorges Tourism.</li> <li>• Between 1996 and 1999, several events, such as the first river closure in the Three Gorges Dam, the return of Hong Kong, Chongqing becoming a municipality, "Farewell Tour of Three Gorges" Promotional Programme, the outbreak of Asian Financial Crisis, significantly impacted the development of cruise ships. Additionally, the rare Yangtze River floods led to nearly two-month shipping suspension. The regional cruise market experienced the worst hit.</li> <li>• Between 2000 and 2002, the rapid development of domestic tourism and the second river closure promoted the development of cruise ships. However, the outbreak of SARS in 2003 resulted in a decline in cruise ship development.</li> </ul>
Between 2003 and the present	The creation of the Three Gorges reservoir improved the shipping conditions, and transformed traffic patterns, tourism resources, tourism products, the structure of source market, the needs of tourists, travel patterns, tourism market environment, and market structure in the region. The development of cruise ships in the Three Gorges enters a transition stage.

**Source:** Adapted from Jia (2006: 307-9); Kan, Deng & Mu (2010); Myyangtze-cruise.com (2010); Wang & Zhao (2010)

According to Deng & Kan (2010), 'the special geographical conditions in the Three Gorges have determined that the best way of travelling to the Three Gorges is to take a cruise ship'. Cruising has played a central role in the development of Three Gorges tourism and although transport modes along the length of the Yangtze, such as air, road and rail, have become diversified, travelling by cruise ships in the Three Gorges reservoir area is still a unique and popular form of travel (Deng & Kan 2010).

However, in the process of development of the Three Gorges cruises, several problems have emerged. For example, according to Kan, Deng & Mu (2010), by the end of 2010, more than ten companies were engaged in Three Gorges tourism cruise shipping. Collectively, these cruise companies operated more than 90 cruise ships, including about 60 luxury cruise ships. In addition to this, they also had about 200 high-speed boats and ordinary ships. Together, these ships could accommodate more than 10 million passengers each year, whilst the number of cruise ships was still increasing. However, the cruise ships' capacity (i.e. supply) was greater than the number of tourists, leading to a waste of assets. In other words, the imbalance between market supply and demand caused vicious competition in Three Gorges tourism market. To take another example, the quality of service still needs to be improved. Many employees working on cruise ships still could not adapt to the transformation to cruise service – from passenger services to travel services. Therefore, the services provided on many cruise ships were still under the international standards (Deng & Kan 2010).

Compared with other countries' inland cruise tourism, such as Nile cruise tourism, Mississippi cruise tourism and Rhine cruise tourism, the contribution of the Yangtze Three Gorges cruise tourism to the national economy is still very small. In other words, significant distinctions exist differences with respect to awareness, brand image and revenue generation of Three Gorges cruise tourism and other countries' inland cruise tourism. (Deng & Kan 2010). Therefore, the potentials exist to further improve and develop Three Gorges cruise tourism.

## **5.4 The impacts of the Three Gorges Dam on the Three Gorges tourism**

### **5.4.1 The positive impacts**

As explained in Chapter 1, the Three Gorges Dam was built to provide hydroelectric power, flood control, and greater river-borne access to the Yangtze River in central China. It is considered that not only will Three Gorges tourism benefit from improved access along the river, but also that the construction of the Dam can directly create

new and significant opportunities for the development of regional tourism, summarized as follows:

- With the completion of water storage, a new landscape has emerged in the Three Gorges reservoir. The formation of a huge artificial lake and fourteen islands and the Peninsula, together with thirty-seven canyons, various caves and other new landscapes, has created a new 'Steep Gorges and a Calm Lake' landscape in the Three Gorges (Li & Ye 2001; Wu, Guo, Ge & Li 2003).
- The construction of the Dam has arguably improved the visual impact of some tourist attractions along the river (see Table 5.5). For example, Fengjie White King Town, one of tourist attractions in Qutang Gorge, has become an island owing to the rising of the water level, resulting in the White King Town appearing more spectacular. Similar landscapes also appear in Huanghua City and Shibaozhai Pagoda, Zhong County, and in Fengdu Ghost Town, Fengdu County (Li & Ye 2001; Wu, Guo, Ge & Li 2003; Zhang & Hu 2001).
- The Dam has facilitated the exploitation of tourism resources. The heightening of the water level has enhanced the navigation conditions along the main routes of the Yangtze River, Wujiang, Daning River, and other tributaries. This improvement to the navigation conditions is seen by some as beneficial to the further development of scenic areas and other tourist attractions along the Yangtze River and its tributaries. Indeed, some sites which were originally difficult to access are now reachable (Li & Ye 2001; Wu, Guo, Ge & Li 2003).
- The construction of the Dam has enhanced the protection and preservation of some important historical sites along the Yangtze River (Zhang & Hu 2001) (see Table 5.5 on Page 157). For example, according to UNESCO (2012), the Baiheliang or, literally, the White Crane Ridge, is an archaeological site boasting some of the world's oldest hydrological inscriptions which record 1,200 years of changes in the water level of the Yangtze River in the north of the Fuling District of the Chongqing Municipality. It is now submerged under the waters of the newly built Three Gorges Dam. Since 1994, China's Department for the Protection of Cultural Heritage has undertaken research into the conservation of the stone inscriptions of Baiheliang. After considering several proposals, it was decided to transform the site into an underwater museum (see Figure 5.3 overleaf). After the museum opened to the public, the government

was able to extend the Three Gorges tour routes from Fengdu to Fuling, thus adding a new tourist attraction to the Three Gorges tourism and enriching the cultural experience of the Three Gorges (Ji 2009). At the same time, the government is also actively preparing an application to the United Nations to get the Baiheliang Underwater Museum listed as a World Cultural Heritage Site, and hopes that more and more historical and cultural resources in the Three Gorges region can be recognized by the world (Cheng 2011; Li 2011).

**Figure 5.3:** Baiheliang-bulls-eye view of the sight



**Source:** <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/underwater-cultural-heritage/about-the-heritage/underwater-museums/the-baiheliang-underwater-museum/>

- The Dam has created an opportunity for co-operation between Chongqing government and Yichang government for boosting the new Three Gorges Tourism, as has been discussed in Section 5.3.3 above. This co-operation involves the improvement of traffic routes between Chongqing Municipality and Yichang City and the transport that links the various sites and attractions around Three Gorges region, the joint promotion of the new Three Gorges tourism through holding ‘International Three Gorges Tourism Festival’ each year and organizing promotional campaigns in main tourist source markets, the joint exploitation and development of new tourism resources, and the joint prevention and control of environmental pollution (China Hospitality News 2009).
- ‘The Three Gorges reservoir area has become the safest cruising area on the Yangtze River’ (Du 2006). As Du (2006) further explains, ‘the number of shipping accidents at the Three Gorges Dam area last year decreased by 40 percent, and that of collisions dropped by 65 percent from 2002, when

construction in the Dam began. Due to advanced technology, the Dam handled water traffic with an improved traffic order and safety record on China's most important waterway'.

To summarize, the construction of the Three Gorges Dam has undoubtedly resulted in a number of positive consequences for the Three Gorges tourism and, consequently, many researchers and experts have proposed various strategies for the further development of the new Three Gorges tourism. However, there have also been some debates focusing on the negative impacts of the Dam on regional tourism, particularly on the natural scenery and historical and cultural attractions, as well as on other consequences affecting the tourism industry, such as on the wider environment and ecology.

#### **5.4.2 The negative impacts**

With respect to the impacts of the Dam's construction on natural scenery, some experts (Li & Ye 2001; Wu, Guo, Ge & Li 2003; Zhang & Hu 2001) claim that, owing to the subsequent rise in water levels, some landscapes have been flooded and some have lost their original character of mystery and spectacle, including Kuimen in Qutang Gorge, rapids and dangerous shoals in Xiling Gorge, the twelve peaks of Wushan, and so forth, thereby reducing both their value as tourist attractions and, to an extent, their more general aesthetic value (see Table 5.6 overleaf and Table 5.7 on Page 164).

**Table 5.6:** The characteristics of the Three Gorges before and after the construction of the Dam

<b>The Three Gorges</b>	<b>The length of each gorge</b>	<b>The characteristics of the Three Gorges before the construction of the Dam</b>	<b>The status quo after the construction of the Dam</b>
Qutang Gorge	8km long	Starts at Baidicheng, Fengjie county in the west and ends in Daixi, Wushan county in the east. It is the shortest and narrowest gorge amongst the three gorges, and is celebrated for its magnificent, peculiar and precipitous scenery in the world.	The summits of Qutang Gorge are all well above the water levels. Thus most of scenic spots in this Gorge are not affected, except the scenic spots at the entrance of the gorge, named Kuimen.
Wuxia Gorge	42km long	Extends from the mouth of the Daning River in Wushan county, Chongqing municipality in the west to Guangdukou of Badong county, Hubei province in the east. It is serene and secluded and presents a panorama of lovely scenery, flanked by high peaks that are often capped by fog or clouds. This gorge is famous for being 'the Most Beautiful Gorge in the world'. The best known Goddess Peak is among the 12 high peaks in the Wu Gorge.	All main scenic spots are not affected by the water storage of the Three Gorges reservoir area.
Xiling Gorge	66km long	Runs from the mouth of Xiangxi (Perfume Stream) in Zigui in the west to Nanjing Pass in Yichang, Hubei province in the east. This gorge used to be famous for its numerous dangerous rugged shoals and the turbulent waters.	The beautiful lake view and all the dangerous shoals have already disappeared.

**Source:** Adapted from Li & Ye 2001; UNESCO (2001); Wu, Guo, Ge & Li 2003; Zhang & Hu 2001

Framed by limestone bluffs, sculpted by time, the Yangtze's riversides famously ranged from sheer inclines to massive mountains, to long sloping riverbanks. This Three Gorges bluff landscape is now reduced, and submerged in parts, by an enormous reservoir lake created by the Three Gorges Dam. ....

Chen, Bao & Mai (2012)

In response to such similar kind of questions, the Chinese authorities have clearly stated that 'the Dam filling will not greatly modify the scenery of the Three Gorges ..... since the peaks along the gorges range from 800 to 1,500m, and the reservoir water

level will rise only about 100m (to 175m). The height of the gorges will be diminished by only about one tenth and the visual sense of the landscape therefore will not be significantly altered' (Ponseti & López-Pujol 2006). Thus, it is officially argued that, even though the increased water level has affected the landscape to an extent, tourism still benefits from the increased water depth, which allows 'not only an increase in the number of visitors to the best known spots in the Yangtze River, but also the chance to visit new scenic spots upstream of some tributaries, previously inaccessible' (Ponseti & López-Pujol 2006).

Nevertheless, with regards to the negative impacts of the Dam on the natural landscape, another issue has recently emerged. Chen, Bao & Mai (2012) criticize that insufficient attention has been paid to the effect of the Three Gorges Dam on the reservoir region's drawdown zone – the sightline of tourists traveling the Three Gorges area by boat – and that no studies have been undertaken to assess how changes to this zone have impacted tourism in the area. They also argue that, given the significance of the Three Gorges is a world-class gorge landscape, the visible environmental impacts of the Dam, particularly water pollution, and consequential rise in water levels are of crucial concern to the tourism industry.

More specifically, the Three Gorges area is, of course, primarily famous for its scenery, although it is also well-known for its history and culture. Indeed, as noted earlier in this thesis (see Chapter 1), it is documented that there has been uninterrupted settlement in the area since prehistoric times. This combination of magnificent natural scenery and a long history makes the Three Gorges highly attractive to both domestic and international visitors. Unfortunately, however, the construction of the Three Gorges Dam has caused a number of problems with respect to the protection of cultural relics of the Three Gorges region.

Owing to the construction of the Dam, 'the Three Gorges area turned into the largest archaeological site in the country and field of cultural relic protection. Numerous cultural ruins above or below ground were found to form a historical route on the development of the Chinese nation in this area. The passage linked the Paleolithic period to the present' (Beijing Youth Daily Report 2003). After the completion of the Dam and water storage, many historical and cultural sites been submerged. Debatty (2007) points out that 'the 600 kilometers long reservoir will flood some 1,300 archaeological sites'.

Certainly, the Chinese central government has made efforts to rescue the most important cultural relics along the Three Gorges. For example, it was reported that the government has earmarked over 100 million yuan (12 million U.S. dollars) every year to save relics in the region. All together, the investment in saving and protecting cultural relics at the Three Gorges will be total over 1 billion yuan (People's Daily News 2001). In addition, different cultural relics have been protected and preserved in different ways. According to Ponseti & López-Pujol (2006), the above-ground cultural sites include four categories: ancient buildings, stone sculptures, bridges, and cliff paths. Three types of preservation measures have been implemented to protect them: 'on-spot' protection, relocation, and data collection. Underground archaeology embraces underground sites to be recovered through archaeological methods by the National History Museum of Beijing. For example, and as described earlier, an underwater museum has been built to protect the Baiheliang, the archaeological site displaying some of the world's oldest hydrological inscriptions (UNESCO 2012). Nevertheless, Chen, Bao & Mai (2012) describe what happened at the Baiheliang as 'a more devastating decline'. They argue that although the Baiheliang has been preserved through the construction of the underwater museum, the site has ceased its function as a hydrological observatory.

Many also criticize the fact that although 'during the approval process for the Dam, a panel of 412 experts was consulted on the various issues surrounding the construction and impacts [of the Three Gorges Dam] ... missing from that panel were sociologist, cultural anthropologists, and archaeologists' (Ponseti & López-Pujol 2006). Following the approval of the Three Gorges Dam project, the government assigned the State Administration of Cultural Heritage the task of preserving the artifacts at the thousands of sites which would be inundated (Childs-Johnson, Cohen & Sullivan 1996). However, one archeologist has estimated that it would take 500 years to excavate all of the sites properly; to date, only one-tenth of the known sites have been excavated (See 2003). As a result, 'for the government, it is impossible to collect and document all the cultural and archaeological sites threatened by the reservoir' (Ponseti & López-Pujol 2006). Reynolds (2011) also criticizes that 'the lack of concern for the heritage of the Yangtze River valley would result in a number of programmes which rushed to save as many artifacts as possible'.

According to CCTV News (2003), following the storage of water in the Three Gorges Reservoir area, some twenty-five tourist attractions, including both natural landscapes and historical sites, would be submerged completely, including Tactics Books and Sword Gorge, Bull's Liver and Horse's Lung Gorge, Hanging Monk Rock, Quyuan

Memorial Temple, Dachang Ancient Town, Fengjie Ancient Town, the White Crane Ridge, and partial Ancient Pathway. The transformation of main attractions in the Three Gorges region is been summarized below in Table 5.7.

**Table 5.7:** The transformation of main attractions in the Three Gorges region: from Chongqing Municipality to Yichang, Hubei Province

<b>Region</b>	<b>Main attractions</b>	<b>The status quo after water storage</b>
<b>Fuling District, Chongqing</b>	The White Crane Ridge	Has been submerged in the Three Gorges Reservoir. However, the inscriptions on the White Crane Ridge are on display in an underwater museum, which opened to the public on May 18, 2009.
<b>Fengdu County, Chongqing</b>	Fengdu Ghost Town	Has been submerged up to the base of the Minshan mountain. Most landscapes above the 'Door of Hell' maintain their previous appearances. Nowadays, the Ghost Town has become an isolated land surrounded with water.
<b>Zhong County, Chongqing</b>	Shibaozhai Pagoda	A dyke has been built around the base of the tower to protect it from the rising water level. The Village has become an isolated land surrounded with water.
<b>Yunyang County, Chongqing</b>	The Zhang Fei Temple	The temple would be submerged completely and thus was moved brick by brick to a new higher site.
<b>Fengjie County, Chongqing</b>	Baidicheng	The water has partially submerged the Town. Mt. Baidishan has become an isolated island surrounded with water. Nevertheless, the landscape of the Town is, arguable, more beautiful than before.
<b>Along the Three Gorges</b>	The Hanging Coffins	Some coffins from different gorges were in danger of being submerged. Therefore, they have been moved to different places for preservation.
<b>The Qutang Gorge, Fengjie County, Chongqing</b>	Kui Gate	Has been covered by water.
	Chalk Wall	Some parts with characters have been cut off and preserved in the local museum.
	Meng Liang Ladder	Has been covered by water.
	The Ancient Pathway	Has been covered by water.
	The Bellows Crevices	Less impacted by the Dam
<b>The Wu Gorge, Chongqing</b>	Daxi Village	Has been covered by water.
	Mt. Wu	Less impacted by the Dam.
	Lesser Three Gorges	There is little change to the Lesser Three Gorges. Although the scenery of Longmen Gorge and Bawu

		Gorge has been diminished, there is no effect on the scenery in Dicui Gorge.
	Goddess Peak	Since it is above 900 meters above sea level, the feature of the peak has not been destroyed.
<b>Hubei Province</b>	Shennong Stream	Less impacted by the Dam.
	Zi Gui	Part of the Zigui territory has been submerged. Residents have been moved to the new county of Zigui, which abuts the Dam. The Qu Yuan Temple gate has been partially submerged. In order to protect the temple, it has been moved to a new location Mt. Phoenix that faces the Dam.
<b>The Xiling Gorge, Hubei Province</b>	Tactics Books and Sword Gorge, and Bull's Liver and Horse's Lung Gorge	The low peaks in both Gorges are covered by water in summer. There is no effect on the distant view in winter when the conservancy time is coming, but the close view of the Gorges' feature has been diminished. The coffins in the former have been moved to the Qu Yuan Memorial Hall in Zigui.
	Huangling Temple	Not affected by the Dam.
	Three Travelers' Cave	Not affected by the Dam.

**Source:** Adapted from China Dam News (2009), China Net (2004), China Travel Report (1998-2012), Chongqing Tourism Administration (2011), Li (2009), Travel China Guide (1998-2012)

In addition to these negative impacts of the Dam on the scenery and historical sites of the Three Gorges', a new problem emerging in recent years. It was reported (Tan 2012) that the inbound market to the Three Gorges fell significantly between January and November 2012. In particular, concerns with regards to a long delays experienced by cruise ships to pass through the ship locks in the Three Gorges Dam have not been resolved; this is considered to have significantly affected tourists' travel experience and to have contributed to the decrease of the number of visitors to the Three Gorges.

## 5.5 Chapter summary

Overall, it is evident from the above discussion that the Three Gorges Dam has not only had an immediate impact on the natural scenery and historical sites in the Three Gorges region but is also having long-term negative effects, particularly water pollution, on the region's environment and on the water traffic that plays a crucial role in Three Gorges tourism. Opinions about the impacts of the Dam on the Three Gorges tourism vary among the Chinese government, tourism experts, and the public, though there remains a lack of knowledge about the perceptions of tourists themselves with respect

the impacts of the Dam on their experience of the Three Gorges. Therefore, in order to develop the new Three Gorges tourism more effectively, it is necessary to identify and understand visitors' perceptions of the Three Gorges and the Dam, hence the central focus of the research in this thesis.

The purpose of the following chapter, therefore, is to introduce and explain the methodology adopted for this research. Specifically, it justifies the use of a case study approach before going on to consider the methods that have been applied to this research, how the primary data was collected and what tools were used for data analysis.

# Chapter Six

## Methodology

### 6.1 Introduction

Having established the conceptual framework for the research in the preceding literature review chapters, the purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methodology employed for that research. Conventionally, when commencing a research project, it is first necessary to consider the research question and objectives, and then subsequently to decide which research method should be employed to answer the question. The research question and objectives can provide a direction for the choice of research methods, and an appropriate methodological choice can affect the reliability and validity of the findings and should eventually provide answers to the research question. However, to identify whether a selected method is appropriate to the research at the outset is a difficult task. It is, therefore, suggested that the opportunity should be taken to check the appropriateness of methodological choice through 'examining if and how far a researcher has applied the method in its own terms' (Flick 2009: 214).

Prior to explaining the actual research methods employed, it is important to consider and establish the philosophical ideas related to research and the relevant philosophical assumptions and research paradigm, as they 'exert an influence on how business research can and should be conducted' (Bryman & Bell 2007: 4), or more specifically on how data can be collected and analyzed and how research questions can be answered. Therefore, this chapter commences with a brief overview of the philosophical assumptions underpinning the research before going on to discuss the methods employed in more detail.

### 6.2 Philosophical assumptions and research paradigm

#### 6.2.1 Research, assumptions and research paradigm

According to Sanders, Lewis & Thornhill (2003: 3), 'research has a number of characteristics: first, data are collected systematically; second, data are interpreted systematically; third, there is a clear purpose: to find things out'. Consequently, they define research as 'something that people undertake in order to find out things in a systematic way, thereby increasing their knowledge' (Sanders, Lewis & Thornhill 2003: 3). More succinctly, Sekaran & Bougie (2009: 2) observe that 'research is simply the

process of finding solutions to a problem after a thorough study and analysis of the situational factors.'

Either way, to find out things in a systematic way is dependent on assumptions made by the researcher at every stage of the research, as 'these assumptions mainly concern the nature of reality and how we can know reality' (Maylor & Blackmon 2005:155). Such assumptions inevitably shape how the researcher understands the research questions, decides upon the methods to be used and interprets the findings (Crotty 1998). In other words, 'awareness of philosophical assumptions can both increase the quality of research and contribute to the creativity of the researcher' (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson 2012: 18). Before making assumptions, however, it is important to have a good understanding of the research paradigm, as this represents 'an overall conceptual framework within which a research may work' (Perry, Riege & Brown 1998). Bryman (1988: 4) defines a paradigm as 'a cluster of beliefs and dictates which for scientists in a particular discipline influence what should be studied, how research should be done, and how results should be interpreted'. Alternatively, Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012: 140) suggest that 'a paradigm is a way of examining social phenomena from which particular understanding of these phenomena can be gained and explanations attempted'.

The relationship between the research paradigm and the assumptions made is clearly illustrated by Guba & Lincoln (1994: 107), who propose that 'a paradigm can be viewed as a set of basic beliefs based on ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions. It represents a worldview that defines the nature of the 'world', the individual's place in it and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts'. Similarly, Burns & Burns (2008: 13) emphasize that 'a paradigm is particular way of viewing the world, a framework of assumptions that reflect a shared set of philosophic beliefs about the world which places strict guidelines and principles on how research should be conducted'.

It is evident that the terms ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods and techniques are frequently referred to in all kinds of research methods studies. In particular, ontology, epistemology and methodology are typically considered to be intimately related to each other and, thus, demand attention. According to Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Jackson (2012: 17-8), Krauss (2005) and Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012: 130,132), ontology is concerned with nature of reality and existence; conversely, epistemology concerns the best ways of enquiring into the nature of the

world (or exploring that reality and existence), namely what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a field of study, whilst methodology refers to the combination of techniques used to inquire into a specific situation. That is, it identifies the particular practices used to attain knowledge of the particular situation or problem, whilst methods and techniques refer to individual techniques for data collection, analysis and so on.

Guba & Lincoln (1994) suggest that it is necessary to understand these three fundamental components (ontology, epistemology and methodology) before determining which paradigm is to be used in a research. They summarize these three components as follows (Guba & Lincoln 1994: 108):

1. *The ontological question:* What is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it?
2. *The epistemological question:* What is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known?
3. *The methodological question:* How can the inquirer go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known?

Guba & Lincoln (1994: 108) go on to explain the relationship among these three fundamental components: 'The answer that can be given to the second question is constrained by the answer already given to the first question. Then the answer for the third question is constrained by answers already given to the first two questions'. Thus, it can be concluded that not only is each component closely connected with the others, but also that the loss of any one component may jeopardize the successful completion of a research project.

Within the research methods literature, numerous research paradigms are referred to, including positivism, post-positivism, critical theory, objectivism, constructivism, realism, interpretivism and so on. Some of these belong to ontological positions, such as objectivism and constructionism; and some are epistemological positions, such as positivism, interpretivism, and realism. For the purposes of this thesis, the relationship between the positivist, interpretivist and realist paradigms is now considered.

### **6.2.2 The relationship amongst the positivist, interpretivist and realist paradigms**

'Positivism is an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond' (Bryman & Bell 2007:

16). Travers (2001: 10) claims that a central assumption of positivism is that 'it is possible to describe the world objectively, from a scientific vantage point'. Positivists assume that there is an objective reality. Natural and social sciences measure independent facts about a single definable reality composed of discrete elements whose nature can be known and categorized (Guba & Lincoln 1994; Tsoukas 1989). Bryman & Bell (2007), therefore, point out that the positivism entails five principles (see Figure 6.1 below):

**Figure 6.1** Five principles of positivism

1. Only phenomena and hence knowledge confirmed by the senses can genuinely be warranted as knowledge (the principle of phenomenalism);
2. The purpose of theory is to generate hypotheses that can be tested and that will thereby allow explanations of laws to be assessed (the principle of deductivism);
3. Knowledge is arrived at through the gathering of facts that provide the basis for laws (the principle of inductivism);
4. Science must (and presumably can) be conducted in a way that is value free (that is, objective);
5. There is a clear distinction between scientific statements and normative statements and a belief that the former are the true domain of the scientist.

**Source:** Bryman & Bell (2007: 16)

The second and the third principles collectively indicate that 'positivism entails elements of both a deductive approach and an inductive strategy' (Bryman & Bell 2007: 16). However, it can be argued 'positivist approaches rely heavily on experimental and manipulative methods. Hypothesis generation and testing are generally involved and typically, quantitative methods are used' (Cohen & Crabtree 2006).

'Interpretivism is a term given to a contrasting epistemology to positivism. It is predicated upon the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action' (Bryman & Bell 2007: 17, 19). Bryman & Bell (2007: 17) further explain that 'writers share a view that the subject matter of the social sciences is fundamentally different from that of the natural sciences. The study of the social world therefore requires a different logic of research procedure, one that reflects the distinctiveness of humans as against the natural order'. Similarly, Travers (2001: 10) emphasizes that, 'interpretivists believe that the objective

of sociological analysis should be to address how members of society understand their own actions. This includes the issue of representativeness, so whereas a positivist would spend a lot of time devising a sampling procedure, an interpretive sociologist might want to know how members of society understand the issue of representativeness.' Therefore, it can be thought that 'interpretive approaches rely heavily on naturalistic methods, such as interviewing, observation, and analysis of existing texts. Generally, meanings are emergent from the research process and qualitative methods are typically used' (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Following on from this brief discussion of the contrasting paradigms of positivism and interpretivism, it can be summarized that, first, a deductive approach is typically associated with a positivist position whereas an interpretative research is very much part of the kind of inductive strategy (Bryman & Bell 2007: 21); second, 'the objective of a positivist study would be to make comparisons, and perhaps develop some kind of causal theory, based on measuring variables in different settings. An interpretivist, however, might want to know how people in a particular setting make comparisons between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in the course of their daily affairs' (Travers 2001: 11). In contrast to both positivism and interpretivism, however, realism is thought to be 'the most popular position, which informs enquiry in the human sciences' (Travers 2001: 11). Realists believe that there is a 'real' world to discover even though it is only imperfectly understandable (Godfrey & Hill 1995; Guba & Lincoln 1994; Tsoukas 1989). Realism can be seen as maintaining a neutral position between positivism and interpretivism.

On the one hand, realism 'shares two features with positivism: a belief that the natural and the social sciences can and should apply the same kinds of approach to the collection of data and to explanation, and a commitment to the view that there is an external reality to which scientists direct their attention' (Bryman & Bell 2007: 18). Realists, however, hold different views from positivists. Bryman & Bell (2007) emphasize that realism has two major forms: empirical realism and critical realism. 'Critical realism particularly implies two things: first, it implies that, whereas positivists take the view that the scientist's conceptualization of reality actually directly reflects that reality, realists argue that the scientist's conceptualization is simply a way of knowing that reality; second, critical realists unlike positivists are perfectly content to admit into their explanations theoretical terms that are not directly amenable to observation' (Bryman & Bell 2007: 18).

On the other hand, realism, like interpretivism, accepts 'what we believe to be real will have important consequences for our behavior' (Livesey 2010). Travers (2001) compares the realists' views with that of interpretivists:

Realism involves looking behind appearances to discover laws or mechanisms that explain human behavior. This becomes important when one interprets what people say about their activities. Interpretivists usually take members' accounts at face value, or contrast these to the perspectives of different groups in society. Realists, however, are likely to view them as incomplete or deficient.

Hence, it can be concluded that 'realist approaches tend to rely on a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Research is conducted in more natural settings and more situational or contextual data is collected. Realist approaches incorporate methods to elicit participants' ways of knowing and seeing, such as interview, observation, and text. Also, research designs provide opportunities for discovering emergent knowledge as opposed to operating by testing *a priori* hypotheses' (Cohen & Crabtree 2006).

In this study, the realist paradigm has been adopted. On the one hand, the purpose of this research is to explore the perceptions of international visitors (that is, the demand side) with respect to the Three Gorges Dam and the destination of the Three Gorges in both breadth (visitor survey) and depth (semi-structured interviews). On the other hand, it also seeks to identify how the central and local governments (the supply side) consider the negative impacts of the Dam, what actions have been taken to minimize the Dam's negative effects on the region, and what strategies have been put in place for the further development of the new Three Gorges tourism. Consequently, the research attempts to conceptualize the alternative ways for the future development of new Three Gorges tourism, including fostering a positive destination image, building a destination brand, and eco-environmental protection, which are considered as the most effective approaches to attract more international visitors in the future.

Nevertheless, the focus of this research is primarily on the demand side, on international visitors, as the intention is to extend Faulkner's framework for tourism disaster strategies in which visitors' perceptions of an affected destination were not considered as an important fact influencing the formulation of development strategy of the affected destination (see Chapters 1 and 2). More importantly, few if any studies

have been undertaken with respect to tourism crisis management related to Three Gorges tourism, particularly focusing on the impact of the Three Gorges Dam on the tourism in the region. Thus, this research is concerned with not only words (qualitative research) but also numbers (quantitative research) to explore and understand international visitors' attitude about the Three Gorges Dam and the Three Gorges tourism. As a result, realism is considered as the most appropriate paradigm to contribute to this research.

### **6.3 Research design and methods**

A research design is 'a blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data, based on the research questions of the study' (Sekaran & Bougie 2009: 95). Nevertheless, how to collect the useful data will largely depend on the application of research methods, as the appropriateness of methodological choices can directly affect the reliability and validity of the findings in a research.

#### **6.3.1 Secondary data**

The collection of secondary data is adopted in most research projects, as well as in this research, as it is 'a necessary first step in any research design and forms an important part of the literature review stage (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000: 41)'. It is essential to identify what work has already been carried out on a particular subject, thereby saving of time, effort and money (Baggio & Klobas 2011: 7; Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000: 41). Additionally, since many secondary data are from government agencies, international associations and institutions, private research companies and industry associations, they are likely to be higher-quality data (Stewart & Kamins 1993), tend to be readily available and are often free or inexpensive to obtain (Baggio & Klobas 2011: 6-7). Thus, as Finn, Elliott-White & Walton (2000: 41) note, logically 'secondary data collection should always come before primary data collection'.

In this research, according to the secondary data, several issues have been explained, and some facts have been identified prior to primary data collection, including why the Three Gorges Dam was built on the Yangtze Three Gorges, why the Dam was conceptualized as a self-induced crisis, what negative impacts the Dam have brought to the Three Gorges region to date, whether the Chinese and local governments have realized the potential crisis that might result from the construction of the Dam, what actions the governments have taken to minimize the negative impacts of the Dam, and

what strategies have been put forward for the development of new Three Gorges tourism so far.

However, according to Finn, Elliott-White & Walton (2000: 58), 'most of the problems associated with using leisure and tourism data arise from the fact that they have been collected for a particular purpose and may not be in a form that the researcher would ideally like them to be'. For example, in this research, particularly in Chapters 4 and 5, some data that related to China's inbound tourist arrivals, the global ranking of China's tourist arrivals and tourism receipts, information with respect to world heritage sites in China, and annual international visitor arrivals at the Three Gorges, were collected for a particular purpose. These data were subsequently adapted to meet the needs of this thesis through careful screening and re-integration. Therefore, it can be said that these data are unique for this research.

### **6.3.2 Qualitative research**

Bryman & Bell (2007: 28, 402) stress that qualitative research possesses the following features:

- It can be construed as a research strategy that tends to be concerned with words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data;
- It predominantly emphasizes an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research;
- An epistemological position described as interpretivist stresses the understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of what world by its participants; and
- An ontological position described as constructionist, which implies that social properties are outcomes of the interactions between individuals.

Indeed, qualitative research is concerned typically with information in the form of words, conveyed orally or in writing, images and sounds (Veal 2011: 35). Five qualitative approaches are included in qualitative research: narrative research, phenomenological research, grounded theory research, ethnographic research, and case study research (Creswell 2013: 83).

As is well known, case studies have been widely used in tourism research (Beeton 2005; Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000; Veal 2011). Veal (2011: 128) stresses that 'a case study involves the study of an example – a case – of the phenomenon being

researched. The aim is to seek to understand the phenomenon by studying a single example'. Bryman & Bell (2007: 63) further explain that 'with a case study, the case is an object of interest in its own right, and the researcher aims to provide an in-depth elucidation of the unique features of the case'.

According to the statement above, therefore, this research is identified as case study research. As discussed in Chapter 1, although the Chinese government insists that the construction of the Three Gorges Dam will be beneficial to the development of China's economy, the Dam has been considered as a self-induced crisis from the perspective of western media and some experts, a crisis which has been directly or indirectly reflected in many ways, such as impacts on the ecological environment, environmental pollution, the displacement of local people, and impacts on Three Gorges tourism. Nevertheless, unlike other cases, such crisis is predictable and its impacts can be minimized if Chinese government takes effective measurements in time. Additionally, during the construction of the Dam, the development of the Three Gorges tourism experienced a series of challenges. In particular, the misleading reports from Taiwan media (see Chapter 5) resulted in significant fluctuations of the number of tourists in the region as well as a long-term trough in the development of Three Gorges tourism. Thus, it can be argued that this case will contribute not only to contemporary tourism crisis management theory and models, but also the tourism in China literature (See Chapter 1).

With regard to its classification, whether or not the case study method should be subsumed under 'qualitative methods' has been long debated. For example, Creswell (2013: 83) and Finn, Elliott-White & Walton (2000: 81) point out that the case study method belongs to qualitative research. However, such classification was questioned by Bryman & Bell (2007), Veal (2011) and Yin (2009). In particular, Yin (2009: 19) argues that 'the case study method is not just a form of 'qualitative research'.... Some case study research goes beyond being a type of qualitative research by employing a mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence. In addition, case studies need not always include the direct and detailed observational evidence marked by other forms of 'qualitative research'. Indeed, this case study, related to the Three Gorges Dam, has employed a mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence (more detail can be found in Section 6.4).

Nevertheless, the case study has its limitations. For example, 'it has been broadly criticized as speculative, unreliable and too specific to be replicated or applied

generally. More importantly, it has also been argued that case studies tend to reflect the bias of the researcher, who is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis' (Beeton 2005: 38-39). However, Creswell (1994) claims that some of the criticisms related to the bias of the researcher may be overcome through the use of 'triangulation'. In other words, by combining qualitative and quantitative methods in a case study, some inherent bias would be neutralized and then a better result could be achieved. Indeed, multiple methods, including documentary research, the use of secondary data, different type of interviews, and questionnaire-based or qualitative surveys, can be used in a case study approach, which make the research more valid and reliable.

However, apart from the limitations mentioned above, it should be noted that the case study approach also has its advantages, such as the 'capacity to explore social processes as they unfold in organizations' (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000: 82), 'providing a richness and uniqueness in data by using multiple methods, namely triangulation' (Veal 2011: 348), and so on (More details can be found in APPENDIX 3).

There are many techniques associated with qualitative methods: qualitative interviewing, participant observation, focus groups, verbal protocol analysis, and the collection and qualitative analysis of texts and documents (Bryman & Bell 2007). Through the application of one or more of these techniques, researchers can either 'gain...insights into people (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Lowe 2002)', 'explore people's life histories or everyday behavior (Silverman 2005: 6)', or 'seek an understanding of actions, problems and processes in the social context (Phillimore & Goodson 2004: 3)'. In short, through qualitative techniques, researchers seek to understand the social world.

Qualitative interviewing is considered as 'a great way to learn detailed information from a single individual or small number of individuals. It is very useful when one wants to gain expert opinions on the subject or talk to someone knowledgeable about a topic' (Driscoll & Brizee 2010). Nevertheless, there are two major types of qualitative interviewing: the semi-structured interview and the unstructured interview.

As Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2003) point out, 'the semi-structured interview is used in qualitative research in order to conduct discussions not only to reveal and understand the 'what' and the 'how', but also to place more emphasis on exploring the 'why''. Bryman & Bell (2007: 479) also suggest that 'if the researcher is beginning the

investigation with a fairly clear focus, rather than a very general notion of wanting to do research on a topic, it is likely that the interview will be semi-structured one, so that the more specific issues can be addressed'. As Bryman & Bell (2007: 474) further explain, the researcher usually has an interview guide with a list of questions on a specific topic. However, questions may not follow on exactly in the way outlined on the schedule. Also questions that are not included in the guide may be asked as the interviewer picks up on things said by interviewees. In this research, semi-structured interviews were adopted to explore and understand the perceptions of the supply side (that is, the governments / relevant authorities) and demand side (international visitors) on the negative impacts of the Dam.

Compared with the semi-structured interview, if the researcher wants to 'gain a genuine understanding of the world views of members of a social setting or of people sharing common attributes, the unstructured interviewing approach may be preferable' (Bryman & Bell 2007: 477). It is considered that with a more unstructured approach, the researcher is more likely to see things as the participants see them (Bryman & Bell 2007: 477, 479). Conducting an unstructured interview with the tour guide in this research provided the researcher with an alternative means of further exploring the perceptions of international visitors on the Three Gorges and the Dam, as well as eliciting a genuine insight into how the tour guide recognized and understood the impacts of the Dam on the development of Three Gorges tourism.

To sum up, qualitative research has its advantages, but there is also consensus on the limitations of qualitative research (Bryman & Bell 2007; Flick 2009; Veal 2011): first, it is too subjective; second, it is difficult to replicate, particularly in case studies; third, there are problems of generalization; and fourth, it lacks transparency.

### **6.3.3 Quantitative research**

According to Veal (2011: 34), much research in the leisure and tourism industries involves the collection, analysis and presentation of statistical information. Sometimes the information is innately quantitative, and sometimes it is qualitative in nature, but is presented in quantitative form – for example, in the visitor survey of this research, numerical scores obtained by asking international visitors to rate how the features of the Three Gorges are important to them, where the scores range from 1, 'Not important at all', to 5, 'very important'.

Quantitative research, as a research strategy, 'entails the collection and analysis of data and exhibits a view of the relationship between theory and research as deductive, a predilection for a natural science approach (and of positivism in particular), and as having an objectivist conception of social reality' (Bryman & Bell 2007: 154).

Quantitative research includes three types of approach: hypothetical-deductive quantitative research, statistical quantitative research and inductive quantitative research (Veal 2011: 34-5). Each approach is explained in Table 6.1 below.

**Table 6.1** Three approaches to quantitative research

Type	Explanation
Hypothetical-deductive quantitative research	Conforms to the hypothetical-deductive model. Invariably statistical methods and tests, such as the chi-square tests, t-test, and analysis of variance, are used.
Statistical quantitative research	Makes use of statistical methods but is not necessarily hypothetical-deductive. It can be descriptive, exploratory and / or deductive.
Inductive quantitative research	Is based on numerical data, but makes little or no use of statistical tests: its most sophisticated statistical measure is usually the percentage and sometimes means / averages. This type of quantitative research is very common in the British tradition of leisure and tourism research and closer in approach to qualitative methods.

**Source:** adapted from Veal (2011: 34-5)

According to the explanation above, it is evident that an inductive quantitative approach has been adopted in this research (more details can be found in Section 6.4.2.2).

Quantitative data usually can be obtained through the structured interview or questionnaire surveys. According to Veal (2011: 260), questionnaire surveys include two forms: interviewer-completed and respondent-completed. The latter often refers to self-completion, whereby respondents read and fill out the questionnaire for themselves, on paper or online. For this research, respondents were allowed to complete the questionnaire survey by themselves on paper.

Nevertheless, using respondent-completion approach offers both advantages and disadvantages (see Figure 6.2 overleaf):

**Figure 6.2** Advantages and disadvantages of respondent-completion approach

<b>Respondent-completion</b>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cheaper</li><li>• Quicker</li><li>• Relatively anonymous</li><li>• Absence of interviewer effects</li><li>• Convenience for respondents</li></ul>
<b>Disadvantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Patchy response</li><li>• Incomplete response</li><li>• Lower response rates</li><li>• Risk of frivolous responses</li><li>• Difficult to ask a lot of questions</li><li>• Cannot collect additional data</li><li>• More care needed in design</li></ul>

**Source:** Adapted from Bryman & Bell (2007: 241-3); Veal (2011: 260)

In particular, Veal (2011: 260) suggests that open-ended questions in questionnaire surveys should be avoided, since they invariably achieve only a low response. Nevertheless, Finn, Elliott-White & Walton (2000: 95) insist that 'open questions are particularly useful in determining a respondent's feeling on a topic or for identifying the reason why they hold particular points of view. They are better at determining how strongly views are held and opinions on specific aspects'. As a result, open-ended questions were designed in the visitor survey of this research.

Following on from the discussions above, it can be argued that there are both advantages and disadvantages related to the use of quantitative research. These are summarized overleaf in Figure 6.3.

Flick (2009: 32) emphasizes that 'debates about qualitative and quantitative research, which was originally oriented to epistemological and philosophical standpoints, have lasted for decades, and nowadays have increasingly moved towards questions of research practice such as the appropriateness of each approach'.

**Figure 6.3** Advantages and disadvantages of quantitative research

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<b>Quantitative research</b>	
<b>Advantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can generalize research findings</li><li>• Research findings can be replicated</li><li>• Data analysis is relatively less time consuming</li><li>• The result has higher credibility and is more 'objective'</li></ul>
<b>Disadvantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quantitative researchers fail to distinguish people and social institutions from 'the world of nature';</li><li>• The measurement process possesses an artificial and spurious sense of precision and accuracy;</li><li>• The reliance on instruments and procedures hinders the connection between research and everyday life;</li><li>• The analysis of relationships between variables creates a static view of social life that is independent of people's lives.</li></ul>

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**Source:** Adapted from Bryman & Bell (2007: 174)

#### **6.3.4 Mixed methods research: combining quantitative and qualitative research**

There is a consensus (Bryman & Bell 2007; Creswell 2013; Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000; Flick 2009; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill) that quantitative and qualitative methods have their strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, it is suggested (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000: 9-10) that 'the two approaches could be combined so as to maximize the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of each method, to improve the validity of the research, and to enhance the research findings'. The term, mixed methods, is used to describe the combinative way of quantitative research and qualitative research. It is defined as 'where two or more methods are used to address the research question at the same time in the research process' (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000: 9).

Creswell & Plano-Clark (2007: 1) stress that 'mixed methods is a new approach. Although researchers for many years have collected both quantitative and qualitative data in the same studies, to put both forms of data together as a distinct research design or methodology is new'. For example, 'leisure and tourism researchers are generally all using a combination of theory and empirical evidence to draw conclusions about leisure and tourism phenomena' (Veal 2011: 33). 'Tourism, like many other human activities, relies heavily on data of all sorts and the quantitative treatment of data' (Baggio & Klobas 2011: xxii).

As Avraham & Ketter (2008: 21) state, 'many different methods may be used to evaluate a place's image among specific target audience, but the most popular are attitude surveys, various questionnaires, focus groups and in-depth interviews'. A surveys 'enables us to understand common attitudes to a subject, political party or place at a certain time, which can be conducted in diverse ways, such as regular mail, electronic mail, telephone, and face-to-face' (Avraham & Ketter 2008: 21). However, Avraham & Ketter (2008: 26) suggest that 'in any event, the best way to analyze a place's image is by combining several complementary research methods. For example, the findings of semi-structured/in-depth interviews can assist in creating a comprehensive and useful survey covering all relevant issues'. Similarly, Turner (2010) also puts forward 'interviews can be coupled with other forms of data collection in order to provide the researcher with a well-rounded collection of information for analyses'.

Bryman (1988) explores a range of different ways of combining qualitative and quantitative methods. One of ways of combining two methods is that quantitative research can explore large-scale macro structures whereas qualitative research can focus on small-scale micro aspects of the project, which has been adopted in this research.

After reviewing the research design and methods, the following section will demonstrate how the decision was made with respect to data collection methods in this study according to the research questions. The collection of data involves the collection of both secondary data and primary data. In particular, the collection of primary data can be divided into two parts: data from supply side (Government) and data from demand side (International visitors).

#### **6.4 A procedure for the determination of research methods and for data collection**

As introduced in Chapter 1, this research aims to identify appropriate strategies, within a conceptual framework of crisis management and tourism policy development, for rebuilding Three Gorges tourism in China following the completion of the Three Gorges Dam. More specifically, the key research question that this thesis addresses is: what are inbound (international) visitors' attitudes towards the Dam and its impact on their experience of the Three Gorges, and how might these attitudes inform strategic responses to the consequences of the Dam on Three Gorges tourism? Thus, two key issues are fundamental to this research, namely, knowledge and understanding of China's tourism policy and the status quo of Three Gorges tourism and, against that

background, an exploration of international visitors' perceptions/images of the Three Gorges Dam and developmental strategies for new Three Gorges tourism.

According to Yin (2009: 10), 'the first and most important condition for differentiating among the various research methods is to classify the type of research question being asked. In general, 'what' questions may either be exploratory or about prevalence. 'How' and 'why' questions are likely to favor the use of case studies, experiments, or histories'. This research question addressed by this thesis includes both 'what' and 'how' questions. On the one hand, it seeks to explore international visitors' attitudes towards the impacts of the Dam on Three Gorges tourism. On the other hand, it also seeks to use the specific case of the Three Gorges to develop existing theory and understanding of crisis management in tourism industry. The case emphasizes some predictable consequences of the construction of the Dam that have the potential to evolve into a (tourism) crisis. Therefore, crisis communication management plays a significant role at the precaution and planning-prevention stage of a crisis, suggesting that, for the Three Gorges to be further and successfully developed as an international destination, then local governments should consider the developmental strategies of the new Three Gorges tourism from the perspective of international visitors.

#### **6.4.1 Secondary research**

For this research, secondary data collection commenced at an early stage of this thesis. In addition to a review of the relevant literatures dictated by the aims and objectives of the thesis, including literature on tourism crisis management and destination image, accessed from appropriate library and on-line academic sources (see Chapters 2 and 3), specific data relevant to the case study and research were obtained from local Tourism Bureau and through official websites. These data included information on tourism policy in China, annual reports on China's inbound tourism in general and Three Gorges' inbound tourism in particular, and developmental plans related to the Three Gorges tourism. Specifically, the secondary data analysis in this research was used to examine trends in the development of Three Gorges tourism over time, and to undertake a comparative study on the development of the Three Gorges tourism prior to and following the construction of the Three Gorges Dam (see Chapters 4 and 5).

In the case of this research, some problems arose with respect to data analysis owing to the fact that, as mentioned in Chapter 5, the Three Gorges are jointly administered by Chongqing Municipality and Hubei Province. Consequently, statistics with regards to inbound tourism are collected separately. Thus, in order to meet the needs of this

research, statistics relating to inbound tourism to the Three Gorges had to be collated from these two sources (see Table 5.2 in Chapter 5).

#### **6.4.2 Primary data collection**

'In many cases, the data used for a study come from different sources and a combination of primary and secondary data is quite common in tourism studies' (Baggio & Klobas 2011: 8). As Baggio & Klobas (2011: 6) go on to explain, 'primary data are those collected directly from the original or 'primary' source by researchers through methods such as direct observation, questionnaire surveys, structured or unstructured interviews and case studies. It is seen as unique data tailored to the specific purposes of the study conducted'.

For the purposes of this study it was deemed necessary to implement a two-stage primary research process. The first (qualitative) stage, Stage One was undertaken during an initial field visit to the case study area in China in the spring of 2011, and was a scoping exercise (More details can be found in Section 6.4.2.1) that sought to elicit background foundational data that would inform the implementation and interpretation of the outcomes of the second stage (Stage Two). Thus, Stage One of the research embraced two broad aims; first, to generate knowledge and understanding of the official plans, policies and processes for the redevelopment of tourism in the Three Gorges following the construction of the Dam and, implicitly, to explore how the international tourist experience of the Three Gorges is perceived from the Chinese perspective; and, second, to undertake initial research amongst international visitors as means of identifying key themes and issues to be addressed in greater depth in the second (quantitative) stage of the research. These two stages are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

##### **6.4.2.1 Stage One research**

As noted above, in addition to the secondary data collection related specifically to tourism in the Three Gorges, scoping research was conducted at Stage One to elicit primary data regarding both tourism policy and planning for the region and an overview of visitors' attitudes and perceptions of the experience of the Three Gorges. Thus, the research at this stage involved two in-depth, semi-structured interviews with representatives of the tourism sector, namely, an expert specializing in Three Gorges tourism research and a high-level official from Chongqing Tourism Bureau, and semi-structured interviews with nine tourists from western countries visiting the Three Gorges. The reason only two representatives of the tourism sector participated in the

interview is that few high-level officials in China were willing to discuss sensitive topics related to the Three Gorges Dam, particularly through personal interviews. On this occasion, interpersonal relationship, as a dominant Chinese characteristic, played an important role in gaining permission from high-level officials for an interview. In addition, with regard to the choice of the nine international tourists for interview, although a large number of international visitors were on the cruise ship, only nine of them were willing to participate in interviews.

During the spring of 2011, two semi-structured (one-to-one) interviews were held, one at the office of Associate Professor RuLiang Kan, China Three Gorges University, Yichang City, Hubei province, and one with Mr. Fuqiang Liu, Chongqing Tourism Bureau, Chongqing Municipality. Prior to 2004, Professor Kan was the Chief of Planning and Development Division and Director of Finance Division of Yichang Tourism Bureau. Since entering the education sector in 2004 he has been engaged in relevant aspects of academic research, although his work has invariably been related to the development of the Three Gorges tourism. Therefore, he has maintained good contacts with Yichang Tourism Bureau and China Three Gorges Corporation. Mr. Liu is currently the Director of Tourist Commodity Promotion Division in Chongqing Tourism Bureau. Prior to this, he worked as Director of the Legal Affairs & Regulations Division and of the Economic Development Division. In both cases, the research topic, the purpose of the interview and interview questions were emailed in advance to enable them to prepare for the interviews.

As noted above, the purpose of the interviews was to explore a variety of issues, including: tourism policies in the Three Gorges region; what efforts have been made by local government to improve international visitors' positive image of the Three Gorges; what the respondents considered to be the principal impacts of the Dam on the Three Gorges region; what planning has been undertaken to rebuild the Three Gorges Tourism and re-establish it as a popular international destination; what policies have been made to protect environment in the Three Gorges; and, whether there is a specific crisis management team to prevent potential crises or to manage crises that might occur in this region. Therefore, the discussions emphasized key themes relevant to the understanding of tourism policies in China, actions taken by local governments for environmental protection in the Three Gorges region and rebuilding Three Gorges tourism as an international destination.

During the same period, semi-structured (one-to-one) interviews were undertaken with nine international visitors; the location for these interviews was at the Cafe Bar on board of the Yangtze cruise ship, Princess Jeannie. The purpose of these interviews was: to explore from a general perspective the tourists' images / perceptions of China; their attitudes towards and experience of the Dam and Three Gorges; why they chose to visit the Three Gorges as one of their destinations in China; the extent to which negative news reports about the Dam had affected their destination choice; what major concerns, if any, they had about their travel in this region; whether there existed a significant distinction between their image and actual experience of the Three Gorges; and, what improvements they felt could be made to enhance the tourist experience of the Three Gorges. These nine visitors were from different countries, including Australia, New Zealand, the UK and Switzerland, and mixed gender and age. All participants had visited the Three Gorges and the Dam, and on a number of occasions they had participated in some on-shore excursions. In each case, the research topic was introduced to the participants before the interview commenced. Subsequently, the discussions focused on key themes relevant to an in-depth understanding of the participants' physical experiences in the Three Gorges region and feelings of China, the Three Gorges Dam and Three Gorges tourism as detailed above. In particular, they were prompted to compare their actual experiences in China with their original image of the country, the Three Gorges and the Dam.

#### **6.4.2.2 Stage Two research**

After obtaining the initial information and an overview to identify visitors' perceptions of the Three Gorges Dam and the Three Gorges, it was identified that the more information collected from international visitors, the more beneficial would this research be to the development of the new Three Gorges tourism. Therefore, another seventeen semi-structured interviews with international visitors were conducted in October 2012 on a cruise ship. In addition, with the help of the tour guide who attended the interview, a pilot survey was conducted prior to the actual survey in August 2012 in order to test the questionnaire. It enabled the appropriateness of questions to international visitors to be checked, and ensured the correctness of the instructions on the questionnaire. Convenience sampling was used for the pilot survey where international visitors were selected because of 'their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher' (Mae Sincero 2012). Consequently 18 international visitors eventually participated in the pilot survey, following which partial adjustments were made as appropriate to a number of questions. The actual survey was then undertaken in September and October 2012, during which 182 questionnaire surveys were eventually collected from

four cruise ships. In other words, 182 surveys were completed by international visitors who were on their cruise ship after finishing the trip in the Three Gorges region.

Here, it is worth further identifying two main issues that were related to the collection of primary data: first, the time spent on cruise ship; and second, the basis of the sampling. With regard to the first issue, in September the researcher departed from Chongqing port and spent three days on a cruise ship travelling downstream to Yichang, Hubei province. She then stayed overnight in one of hotels in Yichang, and next day caught a cruise ship at Yichang port for a 4-day trip back to Chongqing. The same route was repeated in October. The reason for spending this length of time on the cruise ship was to establish a trusting relationship with international visitors in order to get their permission for conducting questionnaires and interviews. Regarding the second issue, the actual survey still adopted convenience sampling. Before conducting any questionnaire and interviews, international visitors on cruise ships were asked if they would like to make a contribution to this research. After gaining their permission, international visitors were given a choice of either filling in a questionnaire or attending an interview. As a result, no respondent participated in both the questionnaire survey and an interview, with the consequence that their responses were not repeated and were valid for analyses.

Although autumn is a peak period for tourism in the Three Gorges, the number of completed questionnaires in the survey and also the number of international visitors who attended interviews was relatively limited. However, this reflected (1) the limited number of international visitors on each cruise ship; (2) the unwillingness of some international visitors to do the questionnaire or to attend the interview; and 3) the limited time and funding on the part of the researcher. Nevertheless the number of questionnaires completed and interviews conducted was considered sufficient to identify key themes and issues with respect to tourists' perceptions of the Three Gorges and their experience of them.

Another reason of adopting quantitative research – undertaking a survey – was because little, if any, market research had been undertaken to elicit international visitors' view of the Three Gorges and the Three Gorges Dam, which is unhelpful for local governments in pursuing the goal of developing the Three Gorges as international tourism destination. The purpose of conducting a survey is to explore what their images of China, the Dam and Three Gorges are, why they choose the Three Gorges as one of their destinations, whether the negative news about the Dam affect their destination

choice, what their major concerns are during their travel in this region, whether there are big differences between their image and real experience of the Three Gorges, and what suggestions they can provide to improve Three Gorges tourism. The use of these two methods forms a complementary relationship.

Indeed, there is another way to obtain tourists' opinion about the Three Gorges – to interview tour guides. It is known that tour guides play an intermediary role between international visitors and Chinese residents. Such a role can 'have considerable influence over destination branding and marketing, as tour guides have much information about how China's/local tourism brand is perceived by tourists' (Dioko, Harrill & Cardon 2010). This is why an experienced tour guide was chosen as an interviewee for this research. An unstructured-interview was conducted in September 2012 to gain some indirect information about international visitors' attitudes about China, Three Gorges and the Three Gorges Dam. This interview was conducted with a senior tourist guide, who has been working in this industry for at least 10 years. Since the senior tourist guide can easily build up a good interactive relationship with tourists during the travel and receive feedback from them afterwards, the findings from him can be used as supplementary sources to further identify the international visitors' perception of the Three Gorges and the Dam. In other words, the author would like to understand international visitors' attitude from the tour guide's perspective.

## **6.5 Questionnaire design**

There are three types of question included in the survey: open-ended (unstructured), closed ended (structured), and scale response (structured). The open-end survey was designed to explore inbound visitors' perceptions of China and their attitudes towards the Dam, to find out whether or not the transformed environment has impacted on their travel experience in the Three Gorges, and to identify how their experience may be improved. The survey can help the author understand the roots of the current image and the way it was formed among the international visitors. It was handed out to those international visitors who have visited or are traveling in the Three Gorges.

As mentioned above, this survey included open-ended questions that can 'elicit free and unbiased answers, without forcing the respondent to choose a ready-made answer' (Avraham & Ketter 2008: 21), and closed-ended questions that ask the respondent to choose from ready-made answers (Avraham & Ketter (2008: 22). In the survey, for example, questions, like 'please use THREE words to describe what your image of China was prior to your visit', and 'please use THREE words to describe what

your first impression of China was after your arrival', allow tourists to provide three responses freely. Meanwhile, the closed-ended questions are also adopted in the survey. Questions like 'what is your purpose of visit this time?', 'where/how did you first hear about the Three Gorges?' and 'where/how did you get relevant information about China/the Three Gorges?' with ready-made answers were provided to tourists for response. These questions are aimed at understanding holidaymakers' decision-making on destination choice so as to assist the marketers in planning the future campaign.

Additionally, similar to measurements have been used for assessing destination image (see Section 3.3.4 in Chapter 3), the survey used trait grading techniques for assessing the Three Gorges tourism's characteristics. For example, the respondent was asked to grade a list of traits from 1 to 5 regarding the characteristics of the Three Gorges (1 – not important at all, 5 – very important). In order to assess the Three Gorges and the Dam's positive and negative characteristics, the respondents were asked to grade each trait on a 1-5 Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree, 5 – Strongly agree).

The survey was undertaken between September and October 2012. This period is considered as peak or 'golden' season for Three Gorges tourism. The study picks out the perception-related questions in the questionnaire, which consisted of four parts. The first part comprised nine questions to explore why these international visitors choose China for visit, what international visitors' general image of and first impression of China, and how they obtained the information about China. The second part contained eleven questions to explore international visitors' perception of the Three Gorges and its tourism development. Particularly, the last question was designed to discover how important the fourteen attributes are to the international visitors on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*not important at all*) to 5 (*very important*). The third part consisted of two questions. One of them was designed to determine the tourists' overall perception of the Three Gorges Dam on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). And the last part was about the participated tourist's information, such as sex, age, nationality, and occupation.

## **6.6 The application of SPSS for the analysis of quantitative data**

At the stage of analyzing the data, a simple descriptive analysis of aggregated data may be of limited use in providing useful marketing information. Contrarily, multivariate analyses can provide a more sophisticated analysis by using statistical packages, such as SPSS, which provide statistical procedures including cluster analysis, factor analysis,

principle components analysis, and multidimensional scaling. In many image studies, a combination of statistical methods has been used, including factor analysis followed by multidimensional scaling. In this research, therefore, SPSS will be used for data analysis.

### **6.7 Coding text manually instead of the application of Nvivo for the analysis of qualitative data**

NVivo, as a form of computer software, has been widely used to facilitate the analysis of qualitative data, including semi-structured interviews. This software 'allows the analyst to code text while working at the computer and to retrieve the coded text' (Bryman and Bell 2007: 603). However, it was eventually decided to code and analyze the text manually rather than using Nvivo for the simple reason that there was a manageable number of interviewees and consequently the major themes discussed by interviewees could be easily coded and analyzed without the need to use Nvivo. More details can be found in Chapter 7 and the Appendices.

### **6.8 Chapter summary**

The above discussed above has shown that mixed methods have been adopted in this research. Primary data were collected through open-end survey and semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Quantitative data collected from tourists, on the one hand, shows international visitors' image and perceptions of China, the Three Gorges, and the Three Gorges Dam, which may contribute to the development of China's tourism, particularly of the Three Gorges tourism. On the other hand, qualitative data collected from local authorities and local education authorities will demonstrate the efforts local governments have made to promote and develop the Three Gorges tourism, and to minimize the negative impacts of the Three Gorges Dam on local tourism. In the following Chapters, the outcomes of both the quantitative and qualitative research undertaken in this study are considered and the ways in which they may benefit local government in implementing developmental strategies for the new Three Gorges tourism are considered.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Findings, Analysis and Discussion**

#### **7.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this research, as discussed in Chapter 1, is to identify appropriate strategies for the development of new Three Gorges tourism in China following the completion of the Dam, based on a conceptual framework of crisis management and tourism policy development. In the preceding chapters, therefore, this thesis research has presented a review of crisis management theory in tourism and of the history and status-quo of China's tourism policy. It has also considered the development of China's inbound tourism, the impacts of the Three Gorges Dam on the Three Gorges Tourism and, through an analysis of secondary data, new approaches to the planning of tourism in the Three Gorges region.

More specifically, in Chapters 2 and 4, it was revealed that governments may play a potentially significant role in the prevention of and responses to crises in a tourist destination. Governments are also responsible for developing strategies, implementing policy, providing investment and encouraging stakeholder collaboration to fat a destination. As a result, in Chapter 6 (Methodology) it was suggested that interviews with local government officials in the Three Gorges region would be an appropriate means of identifying what role the government is playing in addressing the negative impacts of the Three Gorges Dam and in redeveloping tourism in the Three Gorges.

At the same time, in Chapter 2 it was argued that, to date, there has been limited recognition of the need to understand and take into account that to understand visitors' perception of a destination affected by a crisis when formulating a destination development or recovery strategy. Thus, concepts and theories related to country / destination image, with a specific focus on western perceptions of China, were reviewed in Chapter 3. Consequently, in Chapter 6 interviews with and a survey of international visitors visiting the Three Gorges were considered the most appropriate methods of revealing visitors' perceptions of and attitudes towards China and, in particular, the Three Gorges Dam and its perceived impact on the Three Gorges region as a tourist destination. In addition to this, and as noted in Chapter 3, visitors' perceptions of a specific destination may also be elicited from tour guides. Although this represents an indirect way of considering the attitudes of tourists, it nevertheless

offers a supplementary source of data in formulating a development strategy for a tourist destination.

The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to present and discuss the outcomes of the empirical research as indicated in the preceding chapters. Thus, as considered in the methodology (Chapter 6), this chapter is divided into two main sections, the purpose of the first being to identify what central and local governments have done for the development of new Three Gorges tourism, and the second to explore visitors' perceptions of China, the Three Gorges and the Dam. The first section of the chapter, therefore, presents and analyzes the findings from the scoping research (phase one), based on interviews with two key stakeholders in China and nine international visitors. Subsequently, the second section analyzes and discusses the findings of the interviews with seventeen international visitors, an unstructured interview with a tour guide, and the results of the quantitative survey of 182 international visitors.

## **7.2 The outcomes of stage one**

### **7.2.1 The outcomes from interviews with two key stakeholders**

As introduced in Chapter 6, one of interviewees currently holds the post of Associate Professor in China Three Gorges University, Yichang City, and has engaged in the study of the Three Gorges tourism and culture for many years. Before teaching at the University, he worked as the Chief of Planning and Development Division and the Director of Finance Division, respectively, in Yichang Tourism Bureau. At present, owing to the nature of his work, he still keeps in close touch with Yichang Tourism Bureau and China Three Gorges Corporation. Therefore, he remains in the position to gain updated tourism-related information from local government. The other interviewee is currently working as Director of Tourist Commodity Promotion Division in Chongqing Tourism Bureau. Previously, he took the charge of the Legal Affairs & Regulations Division and of the Economic Development Division. Thus, it can be said that these two interviewees possess contemporary and in-depth knowledge of tourism policy, marketing promotion and strategic planning related to the Three Gorges tourism.

The purpose of this section is to analyze the outcomes of the interviews with these two key stakeholders. Interview questions are listed in Table 7.1 overleaf.

**Table 7.1** Interview questions for two key stakeholders

Question No.	Questions
1	After the Chinese government announced the construction of the Three Gorges Dam in Yichang, there were many negative reports about the Dam. These reports at that time largely affected the number of domestic and international visitors to this region. What measures have been taken to improve the tourists', especially international visitors', positive image of the Three Gorges? Has local government undertaken marketing surveys to identify international visitors' perceptions of the Three Gorges tourism?
2	What have been the main impacts of the Three Gorges Dam on the Three Gorges region and its tourism?
3	Many towns and cities have been flooded and the original landscapes of Three Gorges have been transformed. Has the government developed new strategies to rebuild Three Gorges tourism in order to attract more international visitors? What has the government done so far?
4	The transformation of environment in this region has affected the supply of tourism resources. What policies have been developed to protect the environment of the Three Gorges region?
5	Is there any tourism plan or policy for the Three Gorges tourism? Who or which department is responsible for those policies and plans?
6	Are local tourism policies different from the policies developed by the central government? What are the differences?
7	So far, have any laws/regulations/policies been implemented to protect the environment of the Three Gorges region?
8	There are still much controversy surrounding the negative effects of the Three Gorges Dam, particularly its impacts on earthquake disasters, natural and geographical disasters and environmental pollution. Have local governments set up a special crisis management team to prevent potential crises and to take emergency treatment? If so, how do they operate?
9	Two governments, Chongqing Municipality and Hubei Province have decided to jointly develop the new Three Gorges tourism. What is about the cooperation? What are the advantages and disadvantages?
10	What is about the development of cruise ship tourism in the Three Gorges region?

Both interviewees answered questions in Chinese and their answers were recorded through the use of the digital voice recorder. Therefore, after the interview, their answers were converted into text, translated into English, and saved to the computer. It should be noted that, as mentioned in Chapter 6, in order to maintain the flow of discussion the interviews did not follow the order indicated in the schedule. Moreover, some questions that were not included in the guide were also asked to follow up on and discuss in more detail particular points or issues rose by the two interviewees.

### **7.2.1.1 The main impacts of the Three Gorges Dam**

As introduced in Chapter 1 and further discussed in Chapter 5, the principal benefits to China in general, and the Three Gorges region in particular, from the development of the Three Gorges Dam include: flood control, hydroelectric power generation, navigation, water transfer, tourism, irrigation, and Reservoir fisheries. However, the Dam has, of course, also incurred negative impacts on the Three Gorges region. These may be summarized as follows:

- Population resettlement
- Environment and biodiversity transformation / degradation
- Coastal erosion
- Geologic disasters
- Impacts on natural habitats
- Climate change
- Damage to archaeological sites
- Yangtze lake hydrology

Therefore, question 2 sought to explore what the interviewees considered to be the main impacts of the Dam and what actions the government has taken to coping with some or all of these negative impacts.

Both interviewees discussed the main impacts of the Three Gorges Dam on the Three Gorges region and its tourism. They agreed that, to date, western countries appeared to be most concerned about two major impacts of the Dam: the large-scale displacement of local people and the re-construction of the ecological environment. According to the interviewees, central government has made a significant investment in the resettlement of the local people, and now attention is focused on how to help or support local people in setting up new businesses or finding a new job. Nevertheless, the interviewee from university stressed that there were some problems during the displacement and resettling of local people although, on the whole, the quality of life for majority of people has been improved significantly.

With regards to ecological environment, the interviewee from Chongqing Tourism bureau mentioned that western visitors have shown significant concerns about the impacts of the Dam, and felt it necessary to further explain why the Chinese government had wanted to construct the Three Gorges Dam on the Yangtze River:

*China is now still in the era of industrialization; therefore, energy for China is extremely important. All along, the energy security and low-carbon have received a much attention. Particularly, the Japanese nuclear leak crisis reminds us that although nuclear power is low carbon, it is not secure. This crisis shocked the whole world. As a result, the use of water resources is reconsidered as the safest and most ecofriendly way to generate electricity.*

At the same time, it was accepted that the construction of the Dam has also an influence on international visitors. In the opinion of the interviewee from university, for example:

*In addition to being interested in China's culture and history, tourists from western countries advocate natural and original ecosystems. After the creation of the Three Gorges Reservoir, they think that the original ecosystem has definitely been affected.*

Nevertheless, the transformation of the ecological environment is an on-going process and it takes time to recover. Thus, the interviewee believed that a new ecological environment would be formed in the future, as long as appropriate guidance was provided for the future development. Until that time, he believed that the Dam would not be perceived too negatively by western tourists.

At the same time, the interviewee from Tourism Bureau raised the issue of what he referred to as the 'cultural circle' and localization. He argued that:

*South Korea and Japan are in the Chinese cultural circle. Tourists from those countries are more interested in China's culture and history, and less concerned about the ecological environment change.*

Therefore, it can be argued that, owing to similar cultural background, most people from Asian countries are less concerned about the ecological environment change resulting from the Dam's construction than people from western countries.

Both interviewees pointed out the main impacts of the Three Gorges Dam on the Three Gorges tourism have been as follows:

Firstly, the Dam itself has become a very important tourist destination and is now attracting a large number of both domestic and international visitors each year. So far, the Three Gorges Dam is the only destination in the Three Gorges Reservoir area that has received more than a million visitors. Therefore, the Dam is not only a weather vane of Three Gorges tourism, but also a landmark product. From this perspective, the

Three Gorges Dam, as an important tourist attraction, makes a significant contribution to Three Gorges tourism as a whole.

Secondly, following the construction of the Dam and the filling of the Reservoir, it has taken time to improve infrastructure in Three Gorges Reservoir area as tourism industry requires high-standard infrastructure. Various problems were experienced in the process of construction and, therefore, visitors' experience in the Three Gorges region has been directly affected. However, it was believed that with the completion of the project, the benefits would gradually outweigh the disadvantages. For example, the interviewee from the Tourism Bureau emphasized the improvement of transportation and traffic system in the Three Gorges region.

*With respect to transportation and traffic systems, such as port terminal building, road traffic, bridge construction, railway transportation, and airport construction, one-stop services of sea, land, and air transport have been formed and developed which have expanded the capacity of the Three Gorges Reservoir area, helping to enhance the quality of services and tourists' experience, and laying the foundations for the further development of new Three Gorges tourism.*

Thirdly, as a result of the construction of the Dam, there has been a significant transformation of the local environment and tourist attractions. Thus, it has become crucial and urgent to re-establish the Three Gorges as an international tourist destination and to rebuild the Three Gorges tourism. Although some of the original landscapes have been changed following the creation of the Reservoir, to some extent there have been positive benefits through, for example, the development of new landscapes, such as the formation of a huge artificial lake with a large number of islands, and the building of harbors and leisure resorts.

The information provided by the two stakeholders partially reflects the discussion in Chapter 5 with respect to the impacts of the Dam on the Three Gorges tourism. However, from the interviews, it became evident that the government has been aware of the negative impacts of the Dam on regional tourism and has made efforts to cope with the problems related to the tourism. Nevertheless, the government has not purposefully emphasized the effects of the Dam on tourism in the Three Gorges tourism. Rather, the government believes that tourism in the region benefits from the Dam and is, therefore, more concerned with developing new Three Gorges tourism. As a result, from the perspective of tourism promotion, the government is trying to avoid talking about the Dam's negative impacts on tourism, instead stressing the positive

impacts of the Dam as a new tourism attraction in order to attract more tourists to this region. For example, many news reports have been drawing attention to the many visitors who have been attracted to the Dam each year or on particular public holidays (Li 2011; Xinhua News 2005; Xinhua News 2008; Zhang 2006).

### ***7.2.1.2 Crisis management in China's tourism industry***

In Chapter 2, it was revealed that although in the past China has experienced numerous disasters and crises and has eventually coped with and recovered from them, until the SARS outbreak in 2003 limited attention had been paid in China to research into and the academic study of crisis management, particularly in the context of tourism. Therefore, the purpose of question 8 was to find out if there are specific laws or policies in China related to emergency/crisis management and, if so how these are applied to the tourism industry. More specifically, it sought to reveal whether crisis management policies and teams have been established to cope with crisis/emergency in tourist destinations such as the Three Gorges and how these operate.

The interviewee from the university stated that, because of a series of crises that have occurred over the past decade, including the SARS outbreak in 2003, the Wenchuan earthquake in 2008, and the Japanese nuclear leak in 2011, both national and local governments in China have become increasingly concerned about crisis and emergency management. China's first comprehensive emergency management law, named 'Emergency Response Law of the People's Republic of China', came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007 (China Net News 2011). This can be summarized as follows (China Net News 2011):

- The Emergency Response Law includes seven Chapters: General Provisions, Prevention and Emergency Response Preparedness, Surveillance and Warning, Emergency Response Operations and Rescue, Post-Emergency Response Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, Legal Liability, and Supplementary Provisions (China Net News 2011).
- Chapter 1 General Provisions provides an introduction, involving the purpose of establishing this Law, the definition of an emergency incident, the responsibilities of all levels of government for an emergency incident, and so forth. For example, it is explained that this Law has been created in order to prevent and reduce the occurrences of emergency incidents, control, mitigate and eliminate the serious social damage caused by emergency incidents,

standardize the emergency response activities, protect life and property, and maintain national security, public safety, environment safety and social order. Then an emergency incident refers to a natural disaster, accidental disaster, public health incident or social safety incident, which takes place by accident, has caused or might cause serious social damage and needs the adoption of emergency response measures.

- The remaining Chapters specifically stipulate, in different stages, what kind of corresponding measures should be taken by the State Council and governments at all levels to prevent of, respond to, and handle an emergency incident. For example, Chapter 2 in the Law points out that the State establishes a sound precautionary system for emergency response at the stage of prevention of emergencies. Chapter 3 stresses that the State Council shall establish a unified national information system for emergencies at the stage of monitoring and early warning. Then Chapter 4 and 5 emphasize that the people's governments, namely local governments, play a significant role in the stages of emergency handling and rescue, and of post-emergency rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Subsequently, the China National Tourism Administration announced that this law can be applied to China's tourism industry. Nevertheless, with the introduction of Tourism Law of the People's Republic of China in 2013, tourism emergency management has been formally issued in the Chapter Six Tourism Safety of the Law. For example, the Law stipulates people's governments above the county level and relevant departments under them shall take tourism safety as an important part of emergency monitoring and evaluation. In particular, people's governments above the county level shall incorporate tourism emergency management into their emergency management system, develop emergency plans, and establish a tourism emergency response mechanism (CNTA 2013).

Indeed, the national and local governments in China have established a special crisis management team to prevent potential crises or to take emergency actions when crises do occur. The interviewee from the university further explained that Hubei and Chongqing municipal governments have made a series of contingency plans to respond to potential crises. The governments and all relevant departments have established a linkage/communication mechanism. This, once a crisis occurs, all relevant departments and personnel, organized through a network platform, will be

deployed to deal with the crisis. The interviewee from Tourism Bureau provided additional information about how the emergency management system operates:

*Local governments have relevant emergency measures for tourist safety, mainly dealing with tourism security incidents. However, tourism safety involves a wide range of aspects, including traffic accidents, personal accidents, and so on. Therefore, the Tourism Bureau must keep in contact with different departments. It plays the role of coordination and overall planning. Additionally, there is a tourism safety management approach, which clearly stipulates that the Tourism Bureau must establish a Tourism Emergency Office, acting as a coordinator. In any place or attraction that has safety problems or a crisis, the Tourism Bureau will coordinate the local tourism sector, whilst other relevant departments and government seek to solve the problems efficiently. There is a specific emergency management office in Chongqing. Chongqing Tourism Bureau has established a good working relationship with the Emergency Management Office, Supervision and Administration Department, and Security Bureau.*

According to this interviewee, if there is any problem or incident, such as accidents in an hotel, traffic accidents or food poisoning, relevant departments will coordinate with the Tourism Bureau to cope with the problem or accident. However, the most common problem is traffic accidents. Therefore, Chongqing government is most concerned about this type of accident, and the Tourism Bureau pays great attention to travel insurance. The Tourism Bureau has required travel agencies to buy liability insurance, and has proposed that both international and domestic tourists should buy travel insurance. As for natural / geological disasters, the central government has invested to systems to monitor and subsequently rehabilitate those places in the Three Gorges region in which geological disasters have occurred or may occur. However, to date large-scale geological disasters that may affect tourists' experience have not occurred in or around tourist destination areas within the Three Gorges region.

In addition to the discussion above, Chapter 2 also emphasized that media communication plays a crucial role in all stages of a crisis, as it is an effective means by which the government or affected organization may convey authoritative information to the public or media. Nevertheless, in Chapter 5 it was revealed that, following the announcement by the Chinese government regarding the construction of the Three Gorges Dam in Yichang, numerous negative reports emerged about it. In particular, the Taiwanese media released a series of news reports warning about the disappearance

of the Three Gorges scenery due to the Dam, which subsequently had a major impact on the number of domestic and international tourists to this region. However, at that time, local governments took no action to stop such publicity and, as a consequence, the development of Three Gorges tourism entered a trough from which it was unable to recover for some time. Thus, it can be argued that the failure to use media communication to respond promptly to the public's concerns with respect to the alleged impacts of the Dam on the destination significantly affected the development of the Three Gorges tourism at that time (in 1992 and 1998). Given local governments' awareness of the seriousness of this problem, then the purpose of question 1 was to discover what measures, if any, were taken to improve tourists', especially international visitors', image and perceptions of the Three Gorges, and if local governments had undertaken any marketing surveys in order to identify and generate understanding of international visitors' perceptions of Three Gorges tourism.

Both interviewees accepted that there had been many negative reports about the Three Gorges Dam following the Chinese government's announcement of its construction. However, in terms of worldwide marketing of the Three Gorges, the interviewee from the university expressed the view that no matter whether the reports were positive or negative, they were a kind of marketing tool. In other words, he followed the old adage that 'all publicity is good publicity'. He also believed that there should be some positive reports about the Three Gorges Dam, as its benefits, such as flood prevention and improved navigation, cannot or should not be overlooked. Nevertheless, he also accepted it is important to recognize the dialectical views on the impact of the Dam, because there is no doubt that its construction has resulted in a number of negative impacts on the Three Gorges region, particularly to the local environment and local tourism resources. At the same time, he emphasized that the central government and the China Three Gorges Corporation have made efforts to cope with the problems brought about by the Dam. For example, through the use of the Internet, many questions related to environment, tourist attractions, and geology have been answered actively and scientifically by scientists and experts, including the issue about whether the Wenchuan earthquake was, as claimed by some, caused by the Dam. Moreover, in response to the negative publicity in the Taiwanese media, the local governments of Chongqing and Yichang also adopted a variety of ways of promoting the Three Gorges, including organizing promotional campaigns both domestically and overseas and increasing the number of advertisements about the Three Gorges on TV and Internet, and to rebuild international visitors' positive image of

the Three Gorges. As noted earlier in this thesis, as a consequence of these programmes, tourism to the Three Gorges started to recover from 2000.

Significantly, however, and of particular relevance to this thesis, the interviewee from the Chongqing Tourism Bureau revealed that the Chongqing government had undertaken survey of domestic tourists to understand their perceptions of the Three Gorges tourism, but had not yet undertaken such a survey of international visitors.

### ***7.2.1.3 Relevant policies/regulations for the Three Gorges tourism and for environmental protection in this region***

As mentioned in Section 7.2.1.1, the Three Gorges Dam has incurred several negative impacts on the Three Gorges region. Among these, environmental issue and the transformation of tourist resources, particularly of archaeological sites and natural landscapes, are directly related to tourism sector, whilst other issues, such as the displacement of local people and geological disasters, are only indirectly related to tourism sector. Owing to the reputation of the Three Gorges and the Three Gorges Dam and the impact of the administrative division on the Three Gorges tourism management (see Chapter 5), it is considered that there must be both regulations to protect this region from potential risks and a policy for Three Gorges tourism (See Questions 4, 5, 7).

The interviewee from the university stated that:

*The central government has taken a series of actions, including the promulgation of "Three Gorges Regional Tourism Development Plan" in August 2004, to develop regional tourism, to protect the environment, and to ensure the richness and stable condition of displaced people. However, there is not a separate policy for Three Gorges tourism. The existing policy has been incorporated with the policy of local economic development.*

Similarly, according to both interviewees, no specific regulations for the protection of the environment in the Three Gorges region have been produced. The interviewee from Tourism Bureau further explained:

*The State Council Three Gorges Project Construction Committee and the Land and Resources Department take responsibility for the formulation of regulations/policies of the Three Gorges region. They worked out the 'The Plan of Yangtze River Three Gorges Scenic Area', which has not been promulgated.*

*This Plan focuses on the protection of the landscape and environment of the Three Gorges region and the development of Three Gorges tourism.*

However, there is consensus that although the transformation of environment in this region has affected the supply of tourism resources, the Chinese government organized and developed the 'Three Gorges Project Follow-Up Plan' in 2009, in which four main issues with respect to the Three Gorges Reservoir were stressed: first, the ecological and environmental reconstruction and protection; second, the prevention of geological disasters; third, the richness and stable condition of migrants; and fourth, the harmonious socioeconomic development of the region. According to the interviewee from Tourism Bureau, the Chinese government is highly concerned about these issues:

*Each issue has been observed and monitored by relevant departments, such as the national Environmental Protection Agency, the Water Conservancy Bureau, and the Department of Geology. Those departments are also responsible for the establishment of relevant policies. The Tourism Bureau is only responsible for tourism policy. The central government has paid much attention to the prevention of geological disaster, as this issue has received the most attention from people.*

Nevertheless, from the interviewees' responses, it is evident that there has not been any policy/regulation for the Three Gorges tourism and the protection of environment in the Three Gorges region. Therefore, it could be argued that the 2009 Plan is not a law or regulation and therefore cannot direct or constrain development. Moreover, it is likely that delays in formulating regional tourism-related policies and regulations is likely to have an impact on the development of new Three Gorges tourism.

#### ***7.2.1.4 The relationship between local tourism policies and the policies made by the central government***

Chapter 4 introduced the development of China's tourism policy since 1919 and, in particular, noted that the formulation in June 2013 of the Tourism Law of the People's Republic of China, at last the country has its own tourism law to ensure the healthy development of its tourism industry. Therefore, the purpose of question 6 was to identify the relationship between local tourism policies and the policies made by the central government.

According to the interviewee from university, tourism policy formulated by the state is at the macro-level (and by implication strategic), whereas tourism policy developed by the local government is at the micro-level, emphasizing the details and implementation of national policy. Local governments usually consider local interests. For example, although the official requirement is to develop a unified brand for the Three Gorges, owing to the distinctive focus of the two municipal governments on their own local interests, in their specific marketing strategies both local governments separately design and explore new travel routes, and also produce separate tourism promotions and advertising.

Similarly, the interviewee from the Tourism Bureau stated the local tourism policies and regulations must be established based on the national tourism policies and regulations. Such policies and regulations established by the state are referred to as 'higher-level law' and are used to implement local regulations. Local regulations may differ from national tourism regulations in some details, but the general direction should be the same. For example, Chongqing has its own tourism regulations issued by Chongqing Municipal People's Congress in 2006. These may be considered to be local tourism regulations, but such regulations and policies must be established based on national tourism regulations. Nevertheless, some differences exist between national and local policies reflect the fact that because the establishment of local regulations must meet the requirements of local socio-economic development.

Nevertheless, the interviewee from the Tourism Bureau provided extra information about China's tourism policy and law.

*China National Tourism Administration is responsible for tourism regulations and policies, which is one of the subordinate departments of the State Council, specifically in charge of tourism. The debate on the status of tourism has always been fierce, as tourism is a very comprehensive industry and it is rather difficult to coordinate with the various tourism-related aspects. Therefore, to establish a general tourism plan or policy for China's tourism is a challenge. There was no comprehensive and systematic national tourism law over the past twenty years. The absence of tourism law did not match the rapid development of tourism. The formulation of Tourism Laws is a major event, which can encourage the healthy and rapid development of China's tourism industry. Since tourism involves a wide range of fields, such as hotels, environment, water, religion and so on, the establishment of Tourism Laws also benefits the*

*development of other industries and fields. Sooner or later, local tourism laws, regulations and policies need to be revised according to China Tourism Laws.*

As discussed in Chapter 4, before the promulgation of Tourism Laws, the most common regulation within the field of tourism promulgated by the State Council was the 'Travel Agency Regulations', as travel agents play an essential role in the tourism industry. This regulation has been established for a long time and is revised regularly. However, it is considered that the Travel Agency Regulations cannot replace tourism laws. As a result, the promulgation of Tourism Laws will further standardize other tourism-related policies and regulations.

#### **7.2.1.5 Strategic planning and actions taken for the development of new Three Gorges tourism**

As mentioned in Chapter 5, various strategic plans have been put forward to support the development of new Three Gorges tourism.

Both interviewees stressed that although many towns have been flooded and the original landscapes of Three Gorges have been transformed, the Chinese government introduced 'The Development Planning of the Three Gorges Regional Tourism' in 2002 to suggest how to protect existing tourist attractions and to exploit new attractions. In 2008, Hubei Province proposed 'The Planning of Hubei Province Yangtze Three Gorges International Destination', and Chongqing also introduced a series of plans for the development of new Three Gorges tourism. The interviewee from university added that governments have already realized the importance of the development of leisure tourism in this region, as it can be developed sustainably. As a result, local governments are making efforts to develop leisure tourism in this region (more detail can be found in Chapter 5).

All kinds of planning indicate that both central government and local governments have the willingness and determination to rebuild the Three Gorges tourism and eventually to develop the Three Gorges into an international tourism destination. However, it is evident that, owing to the division of administration, the governments of two regions still find it difficult to reach a consensus on the issue of the exploitation and development of tourist attractions.

In addition to the diversity of plans for the development of tourist attractions and the regional economy, cruise ship tourism is also considered as an important element the development of new Three Gorges tourism, particularly for Three Gorges inbound tourism (see Chapters 4 and 5). The interviewee from the university stated that, in the Three Gorges Reservoir area, cruise ships are not only a type of transport but also a kind of tourism product. However, cruise ship is not the only mode of transportation for domestic visitors. Alternatively, they can choose other modes of transport, such as by train (the fastest form of transport in the region), bus or private car bus. The fastest mode of transportation in the region is rail. However, cruise ship is the best choice for international visitors. Therefore, the government has sought to further improve the quality of cruise ships by eliminating a number of low-end cruise ships, retaining existing mid-end cruise ships, and further developing the supply of high-end cruise ships which can provide international visitors with special experience. Furthermore, the interviewee suggested that jet boats should also be developed in order to meet the different needs of tourists. Nowadays, local government is trying to develop yacht clubs, which will allow tourists to have a different experience.

The interviewee from the Tourism Bureau provided extra information about who is responsible for the development of cruise ships.

*The development in the number of cruise ship must be submitted to local government for approval, but the operation right has to be audited by both the Ministry of Transportation and the cruise company.*

Besides proposing different kinds of plans, Chapter 5 also mentioned that local governments, Chongqing Municipality and Hubei Province, have jointly cooperated to develop the new Three Gorges tourism. Thus, Question 9 sought to identify what the challenges face their cooperation.

The interviewee from the university stated this cooperation was official-level cooperation, including jointly organizing 'Yangtze River Three Gorges International Tourism Festival', the integrated management of the market in the Three Gorges Reservoir area, the improvement of two regions' transportation and traffic systems, and holding promotional campaigns at home and abroad. However, there is still a discrepancy owing to local interests, in particular with respect to some business investments where there have been some contradictions due to the difference of interests.

The interviewee from the Tourism Bureau agreed and, by way of further illustration, discussed how Wanzhou in Chongqing Municipality and Yichang in Hubei Province alternately hold a 'Yangtze River Three Gorges Tourism Festival' once a year. Other forms of cooperation also include the improvement of road traffic and marketing promotions. However, some problems exist with regards to the misallocation of funds between these two regions. Therefore, cooperation between the municipalities remains, in some respects, a challenge, not least because of different administrative management systems.

#### ***7.2.1.6 Interim summary***

Overall, the two key stakeholders provided important and comprehensive information related to local and central governments' attitude about how to develop new Three Gorges tourism. The findings showed that several main actions have been taken for the redevelopment of the Three Gorges tourism based on the cooperation of two governments, Chongqing Municipality and Hubei Province, including the protection of environment in the Three Gorges region, the market promotion of the new Three Gorges, the improvement of local infrastructure, the development of tourism crisis management, and so forth. Nevertheless, the findings also revealed that the cooperation of the two local governments is still problematic and challenging due to different administrative management systems with different interests. In addition, the formulation of the development strategy of the Three Gorges tourism lacks market research, particularly market surveys of international visitors. Therefore, it was decided to conduct interviews with international visitors in order to better understand their perception of the Three Gorges and the Dam, thereby potentially benefitting the development of tourism in the region. As a result, semi-structured interviews with nine international visitors were also conducted during the first stage of the research.

#### **7.2.2 The outcomes from interviews with nine international visitors**

In addition to the interviews with two key stakeholders discussed in the preceding section, during the scoping (Stage One) element of the research nine international visitors were also interviewed during the preliminary field work in April 2011. The purpose of these interviews, as discussed in Chapter 6, was to elicit preliminary knowledge and understanding of international visitors' perceptions of China in general

and tourism to the Three Gorges in particular as a means of establishing a baseline for the subsequent research at Stage Two.

All nine international visitors were interviewed individually on a cruise ship after they had completed their Three Gorges tour. They were from the U.K., Australia, New Zealand and Switzerland, respectively (see Table 7.2). Among them, SR1 and SR2, SR3 and SR4, and SR6 and SR7 were three couples. Although they were interviewed individually, there remains the possibility that their answers to some particular questions might therefore be similar or the same. All interviewees' answers were recorded through the use of a digital voice recorder. Following the interviews, answers from each interviewee were transcribed word for word from the voice recorder, and classified according to the interview questions. Each interviewee was also given a code from SR1 to SR9 in the transcript (see Table 7.2). SR identifies that these interviews were taken for the scoping research.

**Table 7.2** Coding interviewees

Interviewees' code	Nationality
SR1	Australian
SR2	Australian
SR3	British
SR4	British
SR5	New Zealander
SR6	Swiss
SR7	Swiss
SR8	British
SR9	Australian

The nine interviews transcribed from Stage One – the scoping research – formed the basis for the initial identification of the emerging narrative themes. Table 7.3 overleaf provides an example of the key themes emerging from the interviews in the Stage One.

**Table 7.3** An example of initial themes from the interviewee's text

1) Read and re-read the original transcript	2) Main narratives emerging from the text in relation to interview questions
Can you explain why you chose China as a destination?	<p><b>Different culture/history or natural sceneries:</b> We wanted to experience different culture...The Three Gorges definitely is one of destinations we want to visit, also the landscapes in Yangshuo, Yellow Mountain, pandas, and Shanghai. (SR3 and SR4 – a couple)</p> <p><b>Returning visitor wished to explore new destinations in China:</b> I was in Shanghai in October 2010 for EXPO. I loved it so much. So I am back in China this time to go on the Yangtze, see the sites, looking forward to seeing pandas, and also Beijing. (SR5)</p>
Can you describe the differences between your image of China and your real experience in this country?	<p><b>The friendliness of Chinese people:</b> We didn't expect that Chinese people would like to talk to us because of language barrier. But after arrival, we felt people were really friendly and tried to use various ways to communicate with us. (SR1 and SR2 – a couple)</p> <p><b>Environmental problems:</b> We were concerned about environmental problems in China, as we often heard this issue from our national media. However, after our arrival, we saw the sky was blue, and the streets in the city were nice and clean. (SR3 and SR4 – a couple)</p> <p><b>The development of economy and education:</b> I thought most people in China were poor and still living in rural areas. Nevertheless, I have had to change my mind. Their clothes are fashionable and westernized. There are lots of modern buildings. Night life is also colorful. (SR8)</p> <p>I was just surprised that there were more and more Chinese people speaking English, particularly in big cities. I shouldn't be too worried about the language barrier in this country. (SR9)</p>
Can you describe if you heard of some negative news about the TGD before your travel to this region, and if you think the news told you the truth?	<p><b>Did not hear any negative news:</b> I did not hear any negative news about the TGD. (SR1, SR2 and SR8)</p> <p><b>Heard some negative news (attitude of neutrality):</b> The news was from Television, Internet and newspapers, which mentioned the negative and positive impacts of the Dam. My government said it's a unique project. For some negative news, I do not think to build a huge dam is a bad thing, as I believe that there will be a new Three Gorges. So I decided to go to the TG and have a look the Dam. (SR7)</p>
Can you describe what was/were your major concern(s) during your	<p><b>Environmental issues:</b> during my travel, I noticed that water pollution is pretty serious. So I wish that local</p>

<p>travel in the Three Gorges region?</p>	<p>government could make efforts to protect environment, particularly the river, as people living along the river need clean water to drink. (SR6)</p> <p><b>The status quo of local people's relocation:</b> One thing that was horrified us is that a tour guide told us that all local people were really satisfied with their relocation and now they are enjoying their new life. We just thought he didn't tell us the real story and perhaps tried to amuse us...We understand that the Chinese government has made great efforts with respect to local people's relocation, living conditions, and opportunities of employment. So we would like to know the real story... (SR3 and SR4 – a couple)</p> <p><b>Disappeared historical sites:</b> Before my travels, I heard there were lots of coffins in this region...But there were only a few available in the cliff...I was told due to the dam, some coffins had to be moved to the local museum... (SR8)</p> <p><b>The functions of the Dam:</b> I am concerned about the real functions of the Dam, as we heard that the dam only produces 3% of energy power each year. I am aware that the main function of the dam is to protect people from floods, but still expect it can make more of a contribution to this country. (SR5)</p>
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Thematic analysis plays a very important role in eliciting the key themes that were emerging from the primary data. In order to facilitate the analysis of the initial transcribed data, for each question, including those questions related to the key themes, interviewees' opinions and thoughts were summarized and then categorized with a specific code.

A list of interview questions has been provided as follows (see Table 7.4 overleaf) prior to the analysis and discussion:

**Table 7.4** Interview questions for international visitors

Question No.	Questions
1	Why did you choose China as a destination?
2	What was your image of China before you travelled here?
3	What was your first impression of China after your arrival?
4	Is there any difference between your image of China and your real experience in China? If 'Yes', please tell me what the differences are.
5	Have you been the TG before? If 'Yes', when? What was your impression of the TG? If 'No', what was your image of the TG before your arrival?
6	Why did you choose the TG as a part of your destinations?
7	Did you hear any negative news about the TGD before your travel to this region? Where did you hear about it? Do you think the news told you the truth? Why?
8	Have you visited the TGD this time? If 'Yes', what is your perception of the Dam? If 'No', could you please tell me the reason why you didn't visit the Dam?
9	During your travel in this region, what was/were your major concern(s)? And why do you think it is important to you?
10	Do you enjoy your travel in the TG region? Which part of the travel did you enjoy most?
11	Could you please give some recommendations, which you think can improve the development of the Three Gorges Tourism?

### 7.2.2.1 International visitors' perception of China

When interviewees were asked why they chose China as a destination, their answers were, perhaps unsurprisingly, very similar: because of the country's history and culture (see Table 7.5).

**Table 7.5** Summarized and coded answers for interview Question 1

Interviewee	Summarized and coded answers
SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4, SR6, SR7, SR8, SR9	Code A – Culture and history
SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4, SR6, SR7	Code B – Natural landscape
SR5	Code C – Returned visitor, wish to explore other destinations in China
SR7	Code D – Recommended by friends or relatives

As an interviewee from the U.K. (SR1) described:

*I and my husband want to experience a different culture. We researched very carefully all the different trips, including some trips provided by Chinese companies. I wrote a list for all things, including the 'must have' and 'must be' things.*

Nevertheless, some interviewees also provided other reasons, such as wanting to see beautiful scenery, and being recommended by relatives. To take some examples, a couple from Australia explained that they had come to China due to experience its culture and its beautiful scenery. At first, they had no idea about which places they should visit. Consequently, they undertook considerable research, including collecting all the information they wanted from brochures and leaflets, and finding out about the touristic highlights of China. After doing so, they realized that no single planned tour including everything they could see. Since they were concerned about how much they could experience within a given time limit, they eventually chose a 27-day trip, offered by a travel agent in Australia, which included all the highlights they wished to visit.

There was only one interviewee (SR5) who said he had been to China before and this time he had wanted to explore new destinations in China.

*I was in Shanghai in October 2010 for EXPO. I loved it so much. So I am back to China to go on the Yangtze trip, and looking forward to seeing pandas and also going to Beijing.*

Question 2 the sought to explore the international visitors' image of China prior to their trip. The majority admitted that their pre-image of China was somewhat negative, considering it to be a large developing country with a large population and serious pollution, and that most Chinese people are still living in rural areas and some would not be very friendly. There was only one interviewee from Switzerland (SR7) who stated that he had had a positive pre-image of China (see Table 7.6 overleaf):

*I got know China from my grandparents. It was in about the 1980s. They travelled to China and took lots of pictures. After coming back to my country, they showed me those pictures. It was really impressive.*

The statement above indicates that if the formation of a destination image is based on someone's recommendation, the image is more likely to be positive.

**Table 7.6** Interviewees' image of China

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Summarized and coded answers</b>
SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4, SR5, SR8	Code A – large population
SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4, SR5,	Code B – Chinese people (poor, unfriendly, living in rural areas)
SR6, SR9	Code C – developing country
SR3, SR4, SR5,	Code D – environmental pollution
SR7	Code E – had a good image of China from relatives

As discussed in Chapter 3, people's image of a destination can to some extent affect their destination choice. Nevertheless, it was also identified that people's first impression of a destination following their arrival is likely to change that image. That is, they might reconsider their impression of the place. Therefore, interviewees were asked to describe their first impression of China after their arrival (Question 3). Most interviewees had to admit that Chinese people were very friendly. In addition, they realized that China is a fast developing country with modern cities and clean streets although along with the rapid development of the economy, there has been a variety of negative impacts, including air pollution, and increasingly dense populations in the big cities (see Table 7.7).

**Table 7.7** Interviewees' first impression of China

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Summarized and coded answers</b>
SR8	Code A – crowded city
SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4, SR5, SR6, SR7, SR9	Code B – friendly people
SR5, SR6, SR7, SR8	Code C – rapid development of the country
SR3, SR4, SR8	Code D – environmental pollution, such as air pollution
SR4	Code E – urban planning and construction

Question 4 allowed the interviewees to compare their image of China prior to their arrival with their first impression of China after their arrival. Most of them strongly felt that there were big differences between their preconceptions of China and their real

experience of the country, apart from the air pollution. In particular, they realized that China was a fast developing country; they found the cities looked clean and modern, and people were very friendly to them.

*We didn't expect that Chinese people would like to talk to us because of language barrier. But after we arrived, we felt people were really friendly and tried to communicate with us in various ways (SR1).*

Another interviewee (SR4) stressed that he had very negative image of China in particular because of environmental issues which were often reported in his country's media. After his arrival, he could see the sky was grey due to air pollution. However, urban planning and construction left a deep and positive impression on him.

Nevertheless, a couple from Switzerland (SR6 and SR7) stated that their initial image of China was verified by their first impression of the country on arrival: *those big cities, like Shanghai and Beijing, are very modern. China is developing rapidly.*

As discussed in Chapter 3, a tourist's image of a country may be formed by a variety of factors and influences, including a direct experience of the country, outside sources of information, such as travel agent, tourism guide books and word of mouth, and past experiences. Indeed, there are numerous factors that may contribute towards a country's image, some playing a crucial role, such as social and cultural richness, economic structure, technical developments, the globalization of business, and the history of the country.

Additionally, the interviews with the international visitors revealed that many were the first time visitors to China. Reflecting the discussion in Chapter 3, for these western tourists, China's image in terms of the economy remains negative; in contrast, however, as a tourist destination China is considered very attractive to western people due to its history and culture.

#### **7.2.2.2 International visitors' perception of Three Gorges**

As discussed in Chapter 3, people's perception of a country may be a significant influence on their destination choice. It was suggested that many international visitors would like to visit China because they are interested in its long history and culture and, as noted in the previous section, this was verified by the interviewees. Consequently, a number of destinations in China, such as Beijing and Xi'an, which are fundamental to history and culture of China, have become the most popular places visited by

international visitors. Therefore, for this research it was important to explore why these international visitors chose the Three Gorges as one of their destinations.

All interviewees stated this was the first time they had visited the Three Gorges. Therefore, they did not have much of an image of the Three Gorges.

In contrast to their reasons for wanting to visit China more generally (that is, its history and culture), however, most explained that they had chosen to visit the Three Gorges because of recommendations from either travel agents or their friends and families (see Table 7.8).

**Table 7.8** Reasons for visiting the Three Gorges

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Summarized and coded answers</b>
SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4, SR5, SR6, SR9	Code A – recommended by travel agents/friends and relatives
SR8	Code B – because of beautiful scenery and hanging coffins
SR7	Code C – because of the positive image of Yangtze River
SR1, SR3	Code D – because of the Dam

As a result of such word-of-mouth recommendations, interviewees' pre-image of the Three Gorges was positive; particularly, they knew the Three Gorges were famous for the natural scenery and the Three Gorges Dam. To give some examples, one of interviewees from New Zealand (SR5) mentioned that his previous travel experience in Shanghai had been really good; therefore, he had wanted to return to China to spend more time in and see more of the country. When he went back to New Zealand, he saw an offer for a 17-day trip to China, which included the Three Gorges in the itinerary. Additionally, one of his best friends who had previously visited the Three Gorges, albeit some thirty years ago, retained strong memories of that trip and so had strongly recommended Yangtze Three Gorges. Therefore, this interviewee selected the tour which included the Three Gorges in the itinerary. Another interviewee (SR9) admitted that prior to booking their tour of China, she did not have much knowledge, nor indeed an image, of the Three Gorges. However, having seen pictures of the Three Gorges in magazines and travel brochures, she thought it would be worthwhile visiting for the scenery and wildlife. Thus, she decided to visit the Three Gorges as one of her destinations in China.

Nevertheless, besides recommendation, two interviewees (SR1 and SR3) indicated that they chose Three Gorges also because of the Dam. One of them (SR1) said that some articles about the construction of the Three Gorges Dam published in newspapers stimulated his desire to see the world's largest Dam. Therefore, he decided to visit the Three Gorges. A female interviewee (SR3) from the U.K. stressed two reasons underpinning her to visit the Three Gorges. One was related to the opportunity to experience the natural scenery of the Three Gorges, the other was to see the impact of the Three Gorges Dam.

*My uncle has been the Three Gorges before, in about 1993. He showed me the pictures of the Three Gorges. It looked beautiful. When he heard the news about the Three Gorges Dam, he was so worried about the Three Gorges' scenery and thought the Dam would completely ruin the spectacularity of the Three Gorges. Therefore, there are two reasons why I chose the Three Gorges as one of destinations: firstly, I still want to see this beautiful place. Secondly, I want to witness the changes of the Three Gorges region after the construction of the Dam.*

In Chapter 3, it was observed that, typically, two groups of factors have been revealed as significant in the tourism demand process, namely, push and pull factors. That is, push factors motivate people to travel in the first place, but pull factors determine actual destination choice. The findings from the interviews confirm the importance of this role played by pull factors in guiding the choice of a specific destination. That is, for most interviewees, it was the tangible features of the Three Gorges, particularly the natural scenery but also, for some, the Dam, that encouraged them to choose the Three Gorges as one of destinations in their China tour. However, in contrast to the discussion in Chapter 3, the findings reveal that external sources of information, particularly word-of-mouth and travel agents, were the most significant factors affecting the formation of destination image and the choice of the destination.

During their trip, most of the international visitors enjoyed the natural scenery of Three Gorges, particularly Wuxia Gorge and the Lesser Three Gorges (see Table 7.9 overleaf). For example, one of interviewees (SR3) said that prior to visiting the Three Gorges, she had low expectations as she thought the scenery of the Three Gorges might have been degraded by the Dam and Reservoir. However, to her surprise, she found the landscape and scenery to be spectacular and, as a consequence, realized that the image created by information she received from the media was completely wrong.

More generally, most interviewees stated that they had enjoyed their trip in the Three Gorges region, including seeing natural scenery, experiencing local food and, in particular, the opportunity to see the Three Gorges Dam (see also the following section, 7.2.2.3).

*The Dam was an amazing project and really impressive. Yesterday, we disembarked. Our tour guide let us take a bus to the top of a hill and overlook the whole town and river view. It was a nice part we never had before. So we were excited. And then tour guide introduced some local food to us. We tried and enjoyed local food very much. We also enjoy cruising on the Yangtze Three Gorges and looking at the natural scenery. (SR6 and SR7)*

However, many felt it was a pity that they had no time to enjoy more shore excursions, such as visiting places where ethnic minorities live and understanding their customs, going to more historical heritage sites, and so on.

**Table 7.9** The parts interviewees enjoyed most

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Enjoyed most</b>
SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4, SR5, SR6, SR7, SR8, SR9	Code A1 – natural scenery
SR2	Code B – friendly local people
SR5, SR6, SR7, SR9	Code C – Three Gorges Dam
SR7	Code D – local food
SR8	Code E – historical attractions

### **7.2.2.3 International visitors' perception of the Three Gorges Dam**

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 6, the construction of the Three Gorges Dam attracted much attention around the world, but particularly from western media, with the negative impacts of the Dam being reported much more than its positive impacts. Therefore, one aim of the scoping research was to exploring the extent to which international visitors were aware of the negative reports about the Three Gorges Dam before they visited the region, whether they were concerned about these negative reports, and what their perceptions of the Three Gorges Dam were.

Just four of the nine interviewees said that they were aware of some negative reports about the Three Gorges Dam before they travelled to the region. These reports were mainly from families, television programmes, the Internet and from newspapers. One of them (SR7) considered that the news reports objectively told the truth from both a negative and positive perspective; other (SR3, SR4), however, considered that they partially told the truth. Nevertheless, they had developed their own perception of the Three Gorges Dam:

*I think the news partially told the truth, like the ecological damage in this region, environmental impact of the Dam on the Three Gorges region. But I don't think the attraction of the Three Gorges has been ruined. I feel lucky as I still see the spectacular scenery in the Three Gorges region. (SR4)*

*The news mentioned the negative and positive impacts of the Dam. My government said it's a unique project. For some negative news, I do not think building a huge Dam is a bad thing, as I believe that there will be a new Three Gorges. This is why I eventually decided to go to the Three Gorges and have a look the Dam. (SR7)*

One of interviewees (SR9) mentioned she heard from news reports that the project was a natural disaster. However, though she thought the issue itself was interesting, she admitted that she had not done enough research to understand whether or not this was the case.

Thus, fewer than half of the international visitors interviewed had been aware of the negative news reports about the Three Gorges Dam. For them their image and perception of the Three Gorges Dam was to a great extent formed and affected by the media, in contrast to the way in which they had developed their images of the Three Gorges more generally.

However, irrespective of whether or not they had heard the negative reports about Three Gorges Dam, almost all interviewees, apart from one (SR8) who had been sick on that date, still visited the Dam site, as they were curious to see the world's largest Dam. They described their impression of the Dam after visiting the Dam site, and also talked about the function of the Dam, the ship locks and the impact of the Dam on local residents (see Table 7.10). For example, when they had seen the Dam, they used some words to express their feeling about it: huge (SR1, SR2, SR4), amazing (SR6, SR7), incredible (SR3) and impressive (SR5, SR9). In particular, one of them (SR9) stated that she was excited to see the ship locks in action. She thought the Dam was

an example of very impressive engineering. Some of them stated that they were aware of the Dam's main function in protecting people from flooding each year, but were less enthusiastic about its contribution to electricity generation, implying that the environmental costs of the Dam's construction could be justified on the basis of preventing large scale natural disasters (flooding), but less so on the basis of power generation which could be achieved by other means.

With regard to the Dam site, some of interviewees rated their experience of it highly. For example, one of interviewees (SR1) explained that the Visitor Centre provided a large model of the Dam to give visitors an initial overview of the whole scheme, and that it was really helpful. Another interviewee (SR5) praised the viewing areas, saying that were well organized and laid out.

On the whole, interviewees had a positive impression of the Dam and the Dam site. Nevertheless, one of interviewees was still concerned about the impact of the Dam on local people.

*I spent a few hours looking around the Dam site and thought this is a huge technical undertaking. Nevertheless, the Dam reminds me of millions of relocated people. I just wonder if they are satisfied with their new life in the new place. (SR2)*

**Table 7.10** Interviewees' perception of the Dam

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Perceptions related to the Dam</b>
SR1, SR2, SR3, SR5	Code A – the Dam site, including visitor centre and surrounding area
SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4, SR5, SR6, SR7, SR9	Code B – the Dam itself (eg. size)
SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4, SR5	Code C – the functions of the Dam
SR1, SR3, SR4, SR6, SR7, SR9	Code D – the ship locks
SR2	Code E – the negative impact of the dam

#### **7.2.2.4 International visitors' major concerns about the Three Gorges region**

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 6, and according to the outcomes of the interviews

with key stakeholders (see Section 7.2.1.1 above), it is western nations and media that are considered to be most concerned about the Dam's negative impacts on the Three Gorges region, including environment, the living conditions of displaced people, wildlife and historical attractions, and geological disasters.

Findings from the interviews with nine international visitors revealed that, apart from geological disasters, international visitors were indeed most concerned about the contribution of the Dam, environmental issues, local people's job, living conditions of relocated people, and the damage brought by the Dam to wildlife and historical sites in the region (see Table 7.11).

**Table 7.11** Interviewees' major concern during their travel in this region

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Major concern(s)</b>
SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4	Code A – local people's jobs, e.g. planting tobacco
SR5, SR6, SR7	Code B – environmental pollution, e.g. air pollution, water pollution
SR3, SR4, SR6, SR7	Code C – living conditions of relocated people
SR1, SR2, SR3, SR4, SR5	Code D – the contribution of the Dam
SR8, SR9	Code E – the impact of the Dam, e.g. disappeared historical sites, wildlife

For example, one of interviewees was disappointed as she did not see much wildlife there during her visit, even though the travel brochure she had used promised that the Three Gorges area had much wildlife to offer. Thus, she complained that the real experience was inconsistent with what was promoted. Others were concerned about the real functions of the Dam because, during their excursion to the Dam, they were informed that the Dam only produces 3% of the country's energy needs each year. Given the scale and impact of the Dam, they had expected it to make more of a contribution.

Additionally, two of interviewees were concerned about disappearance of historical sites. They explained that before their travel, they heard there would be lots of coffins to see; indeed, they had expected to see numerous hanging coffins. However, there were only a few to be seen in the cliff. They were told that some coffins had to be moved to the local museum owing to the rise in water levels, and thought it was a shame that those coffins were no longer in their original location.

Some interviewees talked about environmental issues, the relocation of local people, and wildlife (fish). In particular, they were worried about smoking in this country, as when they visited Lesser Three Gorges a tour guide told them that in this region some people made a living by planting tobacco. They were surprised and questioned why those people did not plant vegetables instead of tobacco, mentioning that in Australian, smoking has been banned in public places. However, they heard that Chinese government still promoted tobacco and most people smoked. Thus, they wondered if it was true that millions of Chinese people died each year because of lung cancer. They thought smoking was not just about people's lives, but also about environmental pollution. Moreover, a couple from Switzerland noticed that water pollution was serious on the Yangtze River. Therefore, they suggested that local government should make efforts to protect the river not only for local people but also for tourists' travel experience.

Furthermore, some interviewees were concerned about local people's living conditions. During their visit to the region, a tour guide from Wushan had told them that local people were really satisfied with their relocation and enjoying their new life. However, they were not convinced that the tour guide had told them the real story and perhaps had tried to allay any concerns they might have.

*He may be trained what he should say and what he shouldn't say to those international visitors. But things he told us seem too straightforward and subjective. We understand that the Chinese government has made great efforts with local people's relocation, living conditions, and opportunities of employment. So we would like to know the real story, but it seems difficult to get right answer. (SR3)*

*When local tour guide told us that all relocated people have happier lives, I don't believe that. Maybe most of people were happy to be moved to new apartment and their lives are getting better, but more or less, some people were unhappy to be relocated. (SR6)*

#### **7.2.2.5 Recommendations for the development of new Three Gorges tourism**

When international visitors were encouraged to provide some recommendations for the improvement of the Three Gorges tourism, most of them could not give any specific advice simply because they were not aware of how the site has evolved to what it is today. Nevertheless, one of interviewees (SR7) mentioned that he had noted that the

river had been heavily polluted. Therefore, he suggested that it needs to be cleaned efficiently. Some interviewees (SR1, SR4 and SR6) expressed their opinion as follows:

*I would like to suggest providing more activities on the board. Also during the travel, more free pictures and information about how the Three Gorges looked like before and after the construction of the Dam should be provided to international visitors. More distinctive optional excursions should be provided so tourists have chance to talk to local people and better understand local customs.*

*In the Lesser Three Gorges region, some great activities (adventure tourism), like hiking, should be explored, due to its geological characteristics. This may attract more young people from other countries to visit this area. Such exploration can optimize the utilization of Three Gorges tourism resources.*

As shown above, the first suggestion involves three aspects: first, entertainment on the cruise ship; second, free pictures for international visitors, allowing them to make a comparison between the past and present Three Gorges and to strengthen their impression of the region; third, distinctive optional excursions. The second suggestion focused on the exploitation of activities in the Three Gorges region.

#### **7.2.2.6 Interim summary**

To conclude, this section has revealed that all interviewees held a positive image of China and the Three Gorges. In general, they enjoyed their trip in China, including the Three Gorges. With regards to the negative impacts of the Three Gorges Dam, fewer than half of interviewees said they been aware of negative reports about the Dam. Nevertheless, their attitude to the dam was objective. Therefore, most of interviewees chose to visit the Dam and had a positive impression of it following their visit. Some interviewees were interested in Three Gorges culture and history and local customs. However, some factors limited their experience in this respect, such as flooded or relocated historical and cultural sites due to water storage in the Three Gorges Reservoir area, and tight itinerary. During their travel in the Three Gorge region, they were concerned about environmental and wildlife protection, the quality of life of relocated people, and the transformation and preservation of historical sites.

More in-depth discussion are to be found in Section 7.3, as the above findings are from the scoping research, which can only be treated as preliminary data and foundation to serve the further analysis and discussion of the Stage two.

## **7.3 The outcomes of stage two**

### **7.3.1 Introduction**

Having reviewing the outcomes from the Stage One, it was decided to conduct both an on-site survey and more semi-structured interviews with international visitors, in order to further develop the breadth and depth of understanding of international visitors' attitude of China, the Three Gorges and the Dam. Moreover, an unstructured interview with an experienced tour guide was also considered as indirect means of developing knowledge of international visitors' perceptions. The combination of these three methods formed a triangulation effect, revealing visitors' perceptions from different perspectives.

Therefore, the analysis of the outcomes of Stage Two can be divided into three sections. The first section explores the outcomes from the questionnaire survey of international visitors (quantitative research). A comprehensive understanding of international visitors' perceptions of China, the Three Gorges and the Dam can be generated due to a good cultural mix. The second section focuses on the outcomes from the interviews of international visitors (qualitative research), particularly focusing on the cultural group from the USA. It demonstrates the influence of cultural proximity on people's attitude toward the Three Gorges Dam and their travel experience. Finally, the third section considers the outcomes of the interview with the 'cultural broker' – the tour guide – to conclude international visitors' perception of China and the Three Gorges tourism, particularly of the Dam.

### **7.3.2 First section: analysis and discussion of findings from the questionnaire survey**

As discussed in Chapter 6, the questionnaire survey was undertaken between September and October 2012. Since the visitors completed the survey on site, namely on four cruise ships, the number of respondents was limited to 182. Nevertheless, the response rate was relatively higher than in mail surveys and this technique was less expensive than personal interviews or telephone surveys. The survey questions (see

Appendix 4) stressed three key themes: international visitors' image and impression of China, Three Gorges and the Three Gorges Dam, their perceptions of the negative impacts of the Dam, and their main concerns during their trip in the Three Gorges region. However, differing from interviews, the survey also elicited other information, including purpose of trip, time spent in the area, and the age and origin of the visitor.

### 7.3.2.1 General information about respondents

The outcome of the Part 4 of the questionnaire survey is considered at the beginning of this analysis as it sought general information about the respondents. The understanding of respondents' characteristics from the outset provides a foundation and framework for further analysis and discussion of subsequent issues. Therefore, this section commences with an analysis of respondents' nationality, gender, age and their occupation, as follows.

- Nationality

According to Table 7.12, the majority of the survey respondents were from Europe (46.7%), including the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Germany and France, and from the Americas (35.7%), specifically Canada, and the USA. The remainder were from Asia (8.8%), Australia and Oceania (7.7%), and Africa (1.1%). Therefore, it can be said that the main international source markets, apart from Asia, for the Three Gorges are Europe and the Americas, reflecting the data discussed in Chapter 5.

**Table 7.12** Survey respondents by nationality

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Africa	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
The Americas	65	35.7	35.7	36.8
Asia	16	8.8	8.8	45.6
Australia and Oceania	14	7.7	7.7	53.3
Europe	85	46.7	46.7	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

- Gender and Age

According to the survey, of the 182 respondents, 93 were male and 89 were female (see Table 7.13). These figures are relatively average. Therefore, it can be inferred that many couples participated in the survey.

**Table 7.13 Gender**

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Male	93	51.1	51.1	51.1
Female	89	48.9	48.9	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Table 7.14 reveals that 38.5% of respondents filled in the survey were over 60-year old and 25.3% were between 20 and 29-year old. 16.5 % of respondents were aged 50-59. It is noticeable that most respondents were from over 60-years old age group which suggested that they were more likely to be retired, hence enjoying more choices for travel from the perspective of time and space.

**Table 7.14 Age**

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Under 20	6	3.3	3.3	3.3
20-29	46	25.3	25.3	28.6
30-39	16	8.8	8.8	37.4
40-49	14	7.7	7.7	45.1
50-59	30	16.5	16.5	61.5
Over 60	70	38.5	38.5	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

- Occupation

Indeed, in the survey, of the 182 respondents, the majority were retired, though this is not surprising given their age profiles as noted above. Other respondents' occupations can be summarized as students, teachers, bank officer, sales assistant, civil servant, engineer, professor, nurse, manager and so forth.

### ***7.3.2.2 International visitors' perception of China***

The purpose of Part 1 of the questionnaire survey was to explore international visitors' image and first impressions of China. As discussed in Chapter 3, tourists' perceptions of a country can to some extent affect their destination choice. Therefore, it was necessary to identify international visitors' perceptions of China at the beginning of the survey.

- The analysis of the outcomes of Question 1

The first question in Part 1 asked if this is their first to visit China. Then the answer was divided into two groups. Of the 182 international visitors participating in the survey, 131, or approximately 72%, stated that it was their first visit to China, whilst 51 respondents had previously visited the country (Table 7.15). It is obvious that the majority of international visitors have not been to China before, which is understandable and can be explained as follows:

Firstly, people need more time and money for a long-haul journey.

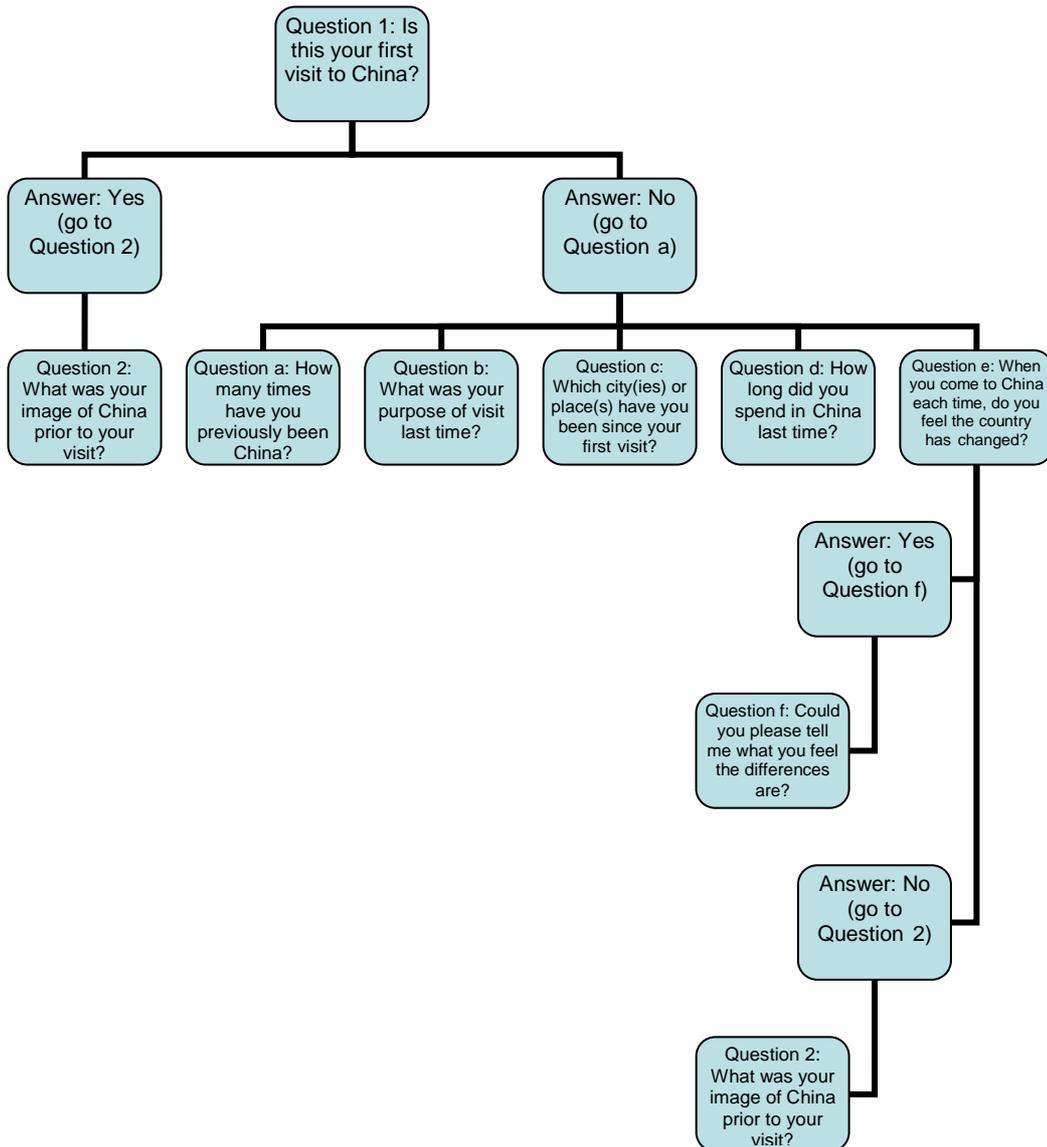
And secondly, as discussed in Chapter 3, from the perspective of western people, China is a completely different country, especially from political, economic, cultural and language perspectives. As a result, some people might find it difficult to choose to China as a destination given the difficulties and differences they imagine they might encounter.

**Table 7.15** First question of the survey: Is this your first visit to China?

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Yes (go to Q. 8)	131	72.0	72.0	72.0
No (go to Q. 2)	51	28.0	28.0	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

According to the results above, 51 respondents indicated that they had been to China before. Therefore, these respondents were asked additional questions in order to provide more details about their experiences in this country (see Figure 7.1 overleaf).

**Figure 7.1** The design of question 1 in the survey



Question a. asked how many times they had previously been China. 47 out of 51 respondents provided an answer (see Table 7.16 overleaf). Among these 47 respondents, seventeen, or 36.2%, of international visitors surveyed had been to China twice before; twelve (25.5%) have already been to China on three previous occasions whilst eighteen (38.3%) indicated that they were experienced tourists to China, having visited the country four or more times in the past.

**Table 7.16** How many times have you previously been China?

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
2	17	33.3	36.2	36.2
3	12	23.5	25.5	61.7
4+	18	35.3	38.3	100.0
Total	47	92.1	100.0	
Missing System	4	7.9		
Total	51	100.0		

When further asked the purpose of visiting China last time (Question b.), 49 out of 51 respondents answered this question (see Table 7.17). Among 49 respondents, more than half, 51%, of respondents said that the last time they visited China was as a leisure tourist. Business was the stated purpose of 24.5% of respondents (indicating that business travel may motivate subsequent leisure/holiday trips), whilst 12.2% had travelled to China previously for the purpose of study and 10.2% had been visiting their friends and relatives. Thus, even though the purpose of many was different, such as business travelers, international students and those who visited China for visiting friends/relatives, they could also be considered also be potential leisure tourists.

**Table 7.17** What was your purpose of visit last time?

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Study	6	11.8	12.2	12.2
Visit friends/relatives	5	9.8	10.2	22.4
Leisure travel	25	49.0	51.0	73.4
Business	12	23.5	24.5	97.9
Other (please specify)	1	2.0	2.1	100.0
Total	49	96.1	100.0	
Missing System	2	3.9		
Total	51	100.0		

After identifying respondents' purpose of visit, Question c., designed as an open question, sought to explore which city(ies) or place(s) the respondents have been to since their first visit. Owing to the different purposes for visiting China, of the 49

respondents, some said that they had been some major cities, like Beijing, Shanghai, Xi'an, Chongqing, Guilin, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong; others indicated that they had been to many cities in China, but did not provide details, because they could either not spell the destination name, or not remember the name of these destinations.

Nevertheless, according to their responses, it is not difficult to see that the cities they visited most are famous either for natural landscapes, like Guilin and Chongqing, for history and culture, such as Beijing and Xi'an, or for business and trade, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Hong Kong. This outcome further reflects and supports the discussion in Chapter 4.

Then Question d. sought to explore how long was spent in China during their previous visit. Similarly, Question d. is an open question; however, its answers can be classified as below (see Table 7.18). As Table 7.18 shows, only 44 respondents answered this question. Most, 38.6%, of respondents had stayed in China for between 11 and 28 days, whilst 11 visitors were in China for 7-10 days. Interestingly, a total of ten respondents indicated that they had spent more than six months in China during their previous visit. According to the outcome of Question b, it can be inferred that these ten respondents were more likely to be international students in China.

**Table 7.18** How long did you spend in China last time?

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Less than 7 days	6	11.8	13.6	13.6
7-10 days	11	21.6	25	38.6
11-28 days	17	33.3	38.6	77.2
6 Months – 1 Year	5	9.8	11.4	88.6
More than 1 year	5	9.8	11.4	100.0
Total	44	86.3	100.0	
Missing System	7	13.7		
Total	51	100.0		

In order to confirm this assumption, a crosstabulation was created through combining the outcome of Question b. (purpose of visit) with the outcome of Question d. (the length of stay). As can be seen from Table 7.19, perhaps not surprisingly, those visitors whose purpose of visit was to study in China usually stayed in China for more than six months. Those whose purpose was to visit friends or for business usually stayed in China for a short time, less than ten days, whilst most leisure visitors spent between one and four weeks in the country.

**Table 7.19** Purpose of visit and the length of stay last time? Crosstabulation

		How long did you spend in China last time?					Total
		Less than 7 days	7-10 days	11-28 days	6 Months - 1 Year	More than 1 year	
What was your purpose of visit last time?	Study	0	0	0	4	2	6
	Visit friends/relatives	0	3	1	0	1	5
	Leisure travel	3	4	14	0	0	21
	Business	3	4	2	1	1	11
	Other (please specify)	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total		6	11	17	5	5	44

As for Question e. 'Do you feel the country has changed when you come to China each time?', 46 out of 51 respondents provided an answer (see Table 7.20) with 41 choosing the answer 'Yes' and five choosing 'No'.

**Table 7.20** When you come to China each time, do you feel the country has changed?

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
	Yes (please go to Q. 7)	41	80.4	89.1	89.1
	No (please go to Q. 8)	5	9.8	10.9	100.0
	Total	46	90.2	100.0	
Missing	System	5	9.8		
Total		51	100.0		

Those who indicated that they could feel the country had changed were then directed to Question f. for further explanation. Again, Question f. is an open question; therefore, not every respondent provided an answer. Nevertheless, the majority of respondents described their different feelings when they came to China each time. Most of them provided positive comments, which were mainly related to China's economy, politics and the development of society. For example, some respondents mentioned that *Chinese people are taking on more of a western lifestyle, and they have become more affluent.* Some emphasized that *Chinese people are more friendly and educated.* In addition, *more and more people can speak English.* Some praised that *China is cleaner, more systematic, and less chaotic.*

Indeed, the development of economy in China is reflected not only in the physical transformation and the rise of social harmony, but also in the improvement of infrastructure and transportation. For example, one respondent stressed that there had been a complete transformation in transport in Guangzhou since his first visit in 1995, particularly with significantly more cars on the roads and an enormous developments in resources and tourism.

Nevertheless, some respondents providing critical comments, which focused on a series of consequences brought by the fast development of economy and reflected on what was discussed in Chapter 3. For example, they were concerned about the traffic, environmental pollution, the high price of commodities, and the increased gap between rich and poor people, while they were experiencing the modernized cities with more cars, new bridges and new shopping centers. More distinctive examples of the international visitors' impressions of China can be found in Appendix 5.

- The analysis of the outcomes of Question 2

Starting from Question 2 in Part 1, the survey targeted 182 respondents. This question sought to explore respondents' image of China. Irrespective of the number of times, if any, that respondents had previously visited China, it is logical to assume that they had some image of the country before undertaking the current visit. Therefore, all respondents in the survey were asked to use three words to describe what their image of China was prior to their visit. Some respondents expressed positive image of China through the words they used, the most common being: *historical, mysterious, attractive, colorful, developing, commercial, cheap, beautiful, traditional, unique, exotic, technological, powerful, and advancing*. However, many of the international visitors/respondents held negative images of China, using a variety of words to describe them: *polluted, crowded, barren, dirty, corrupt, communist, busy, poor, industrial, controlled, rural, primitive, oppressive, cold, suppressed, strict, backward, and unclean*. The image was mainly related to the country's history and culture, environment, economy and politics. That some respondents thought China to be a mysterious, attractive and exotic country, for example, perhaps reflects the fact that, on the one hand, 'distance makes heart grow fonder', and, on the other hand, that the perceived exotic culture and history has increased people's curiosity. Similarly, the finding that some respondents held negative images of China, such as a communist society with corrupt officials, less freedom of speech, and a growing military presence, reflected perhaps the geographical distance, limited time to gain a real understanding of the country, and the influence of negative and subjective reporting in the

international media, factors which, as discussed in Chapter 3, may influence people's view and image of the country. Nevertheless, irrespective of whether people have a good or a bad image of the country, from a psychological perspective, most of them may still wish to visit the country in person so that they can develop their own knowledge about the country. In other words, this 'rebellious' attitude might be considered a motivational 'push' factor.

- The analysis of the outcomes of Question 3

When people have formed a certain image of a country, it is interesting to explore the extent to which they feel that image differs from their first impression of the country after their arrival. Therefore, similar to Question 2, Question 3 in the survey was designed as an open question and allowed respondents to use THREE WORDS to describe their first impression of China.

The discussion of the outcome of Question 2 above indicates that some international visitors had negative images of China prior their arrival. However, according to the responses to Question 3, the attitudes of many of them changed significantly once they had been in the country. For some, their pre-visit image and their first impressions after arriving were similar. For others, however, their first impression of China after arrival was more positive than how they had originally perceived the country to be, whilst some actually had more negative impressions compared to their pre-visit image. A comparison between visitors' pre-visit image of China and their first impressions of the country after arrival can be found in Appendix 6.

According to the discussion in Chapter 4, international visitors travelling to China usually take a flight to one of the big cities, such as Hong Kong, Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Beijing, and then commence their trip. Therefore, their first impression of China can be assumed to be based upon their experience of the city where they first arrive in. In this survey, irrespective of the nature of their first impressions on arrival, the respondents typically focused on a number of aspects, the economy, politics, history and culture, environment, and population density. For example, some respondents used words such as *smelly, dirty, tidy, smoky, smoggy, polluted, clean, grey, greenery*, to indicate their impression of the environment in China. Nevertheless, environment here has two meanings: the natural environment and the living environment. In recent years, the rapid development of the economy in China has resulted in both positive and negative impacts on China's environment. Positive impacts are mainly manifested in

the improvement of people's living environment, as the government has paid great attention to urban greening. However, its negative effects on the natural environment, particularly on air and water, have attracted more attention around the world. In particular, much [publicity has been generated by air pollution produced coal-fired power plants, cars and factories (The Economist 2013), and water resulting most commonly from wastewater from ships and factories (Greenpeace East Asia 2011). As The Economist (2013) claims, 'China is the world's worst polluter but largest investor in green energy. Its rise will have as big an impact on the environment as on the world economy or politics.'

Indeed, the rapid development of economy has also brought many positive or negative impacts to other aspects. For example, searching a better life, large numbers of people from rural areas have relocated to work urban centers, resulting in significant overcrowding in the main cities. Additionally, with the development of economy, the corruption of officialdom has become increasingly severe. After Xi Jinping took office as China's President, 'his campaign against corruption is the most sweeping in decades. It has snared the former second-in-command of the People's Liberation Army and targeted the retired chief of China's massive security apparatus—the highest-ranking official to be investigated for corruption since Mao came to power' (The Economist 2014). Such a large anti-corruption campaign has enhanced external perceptions that China is a corrupt country. Indeed, official corruption has become a common social phenomenon and is one area in which some international visitors insisted that their pre-image of China and first impression of China after their arrival were the same. That is, they saw China as 'corrupt'.

Nevertheless, economic development can promote advances in science and technology, as well as infrastructural and urban development, and education. This is why some respondents praised the modernization of cities in China, the wide use of electronic technology, and friendly Chinese.

- The analysis of the outcomes of Question 4

Having focused on respondents' images and impression of China, Question 4, a multiple-choice question, then sought to identify respondents' purpose of visit this time (see Table 7.21 overleaf).

**Table 7.21** The purpose of visiting China this time

	Responses		% of Cases	
	N	%		
What is your purpose of visit this time? <sup>a</sup>	Study	12	6.4%	6.6%
	Visit friends/relatives	4	2.1%	2.2%
	Leisure travel	163	86.7%	89.6%
	Business	6	3.2%	3.3%
	Other	3	1.6%	1.6%
<i>Total</i>	188	100.0%	103.3%	

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 2.

Table 7.21 shows that 182 respondents provided 188 answers about what their purpose of visiting China was on this visit. The majority, 86.7%, of respondents, classed themselves as leisure tourists, whilst 6.4% chose 'Study', and the remainder were split between 'Visit friends/relatives', 'Business' and 'Other', respectively. Six respondents made a multiple choice, two indicating that they had travelled to China both to visit their friends/relatives and to take the opportunity to participate for leisure travel. Another two respondents had travelled to China because of business and visiting friends. Just one respondent selected 'Business and Leisure travel', and another 'Leisure travel' and 'Other'.

It is noticeable that apart from those visitors who had come to China for leisure travel, a number were studying in China, suggesting that they have opportunities to travel in China. It has been reported that in 2011, the number of international students studying in China increased by 27,521, which was 10.38% more compared to 2010 (China Scholarship Council News 2012). In terms of student nationality, Asian international students were most numerous (187,871, or 64.21% of the total), followed by international students from Europe (16.15%), America (11.05%), Africa (7.09%), and Oceania (1.50%). This indicates that international students also contribute to the development of China's tourism.

- The analysis of the outcomes of Question 5, 6 and 7

Question 5, 6 and 7 are open questions designed to explore respondents' itinerary or route in China, their length of stay in China this time, and the main reason for the visit, respectively.

The outcome of Question 5 revealed that most respondents participated in tours to China, their tour routes typically including three major destinations, namely, Beijing, Shanghai and Xi'an, and then extended to other regions. The outcome reflected what was discussed in Chapter 4, namely international visitors prefer to participate in tours to China rather than travelling independently. Indeed, only a few respondents were travelling independently, primarily students or those visiting relatives in China.

Although Question 6 is an open question, the outcomes still can be classified as below (see Table 7.22). As Table 7.22 shows, for most respondents (89%), the number of days in China ranged from 10 to 30 days. The 2.2% of them choosing 3-6 months and the 6.6% of them intending to stay in China more than six months were most likely to be either studying in China or to have longer-term business commitments. Another 2.2% of respondents stated that they would stay in China between one and two months. Reflecting their length of stay, these respondents might be either leisure or business travelers.

**Table 7.22** How long have you spent/will you spend in China this time?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 10 - 30 days	162	89.0	89.0	89.0
1 - 2 months	4	2.2	2.2	91.2
3 - 6 months	4	2.2	2.2	93.4
6 months - 1 year	6	3.3	3.3	96.7
More than 1 year	6	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

As for Question 7, respondents were asked why they had chosen China as a destination. Some said that China was a good destination for their leisure travel, and others answered that they were visiting China because of its history and culture, natural scenery and economic progress.

As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, the patterns of China's economic development and the country's political systems have been attracting global attention. In addition, China possesses rich tourism resources, including historical and cultural attractions, natural landscapes, and various ethnic customs, all of which contribute to the country's attraction as a tourist destination. Not surprisingly, therefore, some respondents were visiting China because they perceived it to be *'an emerging country'*, *'a diverse and interesting country'*, and *'becoming a dominant country in the world'*. Therefore, they

wanted to see *'the progress made economically under a communist regime'*, *'what China is usually like'*, *'its modern look'*, and *'Chinese people's living conditions'*. Some respondents, however, were interested in Chinese history, culture and food. Thus, they had come to China in order to *'experience a different culture'*, *'visit the Great Wall, Terracotta army and the Three Gorges Dam'*, and *'understand China's education and how Chinese families live together'*.

One of respondents who had visited China previously explained the reason for making a return visit: *'I went to China 30 years ago. China has changed much in the past 30 years. I think I can tell everyone about new China and old China.'*

Apart from the answers above, some respondents provided specific reasons, such as investigating the environment for business investment, internship, study and work, having a conference in China, celebrating of retirement or honeymoon, and the relatively low cost of tours.

- The analysis of the outcomes of Question 8

All respondents in the survey were asked what sort of sites they were interested in visiting in China. According to Table 7.23, 182 respondents provided 385 answers in total. Among the answers, 'natural scenery' and 'historic and cultural heritage sites' were identified by 23.1% and 25.2% of respondents respectively, whilst 19% of them revealed that they would like to visits a 'mixed' selection of sites. As discussed in Chapter 4, China is well known for its long history. Most international visitors travel to China because they are curious about the country's civilization, hence the majority of travel itineraries being based on the 'core' route of Beijing – Shanghai – Xi'an. At the same time China's natural scenery is, of course, world renowned and diversified. Some destinations, such as Li River in Guilin, Yangshuo, Heavenly Huanglong and Jiuzhaigou in Chengdu, the Yangtze Three Gorges in Chongqing and Yichang, highlight the natural combination of mountains and water. And others, such as Huangshan in Anhui province and Zhangjiajie in Hunan province, offer unique scenery, including sunsets, peculiarly shaped granite peaks, views of clouds touching the mountainsides, and abundant forest resources. This diversity of natural scenery in China evidently provides international visitors with more travel choices.

Table 7.23 also reveals that a small number of respondents were interested in townscapes, or the homes and customs of ethnic groups, or rural scenery. However, although many international visitors marveled at the rapid development of China's economy and urban modernization, townscapes/cityscapes were identified as desirable

destinations by just 11.4% of respondents, as urban modernization is commonplace in western countries. Nevertheless, distinctive ancient towns in China are still popular amongst international visitors. In addition, China offers rich ethnic culture and scenery in rural areas (please see more details in Chapter 4). However, such rural culture and scenery has attracted less attention from international visitors, compared with natural scenery and historic and cultural heritage sites. Only 22.5% of respondents indicated that they were interested in the villages and customs of ethnic groups, and 20.3% of them liked rural scenery. There were possibly two main factors affecting their interest: firstly, apart from five ethnic minority autonomous regions, most of the ethnic minorities live in rural areas where transportation remains relatively undeveloped; therefore, it is not easy for international visitors to access to there. Secondly, there is a lack of promotion of ethnic cultures, so few international visitors are aware or have knowledge of them.

**Table 7.23** What sort of sites in China are you interested in?

		Responses		% of Cases
		N	%	
What sort of sites are you interested in <sup>a</sup>	Natural scenery	89	23.1%	48.9%
	Historic and cultural heritage sites	97	25.2%	53.3%
	Townscape / Cityscape	44	11.4%	24.2%
	The habitation and custom of ethnic groups	41	10.6%	22.5%
	Rural scenery	37	9.6%	20.3%
	Mixed	73	19.0%	40.1%
	Other	4	1.0%	2.2%
Total		385	100.0%	211.5%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 2.

- The analysis of the outcomes of Question 9

In the survey, Question 9, a multiple-choice question, sought to identify where / how respondents obtain information about China. As Table 7.24 shows, 182 respondents provided 387 answers. Among these 182 respondents, the Internet was revealed as the most popular source of information, accounting for 60.4% of respondents. According to 387 answers, word of mouth (18.6%), leaflets/brochures from travel agents (16.3%), guide books (16.3%), and TV/radio (13.2%) also played important role in providing travel information. A few respondents had obtained China's travel

information from local newspapers (5.2%) and magazines or through other means (2.1%).

**Table 7.24** Sources of information about China

		Responses		% of Cases
		N	%	
How did you get information about China <sup>a</sup>	Word of mouth/friends or relatives	72	18.6%	39.6%
	Leaflets/brochures from travel agents	63	16.3%	34.6%
	Internet search/browse	110	28.4%	60.4%
	Local newspapers/magazines	20	5.2%	11.0%
	TV/radio	51	13.2%	28.0%
	Guidebook	63	16.3%	34.6%
	Other	8	2.1%	4.4%
Total		387	100.0%	212.6%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 2.

With advances in communication technology, the Internet has become increasingly widely used by tourists as a source of information on destinations, particularly more distant and unfamiliar destinations. More importantly, some travel websites, like TripAdvisor.com, assist consumers in gathering travel information, posting reviews and opinions of travel-related content and engaging in interactive travel forums, which may benefit tourists' decision-making. Nevertheless, it can be argued that contemporary tourists have become more sophisticated, and seek information from a variety of sources. From the evidence of this research, recommendations from friends or families are considered to be a reliable and influential source of information for choosing a destination. Indeed, in the survey, word of mouth was the second most popular source of information about China.

### ***7.3.2.3 International visitors' attitude towards the Three Gorges***

Given the location of the research and the fact that, as discussed above, the majority of international visitors to China join an organized tour, it was of course inevitable that almost all of international visitors participating in the survey had joined a package tour

which included a cruise through the Yangtze Three Gorges. Part 2 of the survey, commencing here, focuses on exploring international visitors' attitudes towards the Three Gorges.

- The analysis of the outcome of Question 10

Question 10 introduced Part by asking whether this is the respondent's first visit to the Three Gorges. From the visitor survey, it was evident that only eight respondents had visited the Three Gorges previously; therefore, more than 95% of respondents were first time visitors to the Three Gorges (see Table 7.25). Travelling to China is, of course, as long-haul journey for most of western visitors. Decision to undertake a long-haul journey is usually not easy as people have to consider several factors, including their budget, the travel route, the length of stay, and so forth. As a result, the finding that most people were visiting the Three Gorges for the first time is both predictable and understandable.

**Table 7.25** Is this your first visit to the Three Gorges?

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Yes (go to Q.18)	174	95.6	95.6	95.6
No (go to Q.17)	8	4.4	4.4	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Of the eight respondents who had previously visited the Three Gorges, six had travelled twice previously to the region and then remaining two had visited on three or more previous occasions (see Table 7.26).

**Table 7.26** If No, how many visits have you previously made here?

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
2	6	75.0	75.0	75.0
3	1	12.5	12.5	87.5
4+	1	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	8	100	100.0	

- The analysis of the outcome of Questions 11 and 12

The purpose of Questions 11 and 12 was to explore the length of respondents' stay at the Three Gorges and where they departed from. Table 7.27 overleaf shows that

51.1% of respondents spent three days at the Three Gorges, and 45.1% had been visiting the Three Gorges for four days. Just 3.8% of respondents stated that they had spent more than five days at the Three Gorges.

**Table 7.27** How many days have you spent / will you spend at the Three Gorges?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 3 days	93	51.1	51.1	51.1
4 days	82	45.1	45.1	96.2
More than 5 days	7	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Moreover, as detailed in Table 7.28, of the 182 survey respondents, 101, or 55.5%, had departed from Chongqing on a 3-day tour to the Three Gorges, finishing downstream at Yichang. Interestingly, 6% (eleven respondents) stated that they had joined the cruise 'In other cities', specifying Shanghai or Wuhan, which indicated that they had to stay on the cruise ship for more than five days.

**Table 7.28** Where did you board?

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
In Chongqing	101	55.5	55.5	55.5
In Yichang, Hubei Province	70	38.5	38.5	94.0
In other cities (please specify)	11	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

As discussed in Chapter 5, normally there are two main starting points for tourist trips through the Three Gorges. On the one hand, a three-day Three Gorges cruise departs from the upstream port of Chongqing, travelling downstream; on the other hand, tourists can choose a 4-day cruise, departing Yichang in Hubei province, travelling upstream. The outcomes of Question 11 and 12 basically reflect this fact.

- The analysis of the outcome of Question 13

Question 13 was designed as a multiple-choice question to explore where respondents first heard about the Three Gorges.

The findings (see Table 7.29 overleaf) from the visitor survey indicate that 182 respondents provided 254 responses to this question. They revealed that they first heard about / read about the Three Gorges mainly in travel agents' leaflets/brochures

(20.9%), TV/radio (18.9%), word of mouth/friends or relatives (16.9%), the Internet (15.7%), and guidebooks (14.2%). This suggests that, in general, the travel agent still plays a traditional and reliable role in providing people with primary travel information about a specific place (also see Chapter 3).

**Table 7.29** Where did you first hear about the Three Gorges?

		Responses		% of Cases
		N	%	
Where did you first hear about the Three Gorges? <sup>a</sup>	Word of mouth/friends or relatives	43	16.9%	23.6%
	Leaflets/brochures from travel agents	53	20.9%	29.1%
	Internet search/browse	40	15.7%	22.0%
	Local newspapers/magazines	11	4.3%	6.0%
	TV/radio	48	18.9%	26.4%
	Guidebook	36	14.2%	19.8%
	Other	23	9.1%	12.6%
Total		254	100.0%	139.6%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 2.

- The analysis of the outcome of Question 14

Question 14 is an open question, which aims to explore why respondents chose the Three Gorges as one of the destinations on their overall trip.

All respondents in the survey explained why they chose the Three Gorges as one of their destinations in China, the most frequent answers being as follows:

1. For natural scenery (34%).
2. Part of the tour (28.6%).
3. To see the world's largest Dam (16.5%).
4. Recommended by friends/guidebook (12%).

For example, one respondent stated that the Three Gorges were 'recommended in the guidebook 'Lonely Planet'. Some said that they heard the Three Gorges was 'a very famous tourist attraction in Chongqing due to its natural scenery'. Some were 'interested in power generation and lock systems'. There were also other respondents

who indicated that they wanted to see not only the scenery in the region, but also 'how the relocation process has been working', 'ecological results of the completion of the Dam', and 'the way in which the government handled the impact of environment'. The Dam itself and the consequences it brought to the Three Gorges region has, of course, attracted worldwide attention since its construction first commenced.

- The analysis of the outcome of Question 15

Typically, once tourists have decided which destination they would like to visit, they are able to access relevant travel information through various means (see Chapter 3). In this visitor survey, respondents were asked where they sourced their information about the Three Gorges (see Table 7.30). Since this question is a multiple-choice question, 182 respondents made 280 choices in total, among which most had obtained relevant travel information about the Three Gorges from the Internet (26.4%). However, in comparison to the question 'How did you get information about China' in the first (scoping) stage of the research, the second and third most popular sources of Three Gorges travel information were leaflets/brochures from travel agents (21.4%) and guidebooks (20.4%). Word of mouth/friends or relatives were only ranked fourth, accounting for 15.4%.

**Table 7.30** How to get relevant information about the Three Gorges

	Responses		% of Cases
	N	%	
Word of mouth/friends or relatives	43	15.4%	23.9%
Leaflets/brochures from travel agents	60	21.4%	33.3%
Internet search/browse	74	26.4%	41.1%
Local newspapers/magazines	16	5.7%	8.9%
Guidebook	57	20.4%	31.7%
Other	30	10.7%	16.7%
Total	280	100.0%	155.6%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 2.

- The analysis of the outcome of Question 16, 17 and 18

Question 16 was designed to identify respondents' favorite part of their trip at the Three Gorges. Two respondents elected not to provide an answer to this question.

Nevertheless, 180 respondents gave 355 answers. In general answers to this question closely matched those to 'Please state the main reason for visiting the Three Gorges'. Most international visitors had chosen the Three Gorges as a destination because of natural scenery and the Three Gorges Dam. Table 7.31 demonstrated that during the travel in the Three Gorges region, the Three Gorges Dam (19.7%), Lesser Three Gorges (19.4%) and Wu Gorge (17.7%) were international visitors' favorite sites / sights. Historical and cultural heritage attractions (11.8%), Xiling Gorge (11.0%), Qutang Gorge (10.7%) and local custom (7.9%), however, were relatively less impressive to them.

**Table 7.31** Your favourite part of the Three Gorges

	Responses		% of Cases
	N	%	
Wu Gorge	63	17.7%	35.0%
Qutang Gorge	38	10.7%	21.1%
Xiling Gorge	39	11.0%	21.7%
Lesser Three Gorges	69	19.4%	38.3%
Historical and cultural heritage attractions	42	11.8%	23.3%
Three Gorges Dam	70	19.7%	38.9%
Local custom from Tu ethnic group	28	7.9%	15.6%
Other	6	1.7%	3.3%
Total	355	100.0%	197.2%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 2.

Question 17 and 18 are open question and can be thought as an extension of Question 16. Therefore, these three questions were put together for further analysis and discussion.

When respondents were asked what they had enjoyed most and what they had enjoyed least during their visit to the Three Gorges region, their answers are strikingly similar and are summarized in Table 7.32 overleaf.

**Table 7.32** International visitors' attitude about the Three Gorges

<b>The parts enjoyed most</b>	<b>The part enjoyed least</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural scenery</li> <li>• The Dam</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pollution in the river</li> <li>• Weather in this region</li> <li>• Local infrastructure</li> <li>• Local vendors</li> <li>• High price of products, including food and drinks on the cruise ship</li> <li>• Low quality of facilities provided on the cruise ship</li> <li>• Some specific tourist attractions, such as Fengdu Ghost Town, and Baidi Town (White Emperor City)</li> <li>• Intensive schedule</li> </ul>

Similar to the outcome of Question 16, the findings from Question 17 and 18 showed that the majority of international visitors really enjoyed the tourist attractions along the Yangtze Three Gorges, particularly the natural scenery along the Lesser Three Gorges and Shennong Stream, and the Dam tour. Conversely, historical heritage attractions and local ethnic minorities' lifestyles and customs were less attractive to international visitors. A small number of respondents even emphasized that they disliked specific tourist attractions, like Ghost City. This may be explained as follows:

First, most historical heritage attractions, such as the Shibaozhai Pagoda, Zhangfei Temple, Baidicheng, Huangling Temple, and the local ethnic minorities are only on the optional list of the Three Gorges tour owing to a tight travel schedule.

Second, owing to the creation of Three Gorges Reservoir, a number of famous historical heritage sites, including the Ancient Pathway, Meng Liang Ladder and Daxi Village, have been submerged, and some historical relics, such as a number of coffins, Zhangfei Temple, and Chalk Wall, have been moved to higher land or placed in a local museum.

As a result, it can be argued that the Dam's influence on historical sites is far greater than its impact on natural landscape. In this case, from the perspective of tourists, the loss of historical sites in a region is a kind of regret.

Some respondents highlighted other elements of the trip that they least enjoyed, such as the weather, water pollution, poor local infrastructure, local vendors, and so on (see

Table 7.32 above), broadly related either to environmental issues or the local management of tourism. As discussed in Chapter 5, water pollution is getting worse because of the Dam. Although the government has made efforts to improve water quality, only little progress has been made. Without doubt, water pollution has now started to have a negative effect on international visitors' travel experience. Therefore, this indicates that local governments need to take further actions to prevent/reduce the negative impacts from water pollution. Moreover, the management of Three Gorges tourism is a long-term problem. Although two governments, Chongqing Municipality and Hubei province, have cooperated to improve the quality of Three Gorges tourism by focusing on the development of local infrastructure and transports, the outcomes of Question 18 suggested that other more minor issues, such as those identified by the respondents pointed out, should be paid more attention and further improved.

- The analysis of the outcome of Question 19

Having explored respondents' impressions of the Three Gorges, Question 19 gave respondents the opportunity to make suggestions as to how Three Gorges tourism might be improved. Since it is an open question, only a proportion of the respondents answered it. Recommendations given frequently in the visitor survey can be summarized as follows:

1. To clean the river and protect the environment in the region;
2. To control the price of products sold on the cruise ship;
3. A more reasonable and flexible travel itinerary with more professional English-speaking tour guides; and
4. Free local maps to be provided.

In more detail, and as discussed in Chapter 5, the debates regarding the negative impacts of the Three Gorges Dam have always tended to focus on the environment, particularly water pollution, geology, the ecosystem, and the quality of life for displaced residents. From this survey, it is evident that water pollution is becoming more severe; just standing on the cruise ship or a small boat, many international visitors could clearly see rubbish and debris floating on the river. As a result, according to the survey, to *strengthen environmental protection* and to *improve the ecological management of the Yangtze River* have become urgent actions. In addition to this, many international

visitors felt strongly that the products sold on the cruise ship were very expensive. Therefore, they suggested that the prices of tourism products on the cruise ship should be controlled. Some visitors complained about the tight schedule of their Three Gorges tour. They would like to see *more tourist attractions* along the Three Gorges, would prefer to have interaction with local ethnic group, need *more free time to undertake self-tours*, and want to have *more time on excursions to explore or to enjoy sites*. Furthermore, it was suggested that local tour guides should be more professional and their English needed to be improved.

- The analysis of the outcome of Question 20

Question 20 was designed to explore international visitors' major concern(s) when they travelled in the Three Gorges region. There were fourteen features related to the Three Gorges tourism listed in the survey and respondents were asked to rate them from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important) (See Appendix 4). It is noticeable that not everyone provided answer for each feature. However, amongst the fourteen features, the majority of international visitors were concerned about 'Overall value for money', 'Safe environment', 'Local infrastructure', 'Environment around the area', 'Availability and quality of food/drinks', 'Rural atmosphere/scenery', 'Cultural and historical attractions', 'Local custom', 'Wildlife at the area', 'Special events/activities', 'Things to do on board', and 'Friendly/welcoming' during their travel in the Three Gorges region.

In particular, a total 87% of the respondents (see Table 7.33) in the survey indicated that before they chose the Three Gorges as one of destinations in China, they definitely considered 'overall value for money'. This finding has partially explained why they wanted to join a travel tour and reflected what was stated in Chapter 5.

**Table 7.33** Overall value for money

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
	5	2.7	2.7	2.7
Not important at all	9	4.9	4.9	7.7
Not really important	10	5.5	5.5	13.2
Valid Important	44	24.2	24.2	37.4
Quite important	56	30.8	30.8	68.1
Very important	58	31.9	31.9	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

In recent years, owing to the impact of the global financial crisis, more and more tourists who wish to undertake a long-haul holiday have to seriously consider their travel budget. In order to achieve both money saving and the satisfaction during their holidays, joining a group tour becomes the most popular choice again (Britten 2009).

With regards to the 'Safety' issue in the Three Gorges region, similarly, 91.7% of respondents in the survey claimed that they were concerned about safe environment in this region (see Table 7.34).

**Table 7.34** Safe environment

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
	7	3.8	3.8	3.8
Not important at all	2	1.1	1.1	4.9
Not really important	6	3.3	3.3	8.2
Valid Important	14	7.7	7.7	15.9
Quite important	57	31.3	31.3	47.3
Very important	96	52.7	52.7	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Chapters 1 and 5 revealed that a large number of experts have disputed the potential for geological disasters in this region due to the construction of the Dam. Fortunately, the high degree of concern amongst both the public media and the academic research arena has prompted both central and local governments to take a series of measures for the prevention of the geological disasters. Indeed, as early as 1995, the State Council (1995) promulgated a regulation to further strengthen the management of Yangtze Three Gorges foreign tourist ships which, to a great extent, has ensured the safe operation of cruise ships and reduced the potential risk.

For 'Local infrastructure', 82.4% of respondents in the survey agreed that this element was important or very important to them during their travel in the region (see Tables 7.35 overleaf). As discussed in Chapter 5, two governments, Chongqing Municipality and Hubei province, have taken actions to further improve local infrastructure. However, some respondents in this survey were critical of local infrastructure (see Table 7.32), indicating that the improvement of local infrastructure would be a long-term and arduous task.

**Table 7.35** Local infrastructure

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
	10	5.5	5.5	5.5
Not important at all	7	3.8	3.8	9.3
Not really important	15	8.2	8.2	17.6
Valid Important	58	31.9	31.9	49.5
Quite important	53	29.1	29.1	78.6
Very important	39	21.4	21.4	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

With regard to 'Availability and quality of food/drinks', 80.2% of respondents in the survey agreed that they were concerned about this issue during their travel in the region (see Tables 7.36). Usually, when travelling in the Three Gorges region, international visitors have to spend much time on the cruise ship. Therefore, the quality and diversification of food and drinks provided on the cruise ship are important to international visitors. Moreover, the price of food and drink on the cruise ship should also be reasonable. According to Table 7.32, international visitors did not complain about the quality of food and drinks. Nevertheless, some international visitors were not satisfied with the price of food and drinks provided on the cruise ships.

**Table 7.36** Availability and quality of food/drinks

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
	9	4.9	4.9	4.9
Not important at all	10	5.5	5.5	10.4
Not really important	17	9.3	9.3	19.8
Valid Important	43	23.6	23.6	43.4
Quite important	53	29.1	29.1	72.5
Very important	50	27.5	27.5	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

By definition, of course, cruise travel requires tourists need to spend time on the cruise ship during their trip. Therefore, the facilities provided on the cruise ship must be easily accessible and make tourists feel comfortable, and the price of food and drinks should be reasonable in order to stimulate tourists' consumption on the ship (Vogel 2011: 212).

Cruise ships, as one of the principal means of transportation, play a significant role in the Three Gorges tourism (see Chapters 4 and 5). However, facilities provided on some cruise ships have not reached the international standard. Therefore, it can be argued that to remove the low quality of cruise ships and to improve facilities on those mid-range and luxury cruise ships will benefit the sustainable development of the Three Gorges tourism. Additionally, the unreasonable price of food and drinks on the cruise ship has seriously hindered the international visitors' consumption, which does not favor the local tourism revenue. As a result, the control over the pricing of food and drinks in tourist attractions, including on cruise ships needs to be taken into account by local governments.

Compared with 'Local infrastructure' and 'Availability and quality of food/drinks', 'Things to do on board' received less attention from international visitors, with only about 59% of respondents claiming that it is (very, quite) important to them (see Table 7.37). This is probably because during the day, international visitors have an intensive schedule either visiting different attractions ashore or viewing the surrounding natural scenery on the cruise ship. Therefore, it is not generally necessary for them to find something else to do on board. Nevertheless, most cruise ships provide visitors with some accessible facilities, including sauna rooms, massage parlors, entertainment centers and bars, so that international visitors can choose different form of relaxation.

**Table 7.37** Things to do on board

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
	7	3.8	3.8	3.8
Not important at all	26	14.3	14.3	18.1
Not really important	40	22.0	22.0	40.1
Valid Important	54	29.7	29.7	69.8
Quite important	37	20.3	20.3	90.1
Very important	18	9.9	9.9	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Of the 182 respondents, more than 91% stated that they were concerned about environment around the region, and thought it was either important or very important to their travel experience (see 7.38 overleaf).

**Table 7.38** Environment around the area

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
	6	3.3	3.3	3.3
Not important at all	3	1.6	1.6	4.9
Not really important	7	3.8	3.8	8.8
Important	38	20.9	20.9	29.7
Quite important	51	28.0	28.0	57.7
Very important	77	42.3	42.3	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Additionally, as for 'Wildlife at the area', more than 70% of respondents claimed that they would like to see more wildlife in this region (see Table 7.39).

**Table 7.39** Wildlife at the area

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
	9	4.9	4.9	4.9
Not important at all	16	8.8	8.8	13.7
Not really important	29	15.9	15.9	29.7
Important	43	23.6	23.6	53.3
Quite important	43	23.6	23.6	76.9
Very important	42	23.1	23.1	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

As mentioned in Chapters 1 and 5, the Three Gorges is famous for its natural scenery. Therefore, the protection of environment and wildlife appears to be essential for ecological development of the Three Gorges region. However, owing to construction of the Dam, water pollution has become an increasingly serious problem and the natural ecological balance along the Yangtze Three Gorges has become threatened. In particular, the number of wildlife and marine species, including White Flag Dolphin, the Siberia crane, and Chinese river sturgeon, has been dwindling (Sample 2007). Such adverse conditions leave international visitors with a negative impression of the Three Gorges.

In Question 20, the features of the Three Gorges also include rural atmosphere/scenery, cultural and historical attractions, and local customs. Some 47% of respondents stated that the rural atmosphere/scenery was very important to them,

whilst 31.9% and 12.1% of respondents thought rural scenery was quite important or important respective to them (see Table 7.40). In the Three Gorges region, rural scenery is distinctive, even though the water level has risen due to the construction of the Dam. For example, fields and the farmhouses on the steep hillside can be found everywhere. Therefore, as a part of natural landscape, rural scenery is very popular amongst international visitors.

**Table 7.40** Rural atmosphere/scenery

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
	6	3.3	3.3	3.3
Not important at all	4	2.2	2.2	5.5
Not really important	6	3.3	3.3	8.8
Important	22	12.1	12.1	20.9
Quite important	58	31.9	31.9	52.7
Very important	86	47.3	47.3	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Similarly, most respondents, about 92 % in total, emphasized the importance of visiting cultural and historical attractions during their tour to the Three Gorges region (see Table 7.41).

**Table 7.41** Cultural and historical attractions

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
	7	3.8	3.8	3.8
Not really important	7	3.8	3.8	7.7
Important	26	14.3	14.3	22.0
Quite important	59	32.4	32.4	54.4
Very important	83	45.6	45.6	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Interestingly, compared with the natural landscape and historical sites, international visitors were relatively less interested in local customs, with 27.5% of respondents selecting 'very important', 29.7% selecting 'quite important' and 22.5% selecting 'important' (see Table 7.42 overleaf).

**Table 7.42** Local custom

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
	8	4.4	4.4	4.4
Not important at all	9	4.9	4.9	9.3
Not really important	20	11.0	11.0	20.3
Valid Important	41	22.5	22.5	42.9
Quite important	54	29.7	29.7	72.5
Very important	50	27.5	27.5	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

As previously discussed, most international visitors are drawn to the Three Gorges because of the region's natural landscape and rural scenery. As the construction of the Dam has arguably had more limited impacts on natural scenery as a whole, international visitors still have positive impressions of this element of the Three Gorges. In contrast, although many international visitors said they wished to see cultural attractions and experience local custom in the Three Gorges region, some factors affected their visit, which directly resulted in their less impression of cultural attractions and local custom. These factors can be summarized as follows:

1. Most visitors are restricted by a tight travel schedule;
2. Some distinctive historical sites have been transformed or submerged due to the construction of the Dam; and
3. Compared with the Great Wall and Terracotta Warriors, most international visitors have limited knowledge about the historical sites and local customs of the Three Gorges due to the lack of market promotion (Ma, Li, Zhang, Chen & Gao 2008).

For 'Special events/activities', just over half of international visitors were concerned about them (see Table 7.43 overleaf).

**Table 7.43** Special events/activities

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
	9	4.9	4.9	4.9
Not important at all	27	14.8	14.8	19.8
Not really important	40	22.0	22.0	41.8
Important	55	30.2	30.2	72.0
Quite important	38	20.9	20.9	92.9
Very important	13	7.1	7.1	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Specifically, in Chapter 5 it was observed that Wanzhou City, Chongqing Municipality and Yichang City, Hubei Province take turns in hosting the annual ‘Three Gorges International Tourism Festival’. However, many international visitors are not familiar with or understand this Festival, primarily because:

1. Most international visitors have a short stay (3-4 days) in the Three Gorges region (see Chapter 5).
2. The Festival only lasts for about 10 days; therefore, most international visitors do not have the chance to set aside a specific day to attend the festival.

Therefore, it can be argued that the international influence of such kind of festival is very limited for the development of new Three Gorges tourism.

Owing to language barriers and the different culture, it may be assumed that some international visitors feel nervous or uncomfortable travelling to a country such as China. Therefore, a friendly and warm welcome from local people is hoped for most international visitors. Indeed, as shown in Table 7.44, 13.7%, 33% and 45.6% of respondents thought Friendly/welcoming is important, quite important or very important to them, respectively.

**Table 7.44** Friendly/welcoming

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
	5	2.7	2.7	2.7
Not important at all	2	1.1	1.1	3.8
Not really important	7	3.8	3.8	7.7
Important	25	13.7	13.7	21.4
Quite important	60	33.0	33.0	54.4
Very important	83	45.6	45.6	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

As discussed previously most international visitors had found that Chinese people are friendly and welcome, despite the language barriers. From the research, it was evident that enthusiastic attitude on the part of local people leaves a strong impression on international visitor, although some respondents pointed out that they were not happy with local vendors at some attractions of the Three Gorges (see Table 7.32). That is, some vendors constantly pestered or pressured them to buy souvenirs, making them feel uncomfortable and stressed.

Finally, with regard to the 'Distinctive souvenirs' and 'Quality of selling products', more than half of respondents thought they were not as important as those features discussed above (see Table 7.45 and Table 7.46 overleaf).

**Table 7.45** Distinctive souvenirs

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
	8	4.4	4.4	4.4
Not important at all	67	36.8	36.8	41.2
Not really important	42	23.1	23.1	64.3
Important	20	11.0	11.0	75.3
Quite important	25	13.7	13.7	89.0
Very important	20	11.0	11.0	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

**Table 7.46** Quality of selling products

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
	10	5.5	5.5	5.5
Not important at all	55	30.2	30.2	35.7
Not really important	31	17.0	17.0	52.7
Important	28	15.4	15.4	68.1
Quite important	37	20.3	20.3	88.5
Very important	21	11.5	11.5	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

As discussed in Chapter 5, tourist products, including souvenirs, picture books, and postcards, in the Three Gorges should demonstrate creativity and innovation, as most souvenirs and other products sold in the Three Gorges region tend to be of low quality and lack of distinctive characteristics. As a pull factor, the innovation and high quality of tourist products will stimulate tourists' consumption, which is beneficial to local tourism revenue. Therefore, this has great potential for development.

All in all, when international visitors travelled in the Three Gorges region, most stated that they were interested in natural scenery, historical attractions and local customs. However, for reasons discussed above, they had less an impression of historical attractions and local custom. Nevertheless, majority of international visitors still paid much attention to both environmental and safety issues in this region.

#### ***7.3.2.4 International visitors' perceptions of the Three Gorges Dam***

As discussed in Chapters 1 and 5, the Three Gorges Dam has long attracted the attention of the world's media, with both positive and negative news stories being publicised. Therefore, fundamental to this research was the need to explore the extent to which international visitors were aware of the contrasting stories and reports about the Dam and its impacts and whether these had influenced their attitudes towards the Dam (see Part 3 of international visitor survey in Appendix 4).

- The analysis of the outcome of Question 21

Question 21 asked respondents if they had watched/heard negative reports about the Three Gorges dam in their country. Findings from visitor survey revealed that a majority

of international visitors, or about 64.3%, had not in fact heard or seen any negative reports about the Dam prior to their visit (see Table 7.47).

**Table 7.47** In your country, did you watch/hear negative reports about the Three Gorges Dam?

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Yes (go to Q 42)	65	35.7	35.7	35.7
Valid No (go to Q 43)	117	64.3	64.3	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

According to gender, there were 93 males and 89 females participating in the survey. Among them, however, 58 males and 59 females claimed that they had not seen or heard negative reports (see Table 7.48).

**Table 7.48** In your country, did you watch/hear negative reports about the Three Gorges Dam? \* Gender

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
In your country, did you watch/hear negative reports about the Three Gorges Dam?	Yes (go to Q 42)	35	30	65
	No (go to Q 43)	58	59	117
Total		93	89	182

According to age, most young visitors, who were under 30 years old, and older people over than 50 years old had not heard negative news related to the Dam (see Table 7.49 overleaf).

**Table 7.49** In your country, did you watch/hear negative reports about the Three Gorges Dam? \* Age

		Age						Total
		Under 20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	Over 60	
In your country, did you watch/hear negative reports about the Three Gorges Dam?	Yes (go to Q 42)	0	19	8	5	8	24	64
	No (go to Q 43)	6	27	8	9	22	46	118
Total		6	46	16	14	30	70	182

This result was quiet surprising, as it was expected that most international visitors would have encountered heard negative reports related to the Dam. Nevertheless, a report from Pew Research Center (2012) perhaps can provide an explanation. This report showed the trends in News Consumption in the U.S. as follows:

- Online and digital news consumption continues to increase.
- Print sources, such as newspapers and magazines, have suffered readership losses in recent years.
- Although television news viewership remains more stable, a growing number of people, particularly those younger than age 30, no longer get news through watching TV every day.
- Young people also consistently spend less time with the news.
- With regard to the interest in local, national, international news, the report revealed that news about international affairs is less popular.
- Business publications draw a heavily male audience. However, Women comprise relatively large shares of the regular viewers of daytime talk shows.

Although this report only focused on Americans, it is believed that the result also applies to European countries. Therefore, this report can indirectly explain why many international visitors did not hear or watch negative news about the Three Gorges Dam.

According to the outcomes of Question 21, a multiple-choice question was further provided to those 65 respondents whose answer was 'Yes', to explore where they got the negative news. 65 respondents selected a total 105 answers, among which

TV/radio (41.9%) was main information source, followed by local newspapers (20%), internet (17.1%) and word of mouth/friends or relatives (11.4%) (see Table 7.50).

**Table 7.50** Where did you get the negative news?

		Responses		% of Cases
		N	%	
Where did you get TGD negative news? <sup>a</sup>	Word of mouth/friends or relatives	12	11.4%	18.5%
	TV/radio	44	41.9%	67.7%
	Internet	18	17.1%	27.7%
	Local newspapers	21	20.0%	32.3%
	Other	10	9.5%	15.4%
Total		105	100.0%	161.5%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 2.

It is known that news from TV/radio usually can be updated promptly. As discussed in Chapter 3, TV/radio is the most powerful media to provide its audience with the newest world news and to help people build better understanding of the world.

- The analysis of the outcomes of Question 22

Question 22 included 15 statements, which allowed respondents to state their perception of China and the Dam by choosing the answer ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Findings from the visitor survey showed that almost all respondents had joined a specific tour and, therefore, would be staying in China for a specified period. As can be seen in Table 7.51, more than 73% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that a number of factors encouraged them to choose a tour package to China rather than travelling independently. These included: travel budget, language barriers and cultural differences. Indeed, this outcome of the survey supports and verifies the observation in Chapter 4 that, owing to perceived difficulties of travelling in China, most foreign tourists prefer to join an organised tour rather than arranging their travel independently.

**Table 7.51** Statement 1: I would like to choose a tour package to China instead of independent travel to China, as I am concerned about some factors, such as travel budget, language barriers, the Chinese political systems, and cultural differences.

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Strongly disagree	11	6.0	6.0	6.0
Disagree	14	7.7	7.7	13.7
Neither agree nor disagree	24	13.2	13.2	26.9
Agree	51	28.0	28.0	54.9
Strongly agree	82	45.1	45.1	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Findings from Statement 2 revealed that about 71% of respondents had known about the existence of the Three Gorges Dam prior to their travel to the region (see Table 7.52). It may, therefore, be considered surprising that, given the publicity surrounding its construction, almost one third of respondents were unaware of it.

**Table 7.52** Statement 2: Before coming to China I was aware of the building of the Three Gorges Dam.

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Strongly disagree	12	6.6	6.6	6.6
Disagree	16	8.8	8.8	15.4
neither agree nor disagree	24	13.2	13.2	28.6
Agree	58	31.9	31.9	60.4
Strongly agree	72	39.6	39.6	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

As for the Statement 3, 57.1% of respondents maintained a neutral position, 22.5% of respondents agreed with the statement and 17 % of them chose 'Strongly agree' (see Table 7.53 overleaf). For those respondents who chose 'Neither agree nor disagree', it may be explained as follows: first, some of them might have heard different stories about the Dam, but they were not interested in this topic; therefore, they did not consider whether those reports were true or not. Second, some of them might never hear any news about the Dam. Thus, it would be difficult for them to make a judgement.

**Table 7.53** Statement 3: The reports in my country about the Dam are objective and true

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Strongly disagree	2	1.1	1.1	1.1
Disagree	4	2.2	2.2	3.3
Neither agree nor disagree	104	57.1	57.1	60.4
Agree	41	22.5	22.5	83.0
Strongly agree	31	17.0	17.0	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

In the survey, most international visitors (63.7%) claimed that they understood why Chinese government had built a large Dam on the Yangtze Three Gorges, and almost one third of respondents maintained a neutral stance (see Table 7.54).

**Table 7.54** Statement 4: To build the Dam at the Three Gorges is understandable.

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Strongly disagree	3	1.6	1.6	1.6
Disagree	7	3.8	3.8	5.5
Neither agree nor disagree	56	30.8	30.8	36.3
Agree	75	41.2	41.2	77.5
Strongly agree	41	22.5	22.5	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

The transformation of tourist resources meant that about 46% of respondents in the survey agreed or strongly agreed that they should have visited the Three Gorges before the Dam was constructed (see Table 7.55 overleaf).

**Table 7.55** Statement 5: It's a pity that I didn't visit the Three Gorges before the Dam was constructed.

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Strongly disagree	15	8.2	8.3	8.3
	Disagree	22	12.1	12.2	20.4
	Neither agree nor disagree	60	33.0	33.1	53.6
	Agree	43	23.6	23.8	77.3
	Strongly agree	41	22.5	22.7	100.0
Total		181	99.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1	.5		
Total		182	100.0		

With regard to Statement 6, 123 respondents, or about 67%, agreed or strongly agreed that they were intrigued to see the Three Gorges Dam (see Table 7.56) – implicitly because it is simply there. This finding is in accordance with the outcome of Question 14, in which it was revealed that some respondents chose the Three Gorges as one of destinations in China because they wanted to visit the Dam.

**Table 7.56** Statement 6: I was intrigued to see the Three Gorges Dam.

		Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid	Strongly disagree	8	4.4	4.4	4.4
	Disagree	17	9.3	9.3	13.7
	Neither agree nor disagree	34	18.7	18.7	32.4
	Agree	61	33.5	33.5	65.9
	Strongly agree	62	34.1	34.1	100.0
Total		182	100.0	100.0	

Nevertheless, when international visitors were further questioned about which part of the Three Gorges they preferred to visit, the natural landscape and historical heritage sites or man-made structures, about 45% still preferred to visit the natural landscape and historical heritage sites in the Three Gorges region (see Table 7.57 overleaf).

**Table 7.57** Statement 7: I prefer to visit the natural landscape and historical heritage sites rather than man-made structures such as the Three Gorges Dam in this region.

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Strongly disagree	13	7.1	7.1	7.1
Disagree	27	14.8	14.8	22.0
Neither agree nor disagree	59	32.4	32.4	54.4
Agree	43	23.6	23.6	78.0
Strongly agree	40	22.0	22.0	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

In the survey, around 40% of visitors thought the benefits of the Dam outweigh its impacts on the local environment and heritage, whilst 48.4% remained neutral and chose 'Neither agree nor disagree'. Many of the respondents had not been to the Three Gorges before the construction of the Dam and consequently were unaware of how the Three Gorges looked previously. Thus, it was difficult for them to make a judgement on the benefits of the Dam. Nevertheless, 10.9% of respondents thought the Dam had brought more negative impacts to the local environment and tourist resources (see Table 7.58).

**Table 7.58** Statement 8: The benefits of the Dam outweigh its impacts on the local environment and heritage.

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Strongly disagree	9	4.9	4.9	4.9
Disagree	11	6.0	6.0	11.0
Neither agree nor disagree	88	48.4	48.4	59.3
Agree	45	24.7	24.7	84.1
Strongly agree	29	15.9	15.9	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

114 out of 182 respondents thought it is a pity that some historical heritage sites have been submerged and some have been moved into museum (see Table 7.59 overleaf). It is known that many western countries pay much attention to the protection of historical heritage sites, and westerners are aware of the need to protect cultural relics and historic sites. Therefore, when they heard that some historical heritage sites have

been either submerged or moved into a museum from the original sites, they regretted the loss of the treasure of Chinese history.

**Table 7.59** Statement 9: It's a pity that some historical heritage sites have been submerged, and some historical relics have been moved into museum from the original places in the region.

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid Strongly disagree	9	4.9	4.9	4.9
Disagree	13	7.1	7.1	12.1
Neither agree nor disagree	46	25.3	25.3	37.4
Agree	74	40.7	40.7	78.0
Strongly agree	40	22.0	22.0	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Although some tourist resources in the Three Gorges region had been transformed, 33.5% of respondents thought their travel experience has not been affected by the Dam. Nevertheless, 46.7% of respondents selected 'Neither disagree nor agree' (see Table 7.60); as mentioned earlier, as it was the first time that most of the international visitors were visiting the region; thus, it would have been difficult for them to estimate whether or not their travel experience had been affected by the Dam.

**Table 7.60** Statement 10: My travel experience has been affected due to the Dam.

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Valid Strongly disagree	24	13.2	13.2	13.2
Disagree	37	20.3	20.3	33.5
Neither disagree nor agree	85	46.7	46.7	80.2
Agree	22	12.1	12.1	92.3
Strongly agree	14	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

Most international visitors had positive experiences of the Three Gorges. However, when asked if they wanted to re-visit the Three Gorges in the future, 44% chose 'Neither agree nor disagree' and 47.9% of them stated that they were unlikely to revisit the Three Gorges in the future, even if new attractions or destination in the region were to be developed (see Table 7.61 overleaf).

**Table 7.61** Statement 11: Some new destinations in this region will be developed. Thus, it is likely that I will re-visit the Three Gorges in the future.

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Strongly disagree	22	12.1	12.1	12.1
Disagree	47	25.8	25.8	37.9
Neither agree nor disagree	80	44.0	44.0	81.9
Agree	19	10.4	10.4	92.3
Strongly agree	14	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

The reason why there is a negative feedback may be explained as follows:

- Many respondents were from western countries. Given the time and expense required to revisit China, particularly to revisit a specific place, it is unlikely they would do so.
- It is impossible for international visitors to experience the most notable characteristics of the Three Gorges by taking just the 3- or 4-day tour.
- It would be difficult for international visitors to imagine what those new attractions would be or be worth visiting.

As for Statement 12, more than half, 53.3% of respondents (including 37.4% 'Agree' and 15.9% strongly agree'), stated that it was difficult for them to envisage the Three Gorges before the Dam was built (see Table 7.62 overleaf). This is because most international visitors had not visited the region before. As a result, they were unable to imagine and perceive the significant transformation of Three Gorges' tourist resources. That is, not having seen the Three Gorges prior to the construction of the Dam, they were unable, of course, to make any comparison.

**Table 7.62** Statement 12: It's difficult to envisage the Three Gorges before the Dam was built.

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Strongly disagree	12	6.6	6.6	6.6
Disagree	15	8.2	8.2	14.8
Neither agree nor disagree	58	31.9	31.9	46.7
Agree	68	37.4	37.4	84.1
Strongly agree	29	15.9	15.9	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

When respondents were asked to judge if the Dam brought more negative impacts than positive impacts to this region, some respondents either disagreed (23.6%) or strongly disagreed (13.7%) with this statement (see Table 7.63). And almost half of respondents remained neutral.

**Table 7.63** Statement 13: Overall, the Dam brings more negative impacts than positive impacts to this region.

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Strongly disagree	25	13.7	13.7	13.7
Disagree	43	23.6	23.6	37.4
Neither agree nor disagree	90	49.5	49.5	86.8
Agree	17	9.3	9.3	96.2
Strongly agree	7	3.8	3.8	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

The findings from Table 7.58 have been explained by the fact that, following their visit, many international visitors had positive impression of the Three Gorges Dam, leading them to consider that it had few negative impacts to this region. However, some negative impacts are not really visible to international visitors (see Chapter 1). Thus, similar to the finding from Table 7.63, it would be difficult for them to estimate how much impact the Dam brought to this region. As a result, most international visitors (49.5%) chose 'Neither agree nor disagree' for this statement.

Statement 14 sought to reveal whether or not respondents would recommend friends or relatives to visit China, particularly the Three Gorges. 75.3% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed to recommend the Three Gorges to their friends or relatives (see

Table 7.64). Thus it indicated that the majority of respondents had good perceptions of China and the Three Gorges.

**Table 7.64** Statement 14: I would recommend friends or relatives to visit China, particularly the Three Gorges.

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Strongly disagree	5	2.7	2.7	2.7
Disagree	9	4.9	4.9	7.7
Neither agree nor disagree	31	17.0	17.0	24.7
Agree	78	42.9	42.9	67.6
Strongly agree	59	32.4	32.4	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

The last statement sought to elicit feedback from respondents with respect to safety issues in China. There was generally positive feedback from respondents, 80.8% of respondents agreeing that China is a safe country in which to travel. 14.3% of respondents were neutral and 4.9% of them stated that China is not a safe country to travel (see Table 7.65). Interestingly, that 4.9% of respondents mostly comprised visitors from the United States and the United Kingdom.

**Table 7.65** Statement 15: China is a safe country to travel.

	Frequency	%	Valid %	Cumulative %
Strongly disagree	7	3.8	3.8	3.8
Disagree	2	1.1	1.1	4.9
Neither agree nor disagree	26	14.3	14.3	19.2
Agree	68	37.4	37.4	56.6
Strongly agree	79	43.4	43.4	100.0
Total	182	100.0	100.0	

As discussed in Chapter 2, the tourism industry is vulnerable to external influences and can be easily affected by factors such as natural disasters, weather events, political uncertainty and so forth. In particular, safety issues have received much attention by tourists since the '9/11' terrorist attacks in 2001 (Chauhan 2007; Villemez 2011). It is recognized that tourists increasingly prefer to travel to those countries with relatively stable governments and with no threat of violence or religious conflict (Wilks 2003: 137).

### **7.3.2.5 Interim summery**

The analysis and discussion of the outcomes of the survey indicated that, generally, international visitors have positive perceptions of China, the Three Gorges and the Dam, although, during their trip, they were concerned about environmental and safety issues. International visitors chose China as a destination due to its history and culture. However, the reason why they chose the Three Gorges as one of their destinations in China was because it has beautiful natural scenery and the world largest dam.

When international visitors travelled to the Three Gorges region, their major concerns were water pollution and the issues related to Three Gorges tourism management. This indicates that local governments need to pay much attention to these two aspects in order to develop the Three Gorges as a famous International tourist destination.

### **7.3.3 Second part: analysis and discussion of findings from interviews with seventeen international visitors**

As introduced in Chapter 6, interviews with seventeen international visitors were conducted individually in October 2012 on a cruise ship after they just finished the visit in the Three Gorges region. Similar to the analysis of the interviews at the Stage One of the research, the discussions focused on key themes relevant to the understanding of the participants' experiences in China and the Three Gorges region and to their feelings of the Dam and Three Gorges tourism. They were prompted to compare the real experience in China and the Three Gorges region with their original image. The interview questions designed for the Stage One were slightly revised for Stage Two interviews, as it was decided it would be useful to the research to explore interviewees' destination choice (See Question 1 in Table 7.66 overleaf), as well as the extent to which they took safety issues into account for their travel (see second question in Question 2 in Table 7.66 overleaf).

All questions for Stage two interviews have been listed in Table 7.66 overleaf.

**Table 7.66** Revised interview questions for international visitors

Question No.	Questions
1	Have you travelled to other countries in last two years? Where have you been?
2	Why did you choose China as a destination? Do you think China is a safe country for travel?
3	What was your image of China before you travelled here?
4	What was your first impression of China after your arrival?
5	Is there any difference between your image of China and your real experience in China? If 'Yes', please tell me what the differences are.
6	Have you been to the Three Gorges before? If 'Yes', when? What was your impression of the Three Gorges? If 'No', what was your image of the Three Gorges before your arrival?
7	Why did you choose the Three Gorges as one of your destinations?
8	Had you heard any negative news about the Three Gorges Dam before your travel to this region? Where did you hear about it? Do you think the news told you the truth? Why?
9	Have you visited the Three Gorges Dam this time? If 'Yes', what is your perception of the Dam? If 'No', could you please tell me the reason why you didn't visit the Dam?
10	During your travel in this region, what was/were your major concern(s)? Why do you think it is important to you?
11	Did you enjoy your travel in the TG region? Which part of the travel did you enjoy most and which part of the travel was less attractive to you? Why did you think they are attractive or less attractive?
12	Could you please give some recommendations, which you think can improve the development of the Three Gorges Tourism?

Since the interviews conducted at the Stage Two of the research were, in effect, a continuation of the interviews at Stage One, the conduct of the interviews, voice-to-text operation and preparation of transcripts transcripts, and the coding process were the same as at the Stage One (scoping research). For example, all interviewees' answers were recorded through the use of a digital voice recorder. After the interview, answers from each interviewee were transcribed word for word from the voice recorder, and classified according to the interview questions. Each interviewee was also given a specific code in the transcript (see Table 7.67 overleaf). The code starting with B means the interviewee is British, whilst F indicates the interviewee is from France. Similarly, the code starting with A means these international visitors are Americans. Some answers related to key emerging themes were coded by using 'alphabet + number' together with different colors (more details can be found in following sections) in order to facilitate further analysis and discussion.

### 7.3.3.1 General information about interviewees

- Nationality

Among the interviewees, fifteen were from the U.S.A, one from the U.K. and one from France (see Table 7.67 overleaf). In order to facilitate the following analysis of major themes, each interviewee was coded in terms of the number of interviewees and their nationality.

**Table 7.67** Number of interviewees and their nationality

<b>Code</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Number of interviewees according to nationality</b>
<b>A1 to A15</b>	<b>Americans</b>	15
<b>B1</b>	<b>British</b>	1
<b>F1</b>	<b>French</b>	1
	<b>Total</b>	17

According to the findings, it is evident that most interviewees were from the U.S.A., which implied that they could hold similar views on China, Three Gorges tourism and the Three Gorges Dam. As discussed in Chapter 3, ‘the factor ‘cultural proximity’ is suggested as a relevant aspect shaping destination image’ (Kastenholz 2010). Thus, following analysis will mainly focus on the views from the U.S.A. group (A1 to A15).

- Popular destinations for interviewees

During the interviews, international visitors were asked if they had travelled to other countries or specific destinations in the last two years (Question 1). Their answers are shown in Table 7.68 overleaf. In addition, ‘The continent(s) of the world they travelled to’ was added to Table 7.68, as it would be helpful to the analysis from the perspective of geographical classification. Among the answers, five continents were given five different colors, providing a direct impression of the most popular continent for travelers. The responses in Table 7.68 indicate that interviewees often travelled to destinations in the Americas, Europe, and Asia. Nevertheless, destinations in the Americas were, unsurprisingly given the origin of the majority of respondents, usually their first choice, with, geographical advantage being the main factor affecting destination choice. Destinations in Europe and Asia were also popular for these interviewees, which was possibly because of the similarity (Europe) or the difference (Asia) of destination culture.

**Table 7.68** Countries that interviewees travelled to in the last two years

Nationality of interviewees	The continent(s) of the world they travelled to	Country/destinations
B1 British	Asia, Australian and Oceania	Australia, China
F1 French	Europe, Asia, The Americas	Italy, Spain, England, Japan, Korea, Cambodia
A1 Americans	Europe, The Americas, Africa	London, Greece, Central America, Banama
A2 Americans	The Americas, Europe, Asia	Argentina, Iceland, Vienna
A3 Americans	Europe, The Americas	England, Amsterdam, Canada
A4 Americans	The Americas, Europe	Mexico, Great Britain
A5 Americans	The Americas, Africa, Asia	Mexico, Morocco and India
A6 Americans	Australian and Oceania, The Americas	Australia, Brazil
A7 Americans	The Americas, Africa, Asia	Cuba, Morocco, India
A8 Americans	Asia, The Americas	India, Canada
A9 Americans	Europe, The Americas	Paris, Canada
A10 Americans	The Americas, Australian and Oceania	Mexico, Australia, New Zealand
A11 Americans	Europe	Germany
A12 Americans	Europe	Germany
A13 Americans	The Americas, Australian and Oceania	Costa Rica, Australia, New Zealand
A14 Americans	Asia	Nepal
A15 Americans	Asia	Nepal

### 7.3.3.2 International visitors' perception of China

- The reasons why interviewees chose China as a destination (Question 2)

Similar to the outcomes at the Stage One, most interviewees were visiting China for the first time, with a smaller proportion of respondents having been to China previously. Therefore, the answers for Question 2 of the interview have to be divided into two parts for analysis and discussion.

Part 1: Views from international visitors who have been China before

It could be assumed that foreign tourist to China would like to make repeat visits given that China is a big country with a long history and offers many distinctive and attractive places to visit and explore.

This was verified in the interviews as it became evident that many of the interviewees who had previously visited China, due to different reasons, on one or more occasions still expressed their interest in the country, returning to the country to explore new destinations either on a short trip (A1) or a longer visit (B1, F1) (see Table 7.69 overleaf). For example, a visitor from the U.S.A. explained that she and her husband had been in China twenty-two years ago and had enjoyed their visit very much.

Therefore, she and her husband decided to revisit China this time. One British respondent had been living in Australia and, following his retirement, it was suggested he should teach English in China. After a short term stay in China, he found that he liked the country and, therefore, he decided to return to China again to teach English in a university on a long-term basis, to further explore China's history and culture. Another interviewee described that she had been working and living in China for about ten years and she loved this country. Nevertheless, her purpose of her first visit to China was to discover the country.

**Table 7.69** Reason for re-visiting China

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Code for explanation of re-visit</b>	<b>Sub-code for reason of the first visit</b>
B1	Code R – Liked China, so decided to teach English in a university of China for a long-term stay.	Code R1 – being recommended to teach English in China for a short term
F1	Code R – Liked China, so decided to find a long-term job in China.	Code R2 – wanted to discover this country
A1	Code R – Liked China, so decided to re-visit.	Code R3 – for leisure.

Part 2: Views from international visitors who were visiting China for the first time

When interviewees who were visiting China for the first time were asked to give a reason why they chose China as a destination, the most frequent response was that they were curious about/interested in the country, particularly regarding the population, economy, history and culture and people's lifestyle (also see Table 7.70 overleaf). This reflects the outcome of the quantitative survey and the discussion in Chapter 4.

**Table 7.70** Reason for visiting China

Interviewee	Coding the reason for visiting China
A5, A10	Code A – word of mouth, e.g. recommended by friends
A2, A6, A7, A9, A11, A13, A14	Code B – curious about/interested in this country, e.g. population, economy, history and culture, people’s lifestyle
A3	Code C – to fulfill someone’s last wishes
A4	Code D – wanted to do more difficult travel and thought travel to China is a challenge
A7, A15	Code E – interested in Buddhism and wanted to visit a specific place, such as Tibet
A8	Code F – Travel credit is going to expire. The trip booked to Egypt was cancelled. Therefore, they chose to visit China instead
A12	Code G - planned to travel round the world. Thus, China is one of the destinations he wanted to visit.

Generally, it is evident that, with the growth in its economy, China has caught the attention of the outside world, and has become more attractive for foreigners. Indeed, the research that many international visitors to China are seeking something different and, in particular, want to witness the results of the country’s rapid economic development (see inbound tourism statistics in Chapter 4). As one visitor (A11) emphasized, *‘we have been many European countries and also Mexico. But we have never come to any specific Asian country. I want to see something different from what we have seen in the past’*. Another visitor from the U.S.A (A13) mentioned, *‘China is an upcoming country and will be the super power of the future. We should get to know it, so we are not afraid.’*

Those international visitors who had not previously visited China indicated that they had undertaken a lot of research about the country and had carefully chosen their tour routes. Some had obtained relevant information from their friends and families who had been to China before, suggesting that word-of-mouth communications play an important role in the formation of country image (also see Chapter 3).

Some interviewees provided specific reasons visiting China. For examples, an American lady (A15) explained that she had come to China because she had become very interested in Buddhism. She had already visited other two places associated with Buddhism, namely India and Nepal, but particularly wanted to visit Tibet. Hence, she

had chosen a China tour that included Tibet in its itinerary. Interestingly, one interviewee (A3) explained that she had a rather unusual reason for visiting China; her sister-in-law had died without fulfilling her desire to visit the country. *'When she was alive, she wished to visit China. Thus, this time I come to China is to fulfill her last wish,'* said the interviewee.

Additionally, when all interviewees were asked about safety issues in China, almost all of them admitted that they felt China is a safe country to visit and that this was considered as a main factor influencing their destination choice. Thus, this outcome once again provided evidence that safety factors play an important role in tourists' destination choice.

- International visitors' image of China

The outcomes of the semi-structured interviews with international visitors revealed that only a few interviewees had a good or positive image of China. Interestingly, those, who held negative images or no image at all of China were from the U.S.A. (see Table 7.71).

**Table 7.71** Interviewees' image of China

Interviewee	The image of China
B1, F1, A7	Code A – positive image: big, blooming, traditional, and intriguing country; rapid development of economy
A1, A2, A3, A5, A6, A11, A12, A15	Code B – negative image: safety issue, language barrier, economy, military, human right
A4, A8, A9, A10, A13, A14	Code C – did not have any/much image of China

To take some examples, on the one hand a visitor from the U.K said that China was a big country and a booming place. Another visitor from France thought China was a traditional, intriguing country with a fascinating history and culture, with beautiful landscapes.

Nevertheless, on the other hand most interviewees admitted to holding negative images of China prior to their visit. These negative images mainly focused on safety issues, language barriers, the undeveloped economy, the military, and (abuse of) human rights. Some perceived China to be a 'big country' with a 'large population', and

still 'underdeveloped'. Also, people in China were 'not friendly' and 'only speak Chinese'. Some examples have been taken as follows:

*For the very first time, it was 22 years ago. We thought China was extremely big and I was concerned about the safety and the size of the country. Also, I was concerned about our ability to travel when we spoke absolutely no Chinese language. (A1)*

*Before coming to here, I thought China was not really developed and considered it still to be a third-world country. (A5)*

However, some interviewees had more negative images of China. As discussed previously in Chapters 3 and 4, China differs from western countries, of course, inasmuch as it remains, despite significant socio-economic reforms since the 1980s, a socialist state governed by the Communist Party. Owing to the differences in political systems, China was for a long period excluded from western capitalist systems and most western media, particularly the American media, tended to make negative reports about the country, including its politics, economy, military and society. As a consequence, many Americans had negative image of China.

During the interviews, one interviewee (A6) talked about human rights in China: *I am still concerned about those working in a factory, and on the farm, do they really have a freedom in some of other larger cities?* One of them also (A12) mentioned China's military: *'I expected it to be a little more controlling. I thought there would be a lot of military.'* Another interviewee (A15) directly pointed out that her image of China was such that she had not much wanted to go there.

An article 'How Americans and Chinese View Each Other', published in 2012 by Pew Research, shows similar outcomes and once again supports the argument that most Americans hold negative perceptions of China, particularly with regards to the economy, environment, and human rights. According to Pew Research (2012a), as economic and geopolitical competition grows between the U.S. and China, Americans have hardened their views about China.

During the interviews, interestingly, a relatively frequent response amongst interviewees to the question about their prior image of China was 'I did not have much image of China'. As discussed in Chapter 3, people who have never been a particular country or destination, such as China, may have few if any impressions and simply seek information about the country through newspapers, TV programmes or the Internet. For example, one of interviewees (A13) said she did not know much about

China but, once she had decided to visit the country, she started to look for some articles about China. Chapter 3 also argued if a tourist is not particularly interested in a certain country or destination, s/he will have limited knowledge about, or little image of, that country/destination. To take some examples from the interviews, one interviewee (A4) used the word 'guess' to describe her image of China: *'I guessed that it was just a little big country.'* Another interviewee (A6) admitted that he had very limited knowledge about China. He just thought China should be different from western countries. Another interviewee (A10) mentioned that he only knew the United States was 'ahead' of other countries. For China, he did not have any image. Therefore, this time he would like to go to China to see how people live and how they dress. In other words, China for him was mysterious and unknown. Then an interviewee from the U.S. simply thought the buildings in China would be really traditional.

Chapter 3 discussed many of the factors that may influence a country's image, including population characteristics, political system, technical developments, the globalization of business, the history of the country, and so forth. Combining the theory of country image with the outcomes of interviews suggests that some factors play a more crucial role than others in influencing a country's image. It can be, therefore, concluded that history and culture, environment, economy and politics are main factors influencing international visitors' image of China.

- International visitors' first impression of China

Although it was evident from both the survey and interviews that many international visitors had very limited knowledge and negative images of China prior their arrival, the attitudes of most visitors changed significantly once they had been in the country.

Similar to the outcomes of survey, many interviewees' first impression of China can be summarized as a 'big and fast-developing country', with 'modernized cities', and 'very friendly people'. In other words, their first impressions were mainly related to Chinese people's attitudes towards international visitors, safety factors, the rapid development of economy and the related achievements it brought, including modernized urban construction, and the application of high technology (see Table 7.72 overleaf).

**Table 7.72** Interviewees' first impression of China after their arrival

Interviewee	First impression of China
A1, A2, A3, A4, A6, A7, A8, A12, A13, A14, A15	Code A – positive impression, e.g. friendly people, economy, technology, urban construction, safety
A5, A9,	Code B – negative impression, e.g. environment pollution, population
B1, F1, A10, A11	Code C – both positive and negative impression

One of interviewees (A2) was impressed that China is more developed. His biggest impression of China was the kindness of people. Several other interviewees also expressed their surprise as follows:

*I am amazed by its beauty and by its level of technology. I thought it was a third-world country, but now I consider it is a first-world country. (A8)*

*I can't help feeling how organized it is, how clean it is, and how safe it is. (A14)*

*I was surprised how modern, how urbanized the city was. (A15)*

Nevertheless, there were a few interviewees holding critical attitudes about China, particularly focusing on pollution, the large population, and the increasing number of skyscrapers. One interviewee (A5) criticized that China was apparently famous for grey sky, so that everything looked blurry. Another interview (A9) was not satisfied with crowded streets and air pollution.

Indeed, several interviewees expressed their neutral attitude with regard to their first impression of China. On the one hand, they were surprised about the rapid development of economy in China; on the other hand, they noticed some consequences that the rapid development of economy had brought. In particular, those interviewees who had visited China previously were aware of what was happening in China and were able to provide a comparative opinion. For example, one of interviewees (B1) described when he was in China the first time, he realized that the country was beginning to boom but that the amount of public transportation, such as taxies, was increasing. Now, it is shame that taxies were used more frequently than bicycles [in Chengdu]. In other words, he thought that China had become unfriendly to the environment.

Evidently, China's economic development has been and continues to be, very rapid. Economic openness has broadened people's horizons and opened their minds, and has facilitated contact with the outside world. In the meantime, however, a number of shortcomings are associated with this rapid economic development. For example, industrial development in China has resulted varying forms of environmental pollution, such as vehicle emissions. Although the growth in car ownership has increased personal mobility, there have been significant increases in air pollution and traffic congestion. Moreover, economic development has enlarged the disparity between the rich and the poor. As one of interviewees (F1) stressed, China is a surprising country that is full of contrasts.

- Differences between international visitors' image of China and their actual experience in China (Question 5)

When the interviewees were asked if there was any difference between their image of China and their actual experience of the country, only one answered to the effect that there was no difference (B1). The majority of interviewees revealed that their experience in China was at least satisfactory and had exceeded their expectations. To take some examples, one interviewee (A1) stressed that her experience in China was better than she had first thought it was going to be, as there were many more interesting sites, locations, and museums to visit than she expected. Another (A15) expressed the view that there was a big difference between his image of China and how he experienced it in actuality:

*Previously I did not have much of an image of China and just thought it was a third-world country. But now I just think my image was completely wrong. China is not an emerging nation anymore. Now I have a very significant, clear and big impression of China. I think I love it and will definitely come back another time.*

One female interviewee from the USA (A13) stated that her experience of China had provided her with a more positive impression of the country than the information she got from her own country, which she had found to be negative and in some respects frightening.

Another interviewee (F1) also opined: *'I didn't expect such modernity and innovation alongside tradition, such an intense and dense human activity. China is a country of effervescence, teeming and active day and night.'*

It is evident, therefore, that many respondents, particularly those from the U.S.A, generally believed there was a great difference between their image of China and their actual experience of the country. Visual impacts and their actual experience led them to begin to question their previous opinion about China and to rethink the authenticity and objectivity of information they received from their national media. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that the protection of environment is being neglected while economy is developed rapidly in China.

### **7.3.3.3 International visitors' perception of the Three Gorges**

- The number of visits to the Three Gorges and interviewees' impression of the Three Gorges (Question 6)

Similar to the survey, most of those participating in the qualitative interviews said that they were visiting the region for the first time, with just two interviewees (B1 and A1) having visited the Three Gorges twice or more, specifically before and after the construction of the Three Gorges Dam. These two interviewees were thus asked an additional question which allowed them to describe their impression of the Three Gorges.

One (B1) said he had a positive impression of the Three Gorges and witnessed the transformation of the region. The interviewee further explained that he had been to the Three Gorges twice. Before his visit, he thought it was a small place. But after the visit, he just realized it was a huge place. The first time was before the construction of the Dam. The river was relatively low and narrow. When he saw surrounding sceneries, they were just so close to him, but the mountains on both side of the river looked very high and steep. The second time was after the construction of the Dam. He travelled from Chongqing to Shanghai. When he arrived at WanSheng (now called Wanzhou), the river looked much higher and wider than before. The views changed hugely. There were many new towns emerging along the Three Gorges. Nevertheless he preferred to see old towns, as those old towns would never be seen again after the completion of the Dam. The interviewee thought it was shame to see those old buildings were pushed down and flooded by the river. Moreover, when he was in the Lesser Three Gorges before the construction of the Dam, he could see lots of graves and rocks. But for the second visit, the water got much higher and flooded the lower ground. The interviewee stressed that he was really interested in coffin; however, some coffins have been moved to museum before the water level rose.

Another interviewee (A1) explained why she had visited the Three Gorges twice before this visit. Her first visit was to explore the natural scenery in the Three Gorges region. At that time, the construction of the Dam had just started. Then she made her second visit to the region, largely because of the misleading information in the media, as discussed in Chapter 5. She had read in the newspapers that the river had flooded fifty percent of the Three Gorges landscape, and as was afraid that everything would be flooded, she and her husband decided to go back again. She wanted to see how it had changed, how people had moved up from the land right along the river that she saw they were working, and the marks along the side of the Gorges which indicated the percentage that had been flooded.

For these two interviewees, their impression of the Three Gorges was related to the Dam. Therefore, it can be argued that the construction of the Dam had a great impact on the Three Gorges as a tourist destination

Apart from the interviewee (B1) who had been the Three Gorges before, the other interviewees all claimed that they had no pre-images of the place. This is perhaps not surprising given that, in recent years, the Three Gorges as a tourist destination, has benefitted from less promotion as a consequence has become less well-known than, for example, the Great Wall and Terracotta Warriors, as discussed in Chapter 5.

- The reason of visiting this region (Question 7)

According to results above, all international visitors participating in interviews were asked why they had chosen the Three Gorges as a part of their trip. Their answers varied, although once again the findings from the interviews revealed that friends' recommendation, the natural scenery in the region and the Dam were the main reasons for their destination choice (see, Table 7.73, also see Section 7.2.2.2).

**Table 7.73** The reason of visiting the Three Gorges

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>The reason for visit</b>
B1, A3, A5, A9, A10, A15	Code A – recommended by friends/relatives
B1, F1, A4, A14	Code B – natural scenery/ the history
A1, A6, A11, A12, A13	Code C – to see the Dam
A2, A7, A8	Code D – a part of a tour
A4	Code E – to understand local people

Indeed, the Three Gorges is famous for its natural scenery and the Three Gorges Dam (See Chapter 5). Thus, some interviewees stated they had wanted to see ‘*beautiful scenery in the Three Gorges region.*’ Some of them said they would like to see both scenery and the Dam: ‘*I thought the Three Gorges would be one of the most beautiful sections in the country. Also I did see a film about building the Dam on the Yangtze. So I would like to see them both.*’ (A13) And some were only interested in the Dam. For example, one interviewee (A11) explained:

*I want to see that massive project. I am interested in those things related to the project, such as the time spent on constructing the Dam, the cost, the relocation of the people, the engineering of the Dam. That’s a real undertaking project. And also I want to see what the effects of the Dam are.*

Another interviewee (A6) stressed that her husband worked for a hydroelectric Dam in the U.S. and, therefore, he wished to see the world’s largest Dam.

Other than the above findings, just one interviewee stated that besides his interest in the scenery and history in the region, he also wanted to get to know the local people during excursions.

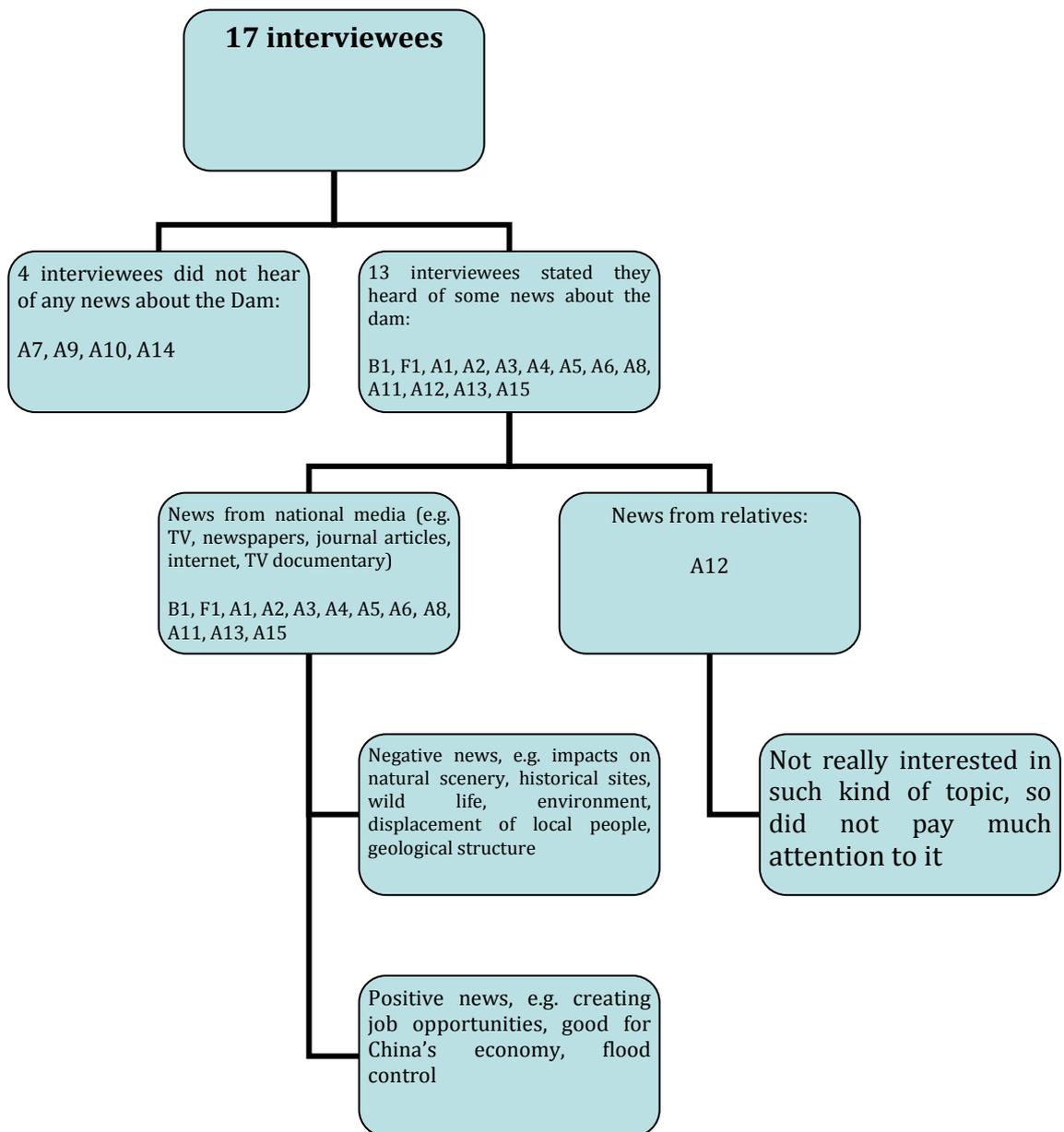
Compared with the outcome of the interviews at the Stage One, most of interviewees in the Stage Two research appeared to be more interested in the Dam than in the natural scenery. This probably reflects concerns about the Dam expressed in the media in the USA and consequential increased curiosity on the part of the American tourists to see the Dam. If this assumption is correct, then it can be said that the mass media is a powerful influence on people’s perception of a destination and destination choice.

#### **7.3.3.4 International visitors’ attitude towards the Three Gorges Dam**

- Source of information about the Three Gorges Dam

During the interviews, thirteen (76%) interviewees stated that they heard or read some news/reports related to the Dam in their country (see Figure 7.2 overleaf), mainly on national TV and in newspapers. A few interviewees found the relevant information from journal articles, internet, relatives or TV documentary. Nevertheless, one of interviewees (A12) said that even though she had heard about the Dam from her husband, she did not pay much attention as she admitted to not being interested in it.

**Figure 7.2** The number of interviewees heard of relevant news and the source of information



Reports and news related to the Dam were both positive and negative (see Figure 7.2). Negative news often focused on the transformation of tourism resources, including impacts on the natural scenery and historical sites, the disappearing wild life, water pollution, changes in geological structures and the displacement of local people. Conversely, positive news about the Dam was more limited, referring to job creation, flood control and the Dam's more general contribution to the Chinese economy.

- International visitors' opinion about the news related to the Dam

In order to verify the authenticity and objectivity of the reports related to the Dam, twelve interviewees were asked to further describe their opinion about the news (see Table 7.74).

Table 7.74 Interviewees' opinion about the news

Interviewee	Opinion about the negative news
B1, A13, A15	Code A – believe the news partially told the truth
F1, A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A8, A11	Code B – believe the news told the truth

Findings from the interviews revealed that most international visitors believed that the negative news about the Dam told them the truth and were objective. For example, an interviewee (A1) explained as follows:

*We had read in the paper and heard it from news, which revealed that it would take longer to build and take more money to build the dam than the government first said it was going to cost. It didn't frighten us because in the United States not everything goes smoothly also. I am going to assume that the news from my country told us the truth, simply because I believe from United States' experiences, not everything works perfectly, not all engineering including this big project is going to exactly act for everything. If there is problem, then just fix it.*

Another interviewee (A2) said he had heard some negative reports about the Three Gorges Dam, particularly about environmental issues, the loss of archaeological sites, and the relocation of people. However, he admitted that many Dams had also been built in the USA, including the Hoover Dam where similar issues had arisen. He thought the reports told the truth about what had happened in the Three Gorges region, as it was really balanced: pluses and minuses, positive and negative.

However, discussed in Chapters 1 and 5, most attention has been paid in the media and, hence, by the public to the resettlement of local people, environmental issues and the disappearance of historical sites. Consequently, these issues have dominated whilst the benefits from the Dam received less attention. Nevertheless, some of interviewees admitted that they only partially agreed with the views expressed their country's media. For example, one interviewee from the UK (B1) thought that the Dam

did not make the Three Gorges less attractive. On the contrary, it had made the Gorges more attractive. Particularly, the Dam would be good for the fishing industry, as there was plenty of water. The interviewee, of course, admitted that there were so many issues arising and some reports were very objective and told true stories, like information about the wildlife, environmental impact and old towns. However, he disagreed with some arguments about the Dam causing the Wenchuan earthquake. Finally, the interviewee stressed that although central government had made efforts to minimize the pollution and things looked OK so far, they still had long way to go and no one would be able to say those negative impacts could be avoided.

Another interviewee (F1) said that the negative reports she had heard were all about the destruction of archaeological sites and the displacement of people. She believed that, in this respects, the reports were accurate. However, she still believed that the country would benefit from the Dam and also there would be still be much to see in the Three Gorges region.

The relocation issue reported by newspapers was emphasized by one interviewee (A15). He thought the reports partially told the truth, particularly the issue about the compensation for those who had been relocated; however, from travel experience, he believed that local people's lives had been transformed and were getting better than before.

It should be noted here that, as mentioned in Section 7.3.3.1, a majority of the interviewees in the Stage Two research were from the U.S.A. Therefore, many of their opinions and examples were very similar. Almost all of interviewees from the U.S.A. said that they understood why China wanted to build the Dam and their attitude about the impacts of the Three Gorges Dam were relatively objective, primarily because they had had a similar experience in their country. That is, the construction of the Hoover Dam had caused much controversy at the time, and also brought both negative and positive impacts to that region.

- International visitors' perception of the Dam after the visit

All interviewees had visited the Dam and discussed their perceptions of it during the interviews (see Table 7.75 overleaf).

**Table 7.75** Coding interviewees' perception of the Dam after their visit

Interviewee	Perception of the Dam
All apart from A15	Code A – positive impression: the dam itself, ship locks, the Visitor Centre and its surrounding areas,
A 15	Code B – neutral attitude

A few words can be used to describe interviewees' experience of their visit and the Dam itself: amazing, impressive, and incredible. It was expected that there would have been a distinction between their image of the Dam and their actual experience of it. To a great extent, they found that the Dam exceed their expectations, one of interviewees (A8) provided a detailed opinion about the Dam:

*We had a very well-organized and informative Dam tour. Particularly, the Dam center provides much information about what happened and is going to happen during and after the construction of the Dam, including the whole process of the construction of the Dam, the displacement of over one million local people, the creation of ship locks, and the future elevator for ships. All things related to the Dam are mindboggling.*

Another interviewee (A12) stated that he thought the technology of the Three Gorges Dam and ship locks was much better than other Dams in the rest of the world. In particular, when he looked at the Dam and watched the cruise ships moving from one lock to the next, he was highly impressed by all the technology behind the project. He also acknowledged that the Visitor Center was located at a small but very beautiful park with great views of the whole area. At the Center, he was able see many photos and 3D model of the Dam project, which represent the history of the construction of the Dam.

Similarly, most interviewees were impressed by the sheer scale of the Dam, the technology of locks and the environment around the Dam Center. Although one of interviewees (A14) said that she was not interested in engineering, she nevertheless found the project was fascinating when they actually saw the Dam.

One interviewee (A15) held a neutral attitude about the Dam. He indicated that he was not interested in the Dam. However, he thought that besides its economic contribution, the Dam was also a good tourist attraction.

In short, there was consensus that the Dam will contribute significantly to socio-economic development in China. As the saying goes, ‘Hearsay does not equal eye-witness’. The Three Gorges Dam is a typical example. That is, although this project is controversial, to visit it in person can help people develop their own opinions about the Dam.

- Major concern(s) when international visitors travelled in the Three Gorges region

Similarly, in the Stage Two research, it was necessary to identify international visitors’ major concerns about the Three Gorges region as a basis for considering how to improve Three Gorges tourism.

According to Table 7.76, most interviewees were concerned about the living conditions of relocated people and the transformation of tourism resources, followed by water pollution, ecological environment, and the function of the Dam. Nevertheless, two interviewees claimed that they had no concerns and just would like to enjoy their trip in this region.

**Table 7.76** Coding international visitors’ major concern(s) in the Three Gorges region

Interviewee	Major concern(s)
B1, F1, A1, A4, A5, A10	Code A – relocated people’s living conditions
B1, F1, A3, A6, A8, A14	Code B – transformation of tourism resources, e.g. historical sites, natural scenery
A8, A10, A11, A13	Code C – water pollution
A2	Code D – ecological environment, e.g. wild life
A15	Code E – the function of the Dam
A9, A12	Code F – no concerns.

Just one interview respondent (A2) stated that he was concerned about wildlife, as he was an advocate of ‘wildlife in natural world’. However, he had noticed that there was not much wildlife in the Three Gorges region.

Nevertheless, in the interviews, some respondents expressed their regret at the disappearance of some historical sites. One of interviewees (A3) stated, ‘*I was concerned about the historical sites that have disappeared, because they represent the*

*place's culture. We belong to the civilization. When a historical site is destroyed, it has gone forever.* Another interviewee (A14) agreed and pointed out that some old buildings in the Three Gorges region were a part of the character in this country. Therefore, they should be protected, not dismantled or submerged.

Typically in western countries, much attention is paid to the protection of historical relics. Specifically, policies are usually formulated to protect cultural relics and ancient buildings. However, in the Three Gorges region, as many historical relics were buried underground and scattered around the area, it became difficult to excavate them before the construction of the Dam (more details can be found in Chapter 1 and 5).

In addition to the points discussed above, some interviewees stressed that they were also concerned about local people's living conditions in the Three Gorges region. One interviewee (A5) mentioned that he had noticed the displacement of towns and villages along the river and had wondered how the local farmers were able to work the almost vertical fields on the hills. Indeed, he expressed the view that farmers in the region must have a difficult life. Another interviewee (A1) expressed her concerns about the displacement of local people as follows:

*I was concerned about the people who had to be moved, simply because nobody in any country likes to be told what they must do. I was certain it was to be difficult for the people on the village where they all lived along the river and they were all farmers, to have to move to higher ground. For fishermen, their whole life was working with river, but they have to move to another village or another town. It is just difficult for people to be told by the government what they must do. We don't like to be told what we have to do; even though it is good for the whole country.*

Indeed, some interviews also paid much attention to the water pollution. As one interviewee (A13) stressed that during his trip, he could see lots of debris floating on the river. He guessed this must be garbage thrown in the river. Occasionally he could see people in boats salvaging the debris. To effectively deal with the water pollution is already high on the agenda, and should be considered as a long-term plan and receive more attention from the government and the public.

- International visitors' favorite places at the Three Gorges

The findings from interviews suggested that most interviewees liked the natural scenery in the Three Gorges region, followed by historical sites, in particular the hanging coffins, and the Dam. A few interviewees mentioned the parts they enjoyed

least (see Table 7.77), with two interviewees claiming that they did not like the Ghost town because they were not interested in or really understood such kind of culture.

**Table 7.77** The part(s) that interviewees enjoyed most vs. the part(s) they enjoyed least

Interviewee	The part they enjoyed most	Interviewee	The part they enjoyed least
B1, A2	Code A – all attractions	A4	Code A1 – the Dam
F1, A4, A7, A10, A14	Code B – historical sites, e.g. hanging coffins, ancient writing in the cliffs, Ghost town, wooden pagoda	A7, A12	Code B1 – historical sites: Ghost town
A1, A3, A5, A7, A8, A9, A10, A12, A13, A14, A15	Code C – natural scenery		
A6, A11, A12	Code D – the Dam		

During the interview, each interviewee specified which attraction they liked most. For example, a female tourist (A1) who had been to the region before said she liked looking at the scenery along the side of the river, because it continues to be beautiful. Additionally, she also liked the fact that the people, who were moved to the higher land, were given cleaner and nicer houses.

Another interviewee (A3) described how she had liked it when the cruise passed through Shennong Stream, as she had been able to sit on the boat, watch how boat trackers work, and enjoy natural landscape around her. Some respondents, however, stated that the part they had enjoyed most was seeing the Three Gorges Dam, particularly when the cruise went through the ship locks, as they were so close to see how the ship locks work.

Two interviewees expressed that they had enjoyed the cruise as a whole through the Three Gorges region and had liked all tourist spots they had been to. As one of them (B1) stated, *‘particularly, if you didn’t expect much before your travel, you would get lots of surprises. So I really enjoyed the travel there and there were no complaints.’* Another interviewee (A10) pointed out that she had particularly liked the Lesser Three Gorges, Fengdu Ghost City and optional excursion to the wooden pagoda. She further

explained that she did not expect to visit so many distinctive scenic spots in the Three Gorges region. After the visit, she thought the Three Gorges was a place worth visiting, as it combined Chinese culture with natural scenery in one experience.

Overall, then, the results from the interviews demonstrated that international visitors most enjoyed the natural scenery, some historical sites and the Dam as elements of their cruise in the Three Gorges. Conversely, no one mentioned the lifestyles and customs of the local ethnic minorities, whilst historical sites and Ghost town seemed less attractive to some international visitors.

### **7.3.3.5 Recommendations for the improvement of Three Gorges tourism**

Finally, all international visitors participating in the interviews were asked to make some recommendations for the improvement of Three Gorges tourism. Some of them provided very useful and constructive suggestions, but some said that they could not give any advice, as they did not know how the site had evolved to what it is today. All answers have been summarized in Table 7.78.

**Table 7.78** Interviewees' recommendation for the improvement of the Three Gorges tourism

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Code for recommendations</b>
F1, A9, A11, A12, A13, A14, A15	Code A – not sure
B1, A5, A7, A8	Code B – tourist circuit design: more time to see more attractions and learn local custom, more distinctive attractions
B1, A1	Code C – local infrastructures, e.g. toilet
B1, A1, A6	Code D – protection of natural scenery, environment, and wild life
B1	Code E – the introduction of budget hotels
A2, A10	Code F – more publicity
A3, A4	Code F – facilities and services provided on cruise ship

In the interviews, some respondents stressed the need for a well-designed tourist circuit for international visitors. Due to their tight travel schedule, international visitors tend to have less opportunities and time to visit more distinctive attractions and

understand local customs. One interviewee's suggestions (B1) were related not only to the design of travel route, but also the protection of natural landscape, the improvement of local infrastructure and the introduction of budget hotels:

*International visitors should be provided with more opportunities to experience local customs. Moreover, local facilities are good, apart from toilets. I like natural things, so I would suggest not changing natural things too much; otherwise, they won't be original. Also there are a lot of new 4 or 5 star hotels, but from my point of view, it is not necessary to build such a high number of luxury hotels. 3 star hotels can provide basic services to tourists and tourists are more concerned about the attractions during their travel, and less interested in whether or not they are living in a 4 or 5 star hotel.*

Besides the improvement of local infrastructure, some interviewees also suggested the improvement of facilities and services on the cruise ships, such as better bathrooms and more diverse food on offer.

Another interviewee (A1) suggested that smaller boats should be provided, so that visitors can go into the area along the side of the gorges. Additionally, the more contact that international visitors can have with the actual life along the side of the river, the greater will be the benefit to the region's tourism.

One of interviewees (A2) made a suggestion regarding marketing and promotion.

*I suggest advertising/doing more publicity for this place in the USA in magazines and newspapers. Or perhaps the local government can invite international travel journals to come here, providing a little free trip, so they can write good articles about this region.*

One interviewee (A6) was critical that the Yangtze itself was heavily polluted; he complained that it was an unappealing muddy color and strewn with rubbish, both natural and manmade, and he thought that this seriously affected Three Gorges tourism and tourists' travel experience. Therefore, he suggested that the government should take further action to protect the river from pollution.

These suggestions from international visitors are addressed further in Chapter 8, which consider how to develop effective strategies to promote the development of the new Three Gorges tourism.

### **7.3.3.6 Interim summery**

According to the discussion above, it is evident that most of interviewees held similar or the same view with respect to some questions, such as the perception of China and the Dam, opinions about negative news related to the Dam, and major concern during their visit to the Three Gorges region. This is because the majority of international visitors participating in the interview were from the U.S.A.; ‘Cultural Proximity’ is likely to result in the similarity or consistency of thoughts about a particular topic or event. Nevertheless, the outcomes from the interviews indicated that these interviewees had relatively objective attitude towards China, the Three Gorges and the Dam.

### **7.3.4 Third part: analysis and discussion of findings from the interview with tour guide**

As discussed in Chapter 6, in addition to interviews and surveys with international visitors, an additional way to obtain tourists’ opinion about China, the Three Gorges and the Dam was through an interview with a tour guide. Therefore, the third part of this chapter analyzes and discusses the findings from the interview with the tour guide. Besides exploring key themes, the interview questions for the tour guide (see Table 7.79 overleaf) also added additional dimensions related to the type of China tours international visitors usually choose, the characteristics of international visitors, training programme for tours guides, and his opinion about the impact of the Dam on the regional tourism. As seen from Table 7.79, questions one to five allowed the tour guide to talk about his experience of international visitors’ attitudes to various aspects of China. The purpose of question 6 was to explore how local government provides training courses to tour guides, whilst questions seven to eleven focused on understanding visitors’ attitude towards the Three Gorges and the Dam. Finally, the last question sought to elicit additional information about the tour guide’s own perceptions of the Three Gorges Dam. During the interview, the order of questions the interviewer asked was different from the order of questions shown in the Table 7.79 overleaf. The tour guide answered questions in Chinese and his answers, as with other interviews, were recorded through the use of the digital voice recorder. Therefore, after the interview, his answers were converted into text, translated into English and saved to the computer.

**Table 7.79** Interview questions for the tour guide

Question No.	Questions
1	According to your experience, please describe international visitors' perceptions of China.
2	International visitors like participating in tours to China, so which routes did they usually choose?
3	According to your experience, what are the characteristics of international visitors?
4	Are international visitors interested in Chinese food after their arrival?
5	During their travel in China, what are the things that foreign visitors dislike?
6	As an experienced tour guide, have you received any relevant professional training provided by national or local government?
7	After traveling in the Three Gorges Reservoir area, what are international visitors' overall perceptions of the Three Gorges tourism? Are they concerned about the environment of the Three Gorges Reservoir area?
8	Are international visitors concerned about the displacement of the local people, or something related to historical sites/relics?
9	What are international visitors' attitudes towards the Three Gorges Dam?
10	Some tourist attractions are included in the tour, but some are not. Would you recommend visitors to visit those optional attractions, such as Shibaozhai Pagoda?
11	As a tour guide, do you meet international visitors who have previously visited the Three Gorges before the construction of the Dam, and have returned following the construction of the Dam to witness the change?
12	After talking about international visitors' perceptions of the Three Gorges and the Dam, could you please provide your own opinion about the Three Gorges? Do you think the Three Gorges looks different now, compared with its former version? In other words, do you think the Dam has significantly impacted on the Three Gorges?

#### ***7.3.4.1 The background of the tour guide***

The tour guide had been working in the tourism industry for about ten years. Most international tour groups he took were from England and Australia. This may be explained by the fact that the agent for whom he was working has developed business in the source markets of the UK, Australian and New Zealand, whilst different travel agents may develop different travel source markets.

#### ***7.3.4.2 International visitors' perception of China***

- International visitors' pre-image and impression of China (Question 1, 4 and 5)

As for international visitors' image of China, the outcome from the interview with tour guide contrasted slightly with the outcomes from the visitor survey and interviews. The tour guide suggested that, on the one hand, international visitors generally thought that China was a magical and beautiful country, and Chinese people were very friendly. On the other hand, they believed that China lacked democracy, Chinese people were very poor and there were a lot of cheap products in China. Therefore, the tour guide thought that international visitors' image of China was rather conservative and traditional. Indeed, he imagined that, in the eyes of many foreigners, China remains a traditional, undeveloped, rural country with people in the fields planting rice, their ploughs being pulled by buffalo. In other words, he considers that foreign visitors believed that China was still in a natural and original state.

Nevertheless, after their arrival, international visitors usually have a very positive impression of China. As the tour guide explained, when international visitors saw Shanghai as well as many of the big inland cities of China, such as Chongqing in southwest China, they marveled at the city's modernization and prosperity. Then they usually drew a comparison between these cities in China and those that they were familiar with in their own country, such as New York or Vancouver.

In addition to findings discussed above, the interview with the tour guide also identified some issues relevant to international visitors' impressions of China. Firstly, with regards to China's politics and policy, once international visitors have arrived in China, the topic they are typically most interested in discussing with tour guide is 'what do you think China's family planning policy?' However, according to the tour guide, international visitors rarely talk about China's politics, knowing that China is a special country with the socialist system.

Secondly, Chinese food, as an element of the country's culture, is well-known globally. Therefore, Chinese cuisine could be considered to be a fundamental element of the country's tourism product or experience. Generally, according to the tour guide, international visitors like Chinese food; however, whether or not international visitors can taste authentic Chinese food in China largely depends on the tour guide. As the tour guide explained, in his tour groups, most people liked Chinese food and he often took them to the local restaurants which could offer authentic Chinese food and understand the needs of foreign visitors. Indeed, there were a handful of people who disliked Chinese food; no matter what they ate, they just did not like it.

Thirdly, it was revealed that generally there are three things that foreign visitors generally dislike: 1) people spit in public areas; 2) it is crowded everywhere; 3)

infrastructure construction, particularly public toilets, still does not meet international standards.

- The type of tour in China and length of stay (Question 2)

The tour guide in his interview explained which tour routes international visitors usually choose. He identified a number of types of tour routes, all popular with international visitors, and explained why tourists choose particular routes. The main tour routes and the number of days can be seen as follows:

1. If time is limited for visitors, they usually choose an 8-day tour to China focused on Beijing-Xi'an. Many international visitors visit China because of these two famous historical cities.
2. If visitors have more time, they usually select a 10-day tour to China. They can visit either three cities, namely, Beijing, Xi'an and Shanghai, or four cities: Beijing, Xi'an, Yangshuo, and Hong Kong. Yangshuo is famous for its natural landscape.
3. Many tour routes are designed based on two destinations, Beijing and Xi'an. For example, if visitors have longer holidays, they often choose tour routes that include southwest region, either the Panda Base in Chengdu, or the Three Gorges between Chongqing and Yichang. This tour route is Beijing – Xi'an – Chengdu or Chongqing – Yangshuo – Shanghai, taking about two weeks.
4. There are also some 20-day or 25-day tours to China, which usually include Yunnan. Nevertheless, some itineraries exclude Yunnan, such as 25-day tour: Hong Kong – Yangshuo – Chongqing Three Gorges – Chengdu – Xi'an – Beijing – Shanghai – Suzhou – Hangzhou – Huangshan – Shanghai.
5. The longest tour takes 29 days, which is 25-day itinerary plus 4-day Yunnan tour.

The tour guide added more explanation for the third type of tour routes:

*Between Chongqing and Chengdu, international visitors prefer to visit the Three Gorges in Chongqing and Yichang. However, this does not mean that visitors do not like pandas. I guess that there must be some factors influencing their final choice. Indeed many foreigners like pandas, and would specifically like to choose the Chengdu Panda Base as a destination. But I have never heard that anyone has specifically chosen the Three Gorges as a destination because he/she likes this place.*

When the tour guide was asked an additional question related to the sort of site that international visitors were interested in, he stated that international visitors, as leisure travelers, were more interested in China's history and culture, such as the Terracotta Warriors in Xi'an, Beijing's Forbidden City and so on, rather than visiting China's big cities. Nevertheless, although they had less interest in China's big and modern cities, they still marveled at China's economic development and urban change.

- The characteristics of international visitors (Question 3)

With regard to the characteristics of international visitors' age, the tour guide explained that it can be divided into several groups according to tour type. In the adventure tour group, most visitors are between 20- and 50-year old. In economic tour group, most are 20-30 years of age. And in the comfortable group, the majority is between 40- and 50-year old.

Moreover, the tour guide's comments about the nature of the groups of tourists he leads are reflected in the occupation profile from the survey. According to the work experience, the tour guide provided more information related to the characteristics of inbound visitors' occupation:

*The majority of tour groups I took were low-end and middle-end groups. Low-end group refers to basic tour group, namely backpacks group, whereas middle-end group refers to comfortable tour group. In the comfortable tour groups, international visitors mainly are retirees, teachers, such as kindergarten teacher, primary school teacher, and secondary school teacher, nurse, and IT professionals.*

It is known that retired people, particularly from western countries, tend to have sufficient time and disposable income participate in long-haul travel and tourism. The outcome of both the survey and the interviews reflect this fact.

#### **7.3.4.3 International visitors' and the tour guide's attitude towards the Three Gorges**

- International visitors' attitude towards the Three Gorges (Question 7 and 8)

During the interview, the tour guide stressed although most international visitors only visit the Three Gorges on one occasion, they are nevertheless left with a strong and positive impression of the area, perhaps explaining the extent to which so many

respondents claimed they had been encouraged to visit by their friends and relatives. Moreover, and as discussed in Chapter 5, although the Three Gorges was initially famous for its natural scenery, it has arguably become more well-known following the construction of the Three Gorges Dam.

The tour guide also observed that international visitors' perceptions of travelling in the Three Gorges can be divided into two categories: their attitudes with respect to the cruise experience, such as service quality and recreational facilities on board; and, their perceptions of the scenery / landscape / attractions experienced along the cruise. The tour guide, referring to international visitors' perceptions of tourist sites, stated that

*The majority of international visitors were not satisfied with the entry ticket price of tourist sites. Indeed, there is still a dual pricing system in some parts of China, whereby foreigners pay much more than Chinese for tickets, particularly for the entry to tourist sites. Therefore, most of them thought the price was unreasonable.'*

Nevertheless, it is noticeable that both international visitors and the tour guide raised the issue related to the quality of service on the cruise ship, reflecting the discussion in Chapter 5. This indicates that it is both essential and urgent to improve the standards of the cruise ships and the service quality they offer; otherwise it will affect the further development of the Three Gorges tourism.

Furthermore, the tour guide also talked about international visitors' view about the environment in the Three Gorges region. According to him, although most international visitors do not actively discuss the environmental issue during their travels, they pay much attention to it. Typically, they most concerned about are two particular questions: first, where have the former houses and graves gone? In addressing this question, the tour guide provided an explanation as follows: *'the relevant government departments have dealt with those houses and graves properly. The former houses and graves have been either dismantled or relocated. And then the area was disinfected in order to prevent water pollution'*. Second, what is the impact of the Dam on the river creatures, such as sturgeon? And how did the government deal with this issue? However, the latter is a relatively professional question; therefore, there were not many visitors asking for answer. During their travel in the Three Gorges region, international visitors could feel that the Chinese government was concerned about environmental problems and making efforts to solve the environment-related problems in the Three Gorges Reservoir area. For example, during their trip they could often see a large number of special boats cleared river trash and floating debris, and dealt with them effectively.

Nevertheless, the tour guide often talked about the water pollution problems with his group members. He sometimes explained *'the river looks clearer and greener than ever, but in fact the river is dirty. Compared with the situation before, the river water flows more slowly and has become a large artificial lake; therefore, a lot of sediment cannot be washed away in time, which makes the water pollution becomes serious'*.

With respect to cultural attractions and local customs of the Three Gorges area, the tour guide stressed if visitors are interested in it, they often research into this prior to their visit and then ask tour guide relevant questions during their trip. However, many international visitors, particularly those for whom it is the first trip to the area, are less interested in and have limited knowledge of the cultural sites and attractions in the Three Gorges.

In addition, the tour guide emphasized that international visitors were concerned about the resettlement of the local people, as there were a large number of international visitors asking him about where the local people have been moved. However, since the resettlement of local people is not closely related to the tourism sector, it will not be further discussed in this research.

- Tour guide's attitude towards the Three Gorges (Question 10 and 12)

Compared with interviewees' views, arguably the tour guide's opinion about the transformation of Three Gorges' landscape should be the most authoritative and credible owing to the frequent travel to this region. In the interview, the tour guide used an example to compare what the Three Gorges' landscape looked like before and after the construction of the Dam.

*Before the construction of the Dam, when I stood on Baidicheng (White Emperor Town), looking up at the entrance of Qutang Gorge, I thought the scenery was extremely spectacular. Passed by Baidicheng, there was a plank built on one side of Qutang Gorge. The plank was extended throughout entire Qutang Gorge. When I walked on the plank, overlooking the rolling river below, I could feel another kind of spectacle of Qutang Gorge. However, after the water storage in the Three Gorges Reservoir, when I once again came to the same position, looking up at the entrance of Qutang Gorge, I could strongly feel that the grandeur of Qutang Gorge has been greatly weakened. I could see the transformation of scenery in the Three Gorges: firstly, the flow of the river water has become slower; secondly, with the rise of water level, canyons in the Gorges did not look*

*deep anymore; thirdly, the plank on the side of Qutang Gorge has been flooded. If you let me draw an analogy, I would say: once Qutang was a hero, now Qutang is a coward. In addition, the water storage in the Three Gorges Reservoir has affected the natural scenery of Lesser Three Gorges, to a large extent. For example, in the past, there were some rocky headlands on both sides of Lesser Three Gorges. Visitors could disembark and walk in the canyon to feel the nature. However, now visitors can only sit on the cruise/boat to enjoy the scenery.*

This view reflected what was discussed in Chapters 1 and 5. Although the national and local governments denied that the construction of the Dam and water storage in the Three Gorges Reservoir had had limited impact on the region's natural scenery, it is evident that the quality and beauty of the natural sceneries in the Three Gorges has been diminished following the filling of the Reservoir.

Additionally, the tour guide emphasized that the Dam had also significantly affected some historical sites of the region. As introduced in Chapter 6, there are many distinctive historical sites in the Three Gorges region, some of which were included in the tour but some, such as the Shibaozhai Pagoda, were not. Those sites, however, have become less attractive to international visitors due to the construction of the Dam. Therefore, the tour guide was asked if he would recommend visitors to visit those optional attractions, such as Shibaozhai Pagoda. The tour guide stressed that he would certainly recommend some good additional sights to international visitors although he could not recommend some attractions, including the Shibaozhai Pagoda. The reason for this was that before the water storage in the Three Gorges Reservoir area, when the cruise passed Shibaozhai Pagoda, visitors on the cruise could gaze upon its majestic appearance from a long distance; this unique building would usually hold visitors' attention. Indeed, many international visitors had been willing to pay extra to visit this attraction. Now, however, one-third of Shibaozhai Pagoda is hidden behind a big Dam, which was built to protect the entrance of the building from the rising waters. As a consequence, the building has lost its original charm and it would be difficult to convince tourists to visit this attraction.

#### **7.3.4.4 International visitors' perception of the Dam**

According to the tour guide, he had never met any international visitors who had previously visited the Three Gorges before the construction of the Dam, and had returned following the construction of the Dam to witness the change.

Since the Dam has had a number of negative impacts on the Three Gorges region, the tour guide indicated that those international visitors who revealed that wanted to visit the Dam perhaps had two purposes: first, to visit the Dam itself; second, to witness the consequences of the Dam's construction. Nevertheless, the tour guide realized a strange phenomenon when talking about international visitors' perceptions of the Dam:

*Whether starting from upstream or from downstream to visit the Three Gorges Dam, when each tour group whose journey started from the upstream, Chongqing, was asked in the Three Gorges tour which was your favorite experience and which did you dislike most, most international visitors said they did not like the Three Gorges Dam tour, called a 'lowlight'.*

Although these international visitors did not give any specific reason, based on the tour guide's experience and previous conversation with other visitors, it was considered that several factors affected their attitude towards the Dam. First, before visiting the Dam, they were undoubtedly influenced by media campaigns had a high expectations about the Dam. However, when they actually saw the Dam, it was not how they had imagined it to be. Second, there were other factors causing such negative attitude about the Dam, such as the weather, the tour guide's explanation, and personal opinions of the Dam. Third, it may be associated with the design of the travel route design. The tour guide further explained,

*Starting from upstream, tourist attractions in the Three Gorges tour include the Three Gorges Dam. Therefore, whether visitors like it or not, they have to visit the Dam. This is mandatory, which could make visitors have the sense of exclusion to a large extent. On the contrary, the tour starting from the downstream excludes the visit of the Three Gorges Dam. Thus, visitors could choose whether or not to visit the Dam. Visitors who were interested in the Dam would usually choose the Dam tour as an extension. As a result, their feedback*

*about the Dam was more positive than those who started the tour from the upstream.*

In general, it was found that many international visitors interested in the Three Gorges Dam. Indeed, the tour guide emphasized that certain types of international visitors showed positive interest in the Dam, such as professionals engaging in hydraulic engineering or architectural design, and so on. Nevertheless, different tourists inevitably hold differing views about the Dam. For example, the tour guide referred to an old couple he once took to visit the Three Gorges Dam. After the visit, the old lady said she was very upset, because she thought the beautiful nature around the Dam had been destroyed.

Therefore, it can be argued that affected by external factors, some people are likely to form a fixed view on a certain thing. Such view tends to affect their attitude towards this thing and cannot be easily changed.

#### ***7.3.4.5 Professional training provided to local tour guides***

An extra question (Question 6) related to professional training provided to local tour guides was added in this interview, because the outcome from the visitor survey indicated some local tour guides in the Three Gorges region were not professional.

When the tour guide was asked if he had previously received any relevant professional training provided by national or local government, he admitted that the National Tourism Administration has stipulated that the local Tourism Bureau must provide local tour guides with free training each year. This is mandatory training and usually some tourism experts and professors will be invited to give a lecture and to teach tourism knowledge and experience.

However, according to international visitors, it suggested that such training provided by China National Tourism Administration was still insufficient and should be further improved in some aspects, such as professional oral English training, and interpretation training.

#### ***7.3.4.6 Interim summery***

The outcomes from the interview with the tour guide provided indirect information about international visitors' perceptions of China, the Three Gorges and the Dam. The

findings are generally in accordance with those from the visitor survey and the interviews with international visitors. At the same time, the interview also confirmed the negative impacts of the Dam on the Three Gorges tourism from the perspective of the tour guide. Therefore, some of the suggestions emerging from this interview, such as the management of tourist attractions and professional training for local tour guides, will also help the development of the new Three Gorges tourism.

#### **7.4 Chapter summary**

The outcomes of both stages of the empirical research discussed in this chapter, including the stakeholder interviews at Stage One, the interviews with international visitors at both stages, and the visitor survey and the interview with tour guide at Stage Two, reflect and build upon a number of issues with respect to the Three Gorges and tourism that have been discussed throughout this thesis. For convenience, these can be considered from two perspectives.

On the one hand, the research findings from supply side – local governments – indicate that both central and local government have made a significant effort to minimize the negative impacts arising from the construction of the Three Gorges Dam's and to develop a new Three Gorges tourism through the organization of various marketing promotional campaigns, establishing relevant policies/laws, establishing various forms of cooperation, and developing crisis management system at tourist attractions. However, as mentioned in Section 7.2.1.5, the further development of tourism in Three Gorges still faces many challenges owing to administrative divisions. Therefore cooperation between the two local governments needs to be continued and further deepened.

In addition, it can be argued that neglecting one of the main factors in developing tourism, that is, international visitors' perceptions of tourism in the Three Gorges, represents a barrier to the effective implementation of strategic plans related to the rebuilding the Three Gorges tourism, thus limiting the ability of local governments to achieve their goal of 'Developing Three Gorges into International Tourist Destination'.

With regards to crisis management in tourism, although there has not been a specific crisis response law for tourism industry in China, China's first comprehensive emergency management law, the 'Emergency Response Law of the People's Republic of China' came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007 (China Net News 2011). China

National Tourism Administration has agreed that this law is applicable to China's tourism industry, but some terms need to be adjusted according to the actual situation of the tourism industry. Additionally, with the introduction and implementation of China's first Tourism Laws in 2013, the development of China's tourism emergency management has entered a new stage. However, the lessons, like the organization of the Farewell tour of The Three Gorges, from the process of developing Three Gorges tourism once again evidenced the importance of media communication in an affected destination (see Chapter 6 and Section 7.2.1.2). Therefore, it is suggested that local governments need to pay attention to crisis communication management at all stages of a crisis, and to ensure good communication between the government, public media, and potential tourists.

On the other hand, from the perspective of demand side, the findings from the initial interviews at Stage One indicated that, amongst the nine international visitors, the majority had a positive image of China, Three Gorges and the Three Gorges Dam. Before their travel, they had searched for relevant travel information through the Internet and travel agents and, significantly, their heir destination choice to the Three Gorges had not been affected by the negative news of the Dam. Nevertheless, their major concerns during their tour in the Three Gorges region focused on environmental issues, local people's living conditions, wildlife and the protection of historical sites. Some of them regretted that they did not have enough time to see or experience local people's lives and to better understand local customs, and were also disappointed that a number of historical sites and attractions had been flooded and others were no longer in their original location.

Further investigation into international visitors' perceptions of China, the Three Gorges and the Three Gorges Dam was undertaken at the Stage Two. The outcomes reveal that China is considered to be one of the most popular destinations in the world and a safe country for travelling. Some international visitors had a positive image of China because of its history and culture and the rapid development of economy. However, some held negative images of China, mostly related to China's political system, the military, the environment, and population. Their image of China was mainly affected by their national media and friends and relatives. Nevertheless, most international visitors had a positive impression of China after their arrival.

With regards to their travel in the Three Gorges, most international visitors stated that they chose the Three Gorges as one of destinations because of its natural scenery and the Three Gorges Dam. Again, however, the fact that some famous heritage sites had

been submerged served to reduce the attractiveness of the Three Gorges and resulted in most international visitors praising the natural beauty of the Three Gorges and the Dam, and ignored the historical and cultural attractions.

Negative media reports about the Dam were mainly related to water pollution, the displacement of local people, the transformation of the tourism resources, and geological disasters. However, such reports had not affected international visitors' destination choice. Their major concerns during their tours in the Three Gorges region were the displacement of local people, the transformation of tourism resources, environment and safety. Before their travel, they had searched for destination information on the internet and through travel agents. Therefore, they had a positive image of Three Gorges and the Dam and, for the most part, they had enjoyed their trip there. However, they regretted that they did not have enough time to experience the life of local people and to better understand local customs. Moreover, some international visitors were critical of the serious water pollution in the Three Gorges. Therefore, they suggested that it was necessary to protect the Yangtze River from the pollution; if not, tourists' travel experience would be significantly affected.

In addition, a number of other factors were identified in the research that impacted upon international visitors' travel experience in the Three Gorges region, including the high price of tourism products, the tight and inflexible itinerary schedule, and the quality of facilities provide on cruise ships. These all need to be taken into account, before local governments can develop strategies for the development of new Three Gorges tourism. Therefore, the purpose of the following final chapter is to draw conclusions through summarizing the research, making some proposals for the development of new Three Gorges tourism in terms of the findings from primary research, and providing recommendations for future research.

# Chapter Eight

## Conclusion

### 8.1 Introduction

The two preceding chapters (Chapters 5 and 7) presented and considered the outcomes of the research into tourism in the Three Gorges and, in particular, the perceptions and responses of international tourists to the Three Gorges Dam and its impacts on the tourist experience. In so doing, these two chapters pointed to the ways in which the utilization of the Three Gorges tourism resources may be optimized and how the impacts of the Three Gorges Dam on tourism in the region may be minimized in order to satisfy the needs of international tourists. Specifically, the results of the research demonstrate that, in response to the potential tourism crisis resulting from the construction of the Dam, the central and local governments have made efforts to protect the region and the tourism sector from the negative impacts of the Three Gorges Dam. However, it is evident that the problem of water pollution has not been solved; indeed, it is becoming more serious. In addition, the research suggests that although local governments are willing to develop a new Three Gorges tourism and to build the area into an international tourism destination, they have not fully taken into account the perceptions of international tourists of the Three Gorges, thereby potentially limiting the likelihood of achieving their objectives for the development of tourism. Therefore, it can be argued that, as a basis for formulating a strategic plan for the development of new Three Gorges tourism, it is necessary to address both macro and micro level issues. In other words, whilst local governments take responsibility for wider (macro) policy-making, planning, promotion and tourism product development, this should be informed by targeted (micro level) market research into the views and experiences of international tourists. The outcomes of such research can be seen as auxiliary information that can facilitate local governments in effective strategic planning.

The purpose of this Chapter, therefore, is to draw conclusions from the research and to demonstrate the extent to which the aims and objectives of the research have been met. It is structured as follows: first, the chapter reviews the research aim, objectives and questions as established in the introduction to the thesis, and how these have been addressed by the research; second, it then identifies the contribution of this research to knowledge; third, it makes recommendations for the development of new

Three Gorges tourism; fourth, it identifies the limitations of the research; and finally, it points to future research needs.

## **8.2 Research aim, objectives and questions**

As discussed in Chapter 1, the Three Gorges region, as the case study upon which this thesis has focused, offers abundant tourist resources including natural scenery, historical and cultural sites, and the unique customs and colorful traditional culture of the Tujia ethnic group. Prior to the construction of the Three Gorges Dam and the subsequent flooding of the Gorges, the area was renowned for its natural beauty. Nowadays, however, the Three Gorges has arguably become more famous as the location of world's largest Dam. Indeed, the findings of research discussed in Chapter 7 reveal that most international visitors came to the Three Gorges not only because of its reputed natural beauty but also to gaze on the Dam. Therefore, it can be said that the Three Gorges Dam contributes to the development of the Three Gorges tourism; it is a tourist attraction in its own right.

Nevertheless, although it can be demonstrated that the Dam benefits or contributes to the development of Three Gorges tourism, at the same time it also impacts negatively on tourism to the Three Gorges region. In particular, two principal negative impacts have been revealed by the research, the first of which is water pollution. If this problem cannot be addressed and solved in time, it is likely to evolve into a crisis that may seriously hinder the further development of new Three Gorges tourism. The second major negative impact resulting from the Dam's construction relates to the transformation of the tourist resources. If the existing tourist resources cannot be effectively reintegrated into the tourism 'product' and experience and new tourist resources cannot be reasonably developed, both domestic and inbound (international) tourism to the Three Gorges is likely to be negatively affected (more details can be found in Chapter 1 and 5). Thus, the purpose of this research was to identify appropriate strategies, within a conceptual framework of crisis management and tourism policy development, for the development of new Three Gorges tourism in China following the completion of the Dam. The primary research aim, objectives and questions as detailed in Chapter 1 are listed as follows (see Table 8.1 overleaf):

**Table 8.1:** Research aim, objectives and questions

<b>Research Aim</b>	To identify appropriate strategies, within a conceptual framework of crisis management and tourism policy development, for rebuilding Three Gorges tourism in China following the completion of the Dam.
<b>Research Objectives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To identify and critically appraise the main tourism policies and guidelines in China, with respect to Three Gorges tourism;</li><li>2. To reveal the impacts of the Dam on the Three Gorges region, particularly on Three Gorges tourism;</li><li>3. To review the circumstances of the inbound tourism in Three Gorges region, before the launch of and after the completion of the Dam (1990-2011) by analysing the transformation of international tourists' attitudes towards the destination;</li><li>4. To identify existing tourism resources in Three Gorges region;</li><li>5. To consider appropriate strategies, which can be supplied for the improvement of tourists' experience in Three Gorges region, according to the framework of crisis management?</li></ol>
<b>Research Questions</b>	<p>What are inbound tourists' attitudes towards the Dam?</p> <p>How might these inform strategic responses to the consequences of the Dam on Three Gorges tourism?</p>

### 8.2.1 The process of achieving research aim

Chapters 2 and 3 reviewed and identified the importance of crisis management and destination image for a developing/affected tourism destination. Subsequently, in Chapter 4, tourism policies and guidelines in China were critically appraised. As is well known, China is a one-party state; therefore, the central government and its relevant departments are responsible for the formulation of all kinds of laws, regulations and policies. The local governments and relevant departments at all levels are the executors of the policies and regulations. Nevertheless, these regulations and policies should be implemented by combining with the actual situation of the local development. The formulation and implementation of laws, regulations and policies related to tourism is a good example (See Section 4.2 in Chapter 4). Therefore, to build up the general knowledge about China's tourism policy and tourism development is conducive to better understand local tourism development.

However, differing from other destinations in China, the central government has paid

more attention to the development of the Three Gorges tourism due to the Three Gorges Dam. Therefore, it is considered that a series of policies and development planning related to the Three Gorges region and the Dam formulated by the central government and its relevant departments will benefit the development of new Three Gorges tourism.

In this research, Chapters 5 and 7 have identified, from the supply perspective, how the central and local governments responded to the negative reports about the Dam, the actions they have taken with respect to marketing and promotion, the policies they have put in place to protect environment, the strategies they have introduced to rebuild the Three Gorges tourism, and if a crisis management team has been established to prevent potential crises in the Three Gorges region. It was revealed that although there were a large number of negative reports about the Dam, central government has responded objectively and scientifically; it was also revealed that central and local government recognize that some problems need to be solved immediately to prevent things get worse. In order to enhance the image of the Three Gorges, a series of jointly organized promotional campaigns have been run to attract domestic and overseas markets. In 2009, the Chinese government developed the 'Three Gorges Project Follow-Up Plan', in which issues about environmental protection, the prevention of geological disasters, and the quality of displaced people's life were emphasized. However, there has not been a specific regulation for environmental protection of the Three Gorges region. Moreover, although China Tourism Laws have been introduced and came into effect in 2013, there has not been a separate policy/regulation for the Three Gorges tourism. In 2004 'Three Gorges Regional Tourism Development Plan' was promulgated to develop the new Three Gorges tourism. However, the formulation of development plan only referred to domestic tourists' suggestions and views about the Three Gorges tourism. Local governments have not undertaken any market survey with international visitors to understand their perceptions of the Three Gorges tourism. Therefore, it can be argued that, achieving the official goal, 'To Build Three Gorges into an International Tourist Destination', will be difficult without referring to international visitors' feedback with regards to Three Gorges tourism.

Also from the demand side, Chapter 7 identified international visitors', particularly western visitors', perceptions of China, the Three Gorges and the Three Gorges Dam through interviews and a survey. It was revealed that China, as a destination, is attractive to international visitors due to its history and culture, and the rapid development of economy. However, with the development of the economy and

industry, environmental pollution, particularly air pollution, has become increasingly serious. Although international visitors marveled at the prosperity and modernization of the cities and towns in China, particularly at the intensive high-rise modern buildings, they were still interested in Chinese traditional architecture, natural landscape and the distinctive folk customs. They sometimes felt uncomfortable due to dense population. Most international visitors had limited or even little knowledge about China before they travelled to there. However, after their arrival, the majority had a strong impression of friendly Chinese people, and clean and modern cities.

Nevertheless, in comparison to their perceptions of China more generally, most international visitors chose the Three Gorges as a destination because of its reputation for beautiful natural scenery and to see the man-made wonder that is the Three Gorges Dam. Interestingly, although the Three Gorges region has a long history which can be traced back to the Old Stone Age, and which is manifested in a large number of historical sites in the Three Gorges region, the reputation and popularity of those sites is more limited than that of other major tourism attractions in China, such as the Great Wall at Beijing and Terracotta Warriors of Xi'an. In addition, due to the water storage in the Three Gorges Reservoir region, a large number of important historical sites have been either submerged or moved to higher locations or the local museums. Therefore, most international tourists, particularly westerners, had limited or even no knowledge about the history and historical sites of the Three Gorges, resulting in more limited interest in this aspect of the experience of the Three Gorges. During their travel in this region, apart from some objective factors such as the weather, water pollution, the high price of tourist products and entrance tickets scenic spots, and tight travel schedules were main factors affecting their travel experience. As for their attitude to the Three Gorges Dam, they generally expressed the view that the building of the Dam on the Yangtze River was understandable. They were aware of both the benefits and negative impacts of the Dam. Although many international visitors stated that they were eager to see the Three Gorges Dam, the survey indicated nevertheless that, for most visitors, the most attractive feature of the Three Gorges region remains the natural scenery, such as Wuxia Gorge, Lesser Three Gorges, and Shennong Stream.

Indeed, in the process of achieving the overall research aim, the research methodology is an indispensable and crucial element that determines whether the research questions are answered and the research result is valid and reliable. Since this research emphasizes that the demand side, tourists, play an important role in tourism crisis management, Chapter 6, Methodology, demonstrated that this research focused

primarily on international visitors' perceptions of the case study destination, the Three Gorges, including the Three Gorges Dam, although it also took the perspective of the supply side, central and local government, into account. Thus, the theoretical foundation of this research was based on Realism, combining positivist and interpretivist approaches. On the one hand, in terms of breadth, the research attempted to reveal objectively the attitudes of international visitors to the Three Gorges and the (negative) impacts of the Dam through a quantitative survey. On the other hand, in terms of depth, qualitative research was undertaken to understand the meaning of the perceptions provided by individuals during in-depth interviews. Moreover, as emphasized in Chapter 6, the visitor survey could only be undertaken on cruise ships; therefore, the number of international visitors participating in the survey was limited by the context of the research. In order to make up for the deficiency, and to generate a more holistic view relating to international visitors' attitude about China, the Three Gorges and the Dam, an additional in-depth interview was arranged with an experienced tour guide who has received numerous international tour groups in China over the past ten years.

According to the discussion above, as well as in Chapter 6, the use of data 'triangulation', known as the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, was considered to contribute to the research paradigm.

Chapter 5 also discussed how decisions were made with regards to the choice of methodologies for primary data collection. According to the theory of crisis management (see Chapter 2), this research has identified that Chinese central government and local government play the most important role in preventing, responding to and coping with the crises or disasters of a tourism destination. Therefore, it was considered essential to conduct an in-depth interview with a senior official of local Tourism Bureau at the first stage of the research. Furthermore, it was also considered important to elicit the views of not only senior officials but also those with expertise in the study of Three Gorges tourism and familiar with or participating in the formulation of the tourism policy and tourism destination development plans, the purpose being to gain a more balanced perspective. Thus, information gained from tourism experts can also be identified as authoritative and reliable. In other words, an in-depth interview with a tourism expert is indispensable.

Nevertheless, few, if any, studies have in general taken into account tourists' perceptions of a destination affected by a crisis as a contribution to planning for the

destination's redevelopment. Thus, conducting in-depth interviews with international visitors who had been the Three Gorges region was also considered at the first stage of this research. More specifically, following the interviews with senior officials of local Tourism Bureau, it was revealed that an international visitor survey had not been conducted by the local government, yet the government categorically wished to develop the Three Gorges into an 'International Tourism Destination'. It therefore can be questioned how the local government can develop the Three Gorges into an 'International Tourism Destination' without drawing opinions from international visitors and understanding their needs. In particular, the construction of the Three Gorges Dam has already had some serious negative impacts on tourism in the Three Gorges area and, therefore, to listen to the suggestions of international visitors during the rebuilding of the Three Gorges tourism could enable the local government 'yield twice the result with half the effort'. Under such considerations, further in-depth interviews and a visitor survey with international visitors were undertaken at the second stage. The purpose of the questionnaire survey was, on the one hand, to explore international visitors' perceptions of the Three Gorges tourism and the Dam and, on the other hand, to consolidate the knowledge gained from interviews.

Therefore, in-depth interviews (semi-structured and unstructured) and questionnaire survey were considered as the most appropriate methodologies for this research to gain valid and reliable results.

### **8.2.2 Interim summary**

Overall, from the perspective of Chinese government, the Three Gorges Dam is not considered as a self-induced crisis. From the perspective of international visitors, the Three Gorges Dam has not yet caused any tourism crisis. However, international visitors' perceptions of environmental pollution indicated that water pollution in the Three Gorges region is becoming worse. Such a problem would be likely to turn into a serious water pollution crisis in the future and affect not only the life of local residents, but also the development of new Three Gorges tourism, if it is not controlled or managed effectively. Therefore, it is suggested that water pollution crisis perhaps can be prevented, if Chinese government responds to international visitors' perceptions efficiently and takes further actions for environmental protection.

### **8.3 Recommendations for the development of new Three Gorges tourism**

The discussion in Chapter 2 identified that crisis management plays a crucial role in preventing, responding to and coping with the diversity of crises in tourism destinations

(see Section 2.2.2). It also demonstrated the importance of understanding tourists' attitudes towards and perceptions of an affected destination, as this could benefit the formulation of new effective development strategies for the destination. By applying crisis management theory to a real-world case, Chapter 1 and 5 showed that, from the perspective of the international media and some experts, the Three Gorges Dam could be thought as a self-induced crisis, as it had not only had a direct and significant impact on the life of local residents, biodiversity and tourism resources of the Three Gorges region, but also 'the potential for increased disease' (Hvistendahl 2008), particularly in the aspects of environment and geology. Although many international media, including the BBC, CNN, the Guardian, and so on, objectively reported the procedure of the construction of the Three Gorges Dam and analyzed its advantages and disadvantages to the Three Gorges region, most of reports focused on the negative effects of the Dam.

In contrast to the attitudes of the media and experts, however, the Chinese government did not treat the Dam as a self-induced crisis. It objectively evaluated the benefits and the negative impacts of the Dam. As for the negative impacts, the government admitted that there were a number of urgent problems that demanded resolution, including the protection of the environment and the prevention of geological disasters. Therefore, several plans have been adopted and put into practice for the prevention of various potential disasters and to minimize the loss brought by the Dam (See Section 1.1 in Chapter 1). Moreover, according to the findings from the interviews with two stakeholders in Chapter 7, crisis management systems have in fact been established in order to respond efficiently to and to deal with the unexpected disasters, including both natural and man-made, in the Three Gorges region. The theoretical development of crisis management in China remains relatively backward. However, practical experience and the characteristics of centralism are of benefit to the Chinese government in the effective handling of emergencies and crises (for more detail see Section 2.3.3 Chapter 2).

With regards to the consequences of the Dam's construction, the Chinese government has always maintained the position that its benefits would, over time, outweigh any disadvantages. Therefore, central and local governments have made significant efforts to prevent some predicted disasters, as well as to enhance the good and positive image of the Dam (see findings from two stakeholders). In short, the governments (both central and local) are confident in the potential benefits that the Dam will in the future and about the development of the new Three Gorges tourism in particular (see

Chapters 1 and 5).

Following the completion of water storage in the Three Gorges Reservoir, there has been a new pattern of the Three Gorges tourism. As a result, the local governments decided to redevelop Three Gorges' tourism resources and to rebuild the image of the area in order to transform it into a popular international tourist destination. However, according to the findings in Chapter 7, a series of development strategies formulated by the local governments did not take international visitors', particularly western visitors', perceptions of Three Gorges and the Three Gorges Dam into account. Therefore, it can be argued that the (re)development the Three Gorges into a popular international tourist destination remains problematic.

In order to develop a better understanding of international visitors' attitude to the Three Gorges Dam and the Three Gorges tourism, the questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews were conducted with international visitors. From the perspective of the demand side, as revealed by the discussion of the research findings in Chapter 7, international visitors' attitudes with regards the impacts of the Three Gorges Dam on the region were not as negative as might have been expected (and certainly more positive than expected by the researcher). On the contrary, their attitudes were by and large positive and objective. To summarize the findings, the majority of international visitors thought that the building of the Dam on the Three Gorges was justifiable. Moreover, there was consensus that, irrespective of where the dam had been built, it would have had both positive and negative consequences for the region and local communities. Typically, most negative impacts can be predicted prior to construction and, thus, what local governments can do is to make efforts to prevent such problems. If the problems cannot be avoided, then actions should be taken to minimize the loss. For some unpredictable problems or disasters, quick response and effective solutions becomes important. Significantly, such responses and attitudes on the part of international visitors reflect closely to the theory of crisis management, particularly in the proactive and reactive stages for a disaster/crisis.

The reasons why international visitors held such positive attitudes towards the Dam can be explained as follows:

First, the majority of international visitors were on their first visit to the Three Gorges. Thus, it would be difficult for them to envisage how the Three Gorges looked previously and to compare the kinds of tourism resources available in the region before and after

the construction of the Dam.

Secondly, the Three Gorges Dam has without doubt been, and remains, a controversial project and, as a consequence, has unsurprisingly been paid much attention by domestic and international media and experts and scholars in related fields. Such a high degree of concern prompted both central and local governments to go to extreme lengths to strengthen positive image of the Three Gorges Dam and redevelop Three Gorges tourism. As a result of their efforts, particularly in marketing and promotion, the positive image of the Dam has arguably been successfully built, rendering it one of the principal attractions in Yangtze Three Gorges region. Most of the international visitors in both the interviews and the survey stressed that they chose the Three Gorges as one of the destinations in China because of the Three Gorges Dam itself. Again, this is evidence that, rather than being considered a problem, the Dam become has not only an intrinsic element of the Three Gorges, but also one of the most popular attractions for tourist to the area.

Thirdly, in contrast to professionals, experts and scholars, most of international visitors did not have the knowledge or expertise to judge whether or not the Dam is a self-induced crisis. Moreover, as leisure tourists wanting to enjoy their trip, in all likelihood they did not hold preconceptions about the dam and its impacts and were not seeking to evaluate the consequences of the Dam's construction during their visit. For example, some of international visitors who participated in the survey or interviews noticed that water pollution was a serious problem in the Three Gorges region. However, they did not attribute this to the construction of the Dam, an issue that is further discussed in later in this chapter.

More generally, however, and irrespective of international visitors' perceptions of the Dam itself, it is important to understand their thoughts and views to inform the successful development of new Three Gorges tourism. As already noted above, the findings from Chapter 7 reveal that the natural scenery of the Three Gorges enjoys a strong reputation and that although the Three Gorges regions has a long history, the natural scenery remains a stronger draw to tourists than the numerous historical sites along the river. Indeed, although most international visitors in the survey and interviews expressed the view that they valued and would like to know more about the history and culture of the region, during their visit to the Three Gorges, none mentioned any interest in ethnic culture, and only a few said that they had positive impressions of the ancient cliff coffins and Baidicheng. This suggests that the region's ethnic culture and

the historical sites along the river remain underdeveloped as attractions and that their promotion has been limited or unsuccessful.

At the same time, following their actual experience of the Three Gorges region, international visitors who participated in the research pointed out some problems related to the Three Gorges tourism, including some issues related to the environment, particularly water pollution, and other issues related to tourism management and local infrastructure construction. Therefore, reflecting these identified problems, a number of recommendations are now proposed for the redevelopment of tourism in the Three Gorges.

### **8.3.1 To effectively control water pollution**

**Issue 1:** Water pollution caused by the Three Gorges Dam has become serious in the Three Gorges region

#### The impact of water pollution on the Three Gorges tourism

Environment issues, particularly water pollution, caused by the Three Gorges Dam have become a challenge for the development of new Three Gorges tourism. In other words, the construction of the Dam has inevitably affected not only the natural ecological environment around the Three Gorges region but also international tourists' travel experience, because not only were the Three Gorges formerly renowned for their natural scenery but most international tourists visit the Three Gorges by cruise ship. It is known that the issue of water pollution is a technical problem that can be solved; indeed, following the creation of the Three Gorges Reservoir area, both central government and local governments have made efforts to minimize water pollution on the Yangtze River. However, despite such efforts over a three-year period, water pollution has, for a number of reasons, not yet been effectively controlled. If this situation cannot be improved in time, it will likely become a serious problem affect the development of the Three Gorges inbound tourism, as many westerners are advocates of environmental protection.

#### Internal and external factors which caused water pollution

It is a recognized fact that the construction of the Three Gorges Dam has caused a decline in the flow rate of the Yangtze River which, in turn, has significantly decreased the self-purification capacity of the River against the organic pollutants. In addition, with much waste being dumped directly into the river and the increase of wastewater

discharge from Chongqing Municipality, the largest industrial and commercial center located at the upstream of the Yangtze Three Gorges, the 'nightmare scenario' that the Yangtze River, China's most important waterway, could be transformed into a massive cesspool of urban, industrial and agricultural wastes now seems to be becoming a reality (Peryman 2013).

Fortunately, the seriousness of the Yangtze River water pollution has been recognized by the national and local governments and, as a consequence, a series of actions have been taken to reduce water pollution. One of the most important of such actions has been to build wastewater treatment plants along the Yangtze Three Gorges region. By the end of 2010, 105 wastewater treatment plants had been built (Lin & Zhao 2011). 'Chongqing Municipal Government invested in more than 40 new large and medium-sized wastewater treatment plants in important cities in the Three Gorges Reservoir Region along the Yangtze River to treat wastewater' (Peryman 2013). Additionally, China has begun to explore the use of fish to clean up water pollution in the Three Gorges Reservoir (Wang 2011). Furthermore, the 2011 State Council Executive Meeting once again stressed that water pollution, as one of urgent problems, must be resolved. Then it discussed and adopted a new 'Yangtze River Basin Water Pollution Prevention Plan' to ensure the safety of the drinking water' (See Section 1.1 in Chapter 1).

However, over the years, no significant improvements with regards to the governance of water pollution have been achieved. Several factors are considered to have limited progress achievement (See Figure 8.1 below):

### **Recommendations for issue 1**

According to the above analysis, suggestions can be made as follows:

From the perspective of policy and management, firstly, it is urgent and necessary to establish a comprehensive and independent agency to provide management in flood control, power generation, navigation and environmental protection across the Yangtze River basin (Yang & Lu 2013). Yang & Lu (2013) further explain that 'although the Dam is chiefly in the charge of the China Three Gorges Corporation (CTGC), the State Council, as the highest level, oversees the Three Gorges Dam, and under the State Council, there are at least 19 additional bureaus involved in the management of the Three Gorges Dam. Since the bureaus are ranked similarly, they are unable to compel one another to pursue certain policies, which results in conflicting resource use'.

Therefore, a single and independent agency under the State Council is needed to control the Three Gorges Dam and implement all laws and regulations related to the Yangtze River basin through coordinating all relevant bureaus.

**Figure 8.1** Factors affecting water pollution prevention

- Authorities have been blamed for the weak enforcement of relevant regulations. In particular, they have undone much of this investment by simultaneously permitting hundreds of factories to release pollutants into the Yangtze River.
- Treatment plants could only treat a certain amount of wastewater per day, which was far less than the actual amount of wastewater produced by Metropolitan Chongqing.
- Most of the treatment plants were poorly designed, which caused operational problems.
- System upset caused by shock loadings from landfill leachate.
- Improper sludge handling caused secondary contamination.
- The decreased flow rate of water caused by the Dam in the Reservoir leads to siltation, which is still difficult to be controlled.
- Long detention time together with agricultural runoff and wastewater discharge causes algal bloom.
- During the flood season, large amounts of trash are carried by the river, which needs a lot of human and financial resources for clearance.
- Increased shipping discharges, including discharge from cruise ships, also contribute to water pollution.

**Source:** Adapted from Lin & Zhao (2011); Peryman (2013); Yang & Lu (2013)

Secondly, it must be stressed that environmental protection is as important as power generation and flood control. Thus, 'environmental performance should become a major criterion for evaluating government officials at the regional and local levels' (Yang & Lu 2013), which can avoid that local government leaders only focus on economic growth and neglect to enforce environmental laws and regulations. For example, currently one of the most urgent requirements that need to be attended to is the strict monitoring of wastewater dumped from all kinds of factories along the Yangtze River, and the gradual relocation of those factories to other places. This can reduce the probability that factories directly dump wastewater into the Yangtze River.

From the perspective of investment, it is suggested that, on the one hand, more

wastewater treatment plants are needed in the Three Gorges Reservoir Basin. Nevertheless, the design of new treatment plants should consider scientific and practical issues and 'avoid over design' (Lin & Zhao 2011). In particular, the design related to wastewater treatment capacity needs foreseeability. In this way, the use of the treatment plants can be maximized and will have sustainability. On the other hand, as Peryman (2013) suggested, local government should urge enlisting private-sector capital and technology to meet municipal water needs and price adjustments that reflect the true cost of water.

From the perspective of education and training, on the one hand, relevant managers and operators should be trained properly for the use of new treatment plants. Each link of the operation needs to be supervised and monitored strictly in order to minimize errors. On the other hand, the further enhancement of the public awareness of environmental protection will contribute to the reduction of floating trash and wastewater discharge. There are various ways in which public awareness of the need for environmental protection can be raised, such as school education, environmental protection-related training programmes, on-site promotion activities, public service advertising and so on. These should be continuously implemented as a long-term strategy, particularly focusing on the efficiency of water use, waste recycling, and waste classification.

To take Chongqing as an example, according to a recent report (Peng 2013), by the end of 2012, the total registered population of Chongqing was 33.43 million, including a resident population of 29.45 million. Among the resident population of the city, 16.78 million people represented the urban populations and 12.67 million the rural population. The level of basic education in rural areas of China, including the rural West, is relatively low (McQuaide 2009). As a result, few people pay attention to environmental issues and / or even know how to protect environment. In Chongqing, the rural population accounts for 43% of the total. Thus, the popularity of environmental protection knowledge in rural areas should be taken into account. Additionally, environmental protection related signs should be widely used in public places, from cities to rural areas. This may gradually develop environmental protection awareness amongst local people, who might consciously begin to protect the environment. As many environmentalists advocate, 'Protecting environment starts from you and me'.

Furthermore, the rapid development of the hospitality sector in Chongqing, including hotels and restaurants, contributes to water pollution. In particular, and as mentioned in

Chapter 5, the Three Gorges, as a tourist destination, has become more famous and attractive due to the Three Gorges Dam. For many tourists, joining a cruise tour to the Three Gorges is considered the most convenient and popular way for visiting and experiencing the area. However, the increase in the number of cruise ships may result in more and more wastewater being discharged directly into the river, and more garbage being directly thrown into the river, paradoxically contributing to the pollution commented on by tourists in the research. Therefore, the wasteful use of water and wastewater discharge from cruise ships should be strictly controlled. Environmental protection related signs, like Water Conservation Signs, should be also displayed on all kinds of Three Gorges cruise ships.

### **Issue 1 summary**

To protect environment not only requires the efforts of the government, but also needs the support of the public. As Wang (2004) stresses, 'environmental protection is not only a government-led public welfare activity, it is a business-oriented economic activity. Therefore, the development of environmental protection industry cannot rely solely on the government, it is important to rely on the strength of society'. For scenic areas, such as the Three Gorges, environmental protection is particularly important, as it will directly affect the image of the area and tourists' travel experience. Therefore, it can be said that to protect the environment is everyone's responsibility and in everyone's interest.

### **8.3.2 To establish a unified tourism management system**

**Issue 2:** The lack of a unified tourism management system caused by the administrative division has seriously hindered the development of the Three Gorges tourism.

Section 6.3.1 in Chapter 6 revealed that since the Three Gorges scenic area crosses Hubei Province and Chongqing Municipality, its tourism management system is separated according to the administrative division. The long-term lack of a unified tourism management system in the Three Gorges scenic area has caused a number of serious consequences, including a lack of characteristic tourist commodities/products, high price and low quality of tourist commodities, a lack of the integration of tourism resources, irrational and disordered competition through random increases or reductions in entrance fees to tourist attractions and the price for taking a cruise ship, the lack of the management of vendors in scenic areas, the excessive exploitation of

tourist resources, the lack of holistic sales network and unified promotion channels, and unreasonable tourism route design. Without a unified tourism management system, it will be difficult to further develop tourism in the Three Gorges.

Nevertheless, the construction of the Three Gorges Dam has provided an opportunity for the re-development of Three Gorges tourism. In particular, the official promulgation of 'The Compendium for Three Gorges Regional Tourism Development Plan' in 2004 marked the beginning of the implementation phase of tourism development planning in the Three Gorges region (see Section 5.2.3 in Chapter 5). Following that, the two local governments, Chongqing Municipality and Hubei Province, officially recognized the importance of cooperation for the development of the new Three Gorges tourism and, subsequently, sought practical means of cooperation and put them into practice (more details can be found in Section 5.3.3 of Chapter 5). Without doubt, this cooperation had some positive influence, particularly in road and transportation development of the Three Gorges region and in the promotion of Three Gorges tourism. However, such cooperation remained at a surface level and, overall, its effect remained limited. As the interviews with two key stakeholders revealed, 'owing to the division of administration as well as the consideration for regional interests, the governments of two regions still find it difficult to reach a consensus on some issues, including the issue of the exploitation and development of tourist attractions (see Section 7.2.1.5 in Chapter 7).

Without doubt, the construction of the Three Gorges Dam also brings challenges for new Three Gorges tourism development. For example, regional tourism resource development plays an important role in the strategic planning of regional tourism development. In particular, because of the impacts of the Dam's construction, the existing tourism resources in the Three Gorges Reservoir region face the challenge of reintegration, whilst new tourism resources are encountering the challenge of reasonable and effective exploitation and development.

### **Recommendations for issue 2**

Following the discussion above, the establishment of a unified tourism management system for the development of the new Three Gorges tourism can be considered urgent and inevitable.

The consequences of the lack of a unified tourism management system undoubtedly have seriously affected and restricted the development of tourism in the Three Gorges. Moreover, it is likely to affect the future development of the new Three Gorges tourism,

if problems cannot be solved in timely and effective manner. Therefore, the best way to solve these problems is to establish a unified tourism management system which will require two governments, Hubei Province and Chongqing Municipality, to take further actions to strengthen cooperation. Nevertheless, further cooperation must be based on such the premise of a unified concept, that is, from a long-term perspective the Three Gorges must be developed holistically as single, unified destination.

A unified Three Gorges tourism management system would involve the supervision and monitoring of the services provided on cruise ships and by travel agencies and hotels, scenic area management, the establishment of a tourism crisis management team, tourism resources development and management, the construction of tourism infrastructure, destination branding, and so forth.

According to the research findings and international visitors' suggestions summarized in Chapter 7, several issues are significant, as follows:

Firstly, according to Morgan & Pritchard's framework of the Five Phases in Destination Brand Building (See Section 3.3.5 in Chapter 3), it is suggested that, prior to putting forward any tourism development strategy, a comprehensive analysis of tourism resources, markets, and the current situation of the Three Gorges is indispensable.

There should be consensus that the Yangtze Three Gorges, as a tourist destination, enjoys key competitive advantages in comparison to compared with other scenic tourism destinations in China:

- a) Cruise tours are available in relatively few scenic areas in China, but taking a cruise ship to travel to the Three Gorges with its characteristic Karst topography represents a unique experience;
- b) The scale of the Gorges area is significant, embracing two administrative regions, Chongqing Municipality and Hubei Province. If tourists choose to travel by a cruise ship, it usually takes three to four days to complete the trip. Even so, what they can see during that time represents only a small proportion of the Three Gorges region;
- c) From the perspective of history and culture, the Yangtze River, as a whole, occupies an important place in Chinese history. 'During the 40 million-year

history of the life and 50 thousand-year history of human civilization, the Yangtze River brings up billions of Huaxia people' (China Culture 2008). Nevertheless, the Three Gorges section is considered to be most typically representative of the historical civilization of the Yangtze River (See Section 6.2 in Chapter 6). Therefore, there are many cultural and historical sites of different dynasties, as well as the cultural customs of Tujia ethnic minority in the Three Gorges region, to be developed as tourist attractions;

- d) Owing to its natural scenery, the Three Gorges has been one of China's most popular tourist destinations for centuries (See Section 5.3 in Chapter 5). Therefore, it enjoys a wide national and international reputation;
- e) The Three Gorges Dam, as the largest Dam in the world, adds an additional dimension to the Three Gorges tourism experience. Now the Three Gorges combines natural scenery, historical sites and local custom with a dramatic man-made landscape. Compared with other tourism attractions, its tourism resources are, therefore, more diversified.

Given these key attributes of the Three Gorges, market research is required in order to identify tourists' interests and needs, to explore their perceptions of the new Three Gorges, and to understand how their destination choice will benefit the formulation of the new Three Gorges tourism development strategy. From the standpoint of tourism destination development, before developing any tourism strategy, the identification of tourists' perceptions of a destination through market research should always be considered a priority. The same can be said for crisis management in tourism (see Chapter 2). As this research has demonstrated, research into tourists' attitudes and perceptions can make a fundamental contribution to the reconstruction and recovery of the affected destination.

Subsequently, the image of the Three Gorges should be built based on these key advantages, as well as emphasizing the changes brought by the Dam and the consequential opportunities for the development of new Three Gorges tourism. Furthermore, the development and promotion of the Three Gorges tourism resources, including its natural scenery, its historical sites from different historical periods, local customs and the contemporary man-made landscape, should be integrated into the marketing and promotion of the area. To focus only on one or two aspects, such as the natural scenery and/or the Three Gorges Dam, will be to mislead tourists' perceptions

of the Three Gorges. The findings discussed Chapter 7 revealed that the majority of international tourists visit China because of China's history and culture. In contrast, and as previously noted, most international tourists visit the Three Gorges because of its beautiful natural scenery and man-made landscape. Moreover, with the creation of the Three Gorges Reservoir, many important historical sites have been either submerged or relocated. Therefore, utilizing existing tourism resources and discovering their historic and culture connotation in terms of international tourists' interest needs to be taken into account for the development of new Three Gorges tourism.

As Cheng & Zhao (2006) suggest, more attention should be paid to the use of cultural resources and the exploitation of cultural products, as culture also plays a significant role in Three Gorges tourism development. Only the organic combination of cultural products and natural landscape benefits the sustainable development of Three Gorges tourism. Using unique culture to attract people and using natural wonders to retain people can create the eternal charm of the Three Gorges tourism.

Moreover, in order to strengthen the positive image of the Three Gorges and to further enhance the area's reputation as a tourist destination, reporters and photographers for foreign travel-related magazines and newspapers should be invited to visit the Three Gorges on free familiarization visits. Such promotional activity has been widely applied to the tourism, hotel and catering industry in many western countries and has achieved good results (Chandra 2004: 249). Therefore, it can be a good reference for the promotion of the Three Gorges tourism.

Secondly, with the success of water storage in the Three Gorges Reservoir region and the development of new tourist attractions, the distribution and characteristics of the old and new attractions should be further analyzed and identified. Then new Three Gorges tourism routes need to be designed, embodying flexibility and diversity, which demonstrate both typical and new characteristics of the Three Gorges, and which will allow visitors to gain a comprehensive understanding of the new Three Gorges. Travel agencies also take responsibility to provide both national and international visitors with reasonable Three Gorges itineraries and to ensure they are satisfied with the schedule and have chance to explore local culture.

Thirdly, Three Gorges tourist products have typically been developed to only a limited extent, usually based on agricultural products and common handicrafts (Cheng & Zhao 2006). Therefore, high quality tourism commodities need to be developed using

innovative designs incorporating distinctive Three Gorges characteristics. Only distinctive and memorable travel products can appeal to tourists, which is also an important way to improve the overall benefit of Three Gorges tourism. Nevertheless, the cost of tourist commodities as well as of entrance tickets to attractions should be standardized.

Fourthly, English communication ability and explanation ability of local tour guides need to be further improved. In order to achieve the goal of making the Three Gorges a world-class tourist destination, effective and constant official training must be provided for local tour guides. Training should be in accordance with the international standards and the training content needs to be related to the circumstances of local tourism. After the training, local tour guide should meet several requirements: a) being able to properly and accurately communicate in English; b) have good knowledge of tourism policy, local culture and history, and current issues related to local tourism; c) being able to be objective and provide a fair opinion when answer tourists' questions and explain some issues; d) being able to provide innovative introduction to interest tourists.

Fifthly, with regards to how to supervise and monitor the quality of services on cruise ship, launching a 'Mystery Shopping' scheme is considered one effective means to improving levels of service. Equally, such a scheme could also be used for monitoring the quality of services provided at specific scenic spots and other tourist attractions though the Three Gorges.

In the West, people working in the service sector are familiar with the term 'Mystery Shopper' or 'Mystery Shopping', which emerged in the 1940s as a means of measuring employee integrity (PamInCa 2009: 3). According to Knight (2007), 'mystery shopping has a long history in the UK. The first mystery shoppers were employed 60 years ago to check financial advisers were doing an honest job'. Nowadays it has been frequently used in hotels and catering, leisure services, retailing, motoring, government departments, after-school care, assisted living facilities, cruise lines, banks, financial services and more (PamInCa 2009: 4; Wilson 1998).

What is Mystery Shopping/Mystery Shoppers? How does it work? Why is it so popular in the service sector? In broad terms, Mystery Shopping can be defined as 'the use of individuals trained to experience and measure any customer service process, and the processes and procedures used in the delivery of the service by acting as potential

customers and in some way reporting back on their experiences in a detailed and objective way' (Atef 2012). When the term is used in the tourism and leisure industries, it is defined as a participant observation method used by many tourism and leisure organizations, where people pose as customers so that they can experience the service delivered by an organization (Williams & Buswell 2003: 175). Often, mystery shoppers can sample a restaurant meal, a trip on a cruise ship, or an overnight stay at a resort hotel (Ford, Sturman & Heaton 2012: 426). Nevertheless, what a mystery shopper should do is to 'methodically sample the service and its delivery, take note of the environment' (Ford, Sturman & Heaton 2012: 426), 'use a ratings form to systematically and comprehensively record their evaluation, and then sending the detailed report of their experience back to organization management' (Williams & Buswell 2003: 175). In other words, mystery shoppers are specifically instructed to determine if service standards were met (Ford, Sturman & Heaton 2012: 426).

Mystery shopping is becoming popular as more and more companies seek to improve their service quality to satisfy customers' demand (PamInCa 2009: 4). Moreover, it is considered to be a powerful tool to provide management with a relatively objective snapshot of the guest experience (Ford, Sturman & Heaton 2012: 426). Thus, the main advantages by using mystery shoppers can be summarized as follows (see Figure 8.2):

**Figure 8.2** Advantages of using mystery shoppers

- Mystery shoppers are unannounced; therefore, employees cannot 'dress up' their performance.
- They can also observe competing organizations in a particular market and systematically gather information on their service level, facilities, prices and special packages.
- They can gauge the effectiveness of a particular training or incentive programme by shopping at a hospitality organization before and after the training occurs or incentive is implemented.

**Source:** Adapted from Ford, Sturman & Heaton (2012: 426-427)

However, the use of a mystery shopper has its limitations. Lai & Chang (2013) reveal that to instruct an external mystery shopper to assess an organization's service will cost more and the mystery shopper is unfamiliar with the organization. Ford, Sturman & Heaton (2012: 427) also point out, the small size of the sample from which the shopper generates reports cannot fully reflect the company's overall service quality. Furthermore, the unique references, biases, or expectations of individual shoppers can

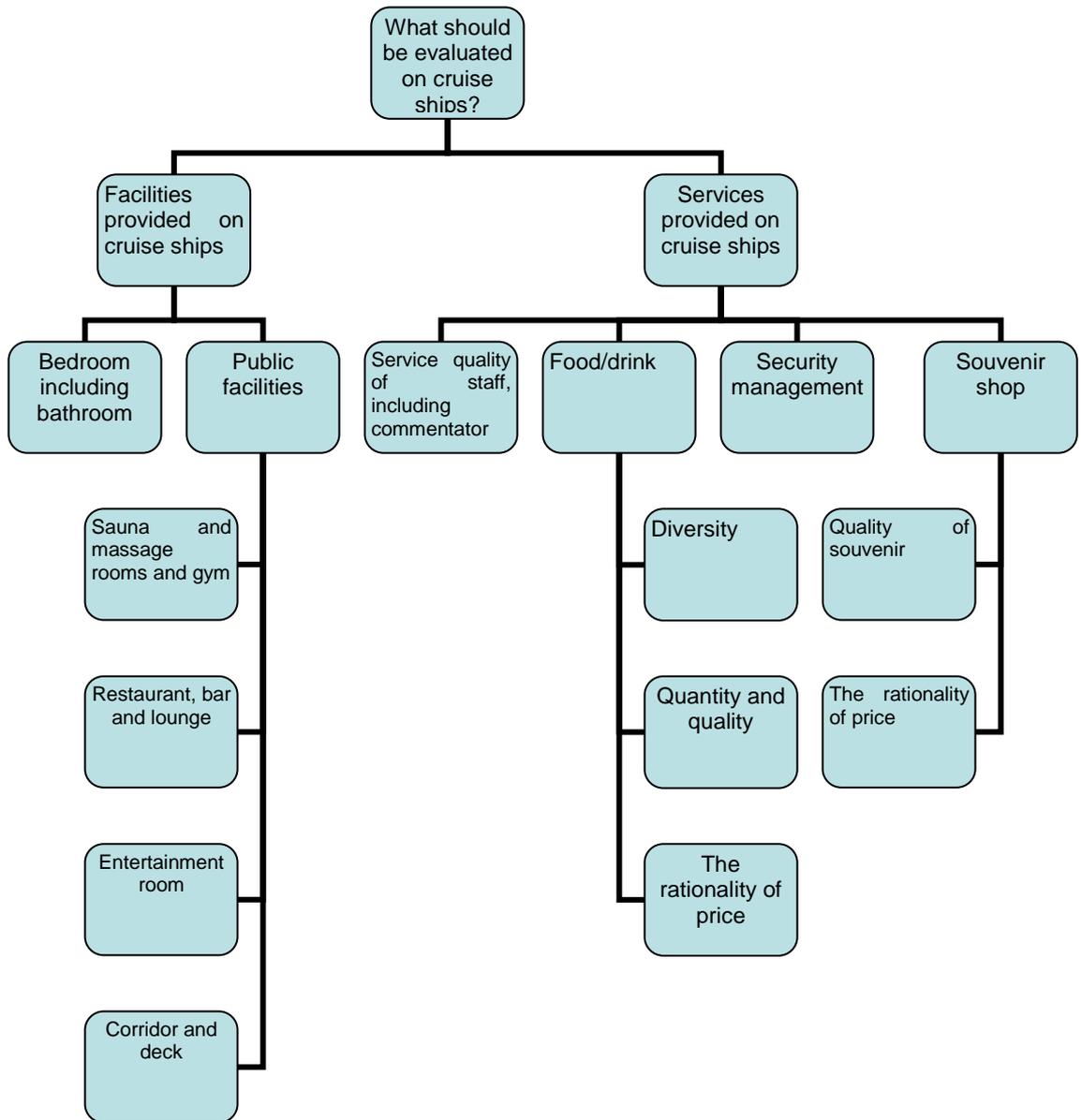
influence a report. With regard to biases, therefore, it is suggested that 'the most successful mystery shopper exercises are those that use trained people external to the organization' (Williams & Buswell 2003: 177).

Compared with Western countries, in China, the use of mystery shoppers is not so popular and 'Mystery Shopping' scheme has not been applied widely. Ma, Qu, Njite & Chen's (2011) research into 'Asian customers' perceptions of Chinese restaurants' perhaps can explain this phenomenon, that is, 'due to the influence of the Confucian culture, Asian customers tend to express dissatisfaction less often, because they consider it is important to "save face", both for others and for themselves. Consequently, Chinese customers are less willing to tell service providers about their experiences'. As a result, it is more difficult for service providers to access to their customers' experiences (Lai & Chang 2013).

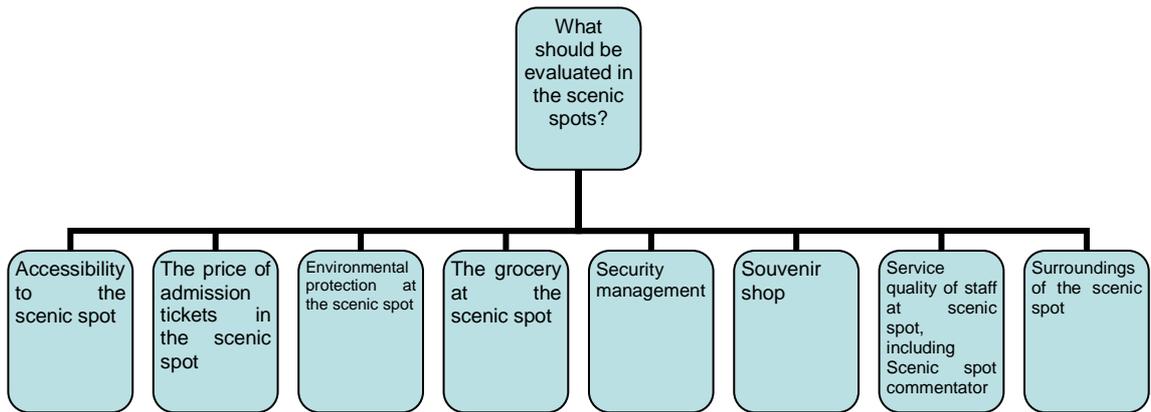
Nevertheless, with more and more international hotel chains and travel agents established in China, both the hotel and tourism sectors in some major cities have begun to adopt the assessment of mystery shoppers to improve their service quality. Therefore, if local governments of the Three Gorges region want to make the Three Gorges world-class tourist destination, they should adopt the 'Mystery Shopping' scheme to improve the quality of service in scenic area and on cruise ships.

According to the findings in Chapter 7, an overview of how to evaluate the quality of services provided on cruise ships and in the scenic areas of the Three Gorges region is provided below follows (see Figure 8.3 overleaf and Figure 8.4 on Page 324):

**Figure 8.3** A brief structure for the evaluation of the quality of services provided on cruise ship



**Figure 8.4** A summary structure for the evaluation of the quality of services provided at scenic attractions in Three Gorges region



### Issue 2 summary

The prerequisite of the development of the new Three Gorges tourism is to establish a unified tourism management system, which means that two governments, Chongqing Municipality and Hubei Province, must build a deeper cooperative relationship. Under this condition, many problems, including the lack of characteristic tourist commodities/products, the lack of the integration of tourism resources, irrational and disordered competition, the lack of the management of the scenic area vendors, the excessive exploitation of tourist resources, and unreasonable tourism route design, can be solved effectively.

### 8.4 Contribution of this research

The research provides an original contribution to the advancement of knowledge within the context of crisis management in tourism. Particularly, this research establishes a link between strategic responses, within a framework of crisis management, and tourists' perceptions of the affected destination. Few, if any, studies pay attention to tourists' perceptions within the context of tourism crisis management and, therefore, this research has added a new dimension to this field of study. The case study used in the research is also regarded as a unique source to expand present tourism crisis management theory and models, especially in the theory of proactive and reactive crisis management. In other words, findings from the visitor survey and interviews have revealed international visitors' attitudes regarding Three Gorges tourism and the Three Gorges Dam. Their attitudes indicate that the government needs to pay much attention to the prevention of potential crises, to alleviating / preventing water pollution, and to the strengthening of tourism management. The construction of the Dam has resulted in the significant transformation of tourism resources; however, it has also brought an opportunity for the development of a new Three Gorges tourism. Therefore, an

understanding of international visitors' perceptions of the contemporary Three Gorges and of their travel needs, as generated by this research, will contribute to building a new image of the Three Gorges and top the formulation of developmental strategies for regional tourism.

### **8.5 Limitations of this research**

This research has elicited relevant data and provided both a broader and deeper understanding of international visitors' attitudes with regards to the Three Gorges Dam and the Three Gorges tourism. Nevertheless, there are still some limitations to this research.

First, this research used a case study to demonstrate that, a better understanding of international (and, in particular, Western) visitors' perception of a destination affected by a crisis - the Three Gorges – will benefit the redevelopment of tourism in the area. Therefore, it can be argued that all findings are valid only to the case under study and cannot be generalized to the total tourists' population (Dolnicar 2007).

Secondly, as discussed in Chapter 5, given both time and financial constraints, the number of participants in visitor survey and interviews was relatively limited. For example, in order to gain the best results, interviews and visitor survey could only be conducted on cruise ships once international visitors had completed their Three Gorges tour. Additionally, in order to maximize information from international visitors and to control budget at the same time, scoping research, including interviews with nine international visitors, and stage-two research, including interviews with 17 international visitors and 182 surveys, were intensively conducted in April 2011 and in September and October 2012, respectively, although it was in peak season. Furthermore, the number of international visitors on each cruise ship was limited. Therefore, the total number of international visitors participating in survey and interviews was restricted and, arguably, of insufficient significance to support detailed statistical analysis of the survey outcomes.

Thirdly, English was the only language used for the survey and interviews, with the result that some respondents from non-English speaking countries were unable to express their thoughts and opinions fully and fluently. Therefore, the ability to understand other languages, such as German, Dutch, French and Italian, would benefit surveys and interviews such as these.

Fourthly, open-ended questions were included in the visitor survey, but these attracted a relatively limited response rate. Moreover, since an inductive quantitative approach has been adopted in the research (see Section 6.3.3 in Chapter 6), only a few basic correlations and cross-tabulations were undertaken in Chapter 7.

## **8.6 Recommendations for future research**

As this study focused primarily on the impacts of the Three Gorges Dam on the development of tourism in the Three Gorges region, it may be interesting to see if this research is repeatable elsewhere, either in similar or different contexts. Certainly, the study on Aswan Dam provided a good reference point for this research.

In addition, as discussed in Chapter 7, local government would like to develop the new Three Gorges into an international tourist destination; therefore, future research should remain focused on the development strategy. Indeed, market surveys and in-depth interviews related to international tourists' perceptions of Three Gorges tourism should be conducted regularly, such as once a year.

Furthermore, more case studies based on destinations elsewhere China should be undertaken in order to contribute further to the theory of crisis management in tourism. This will also benefit the development of crisis management in China.

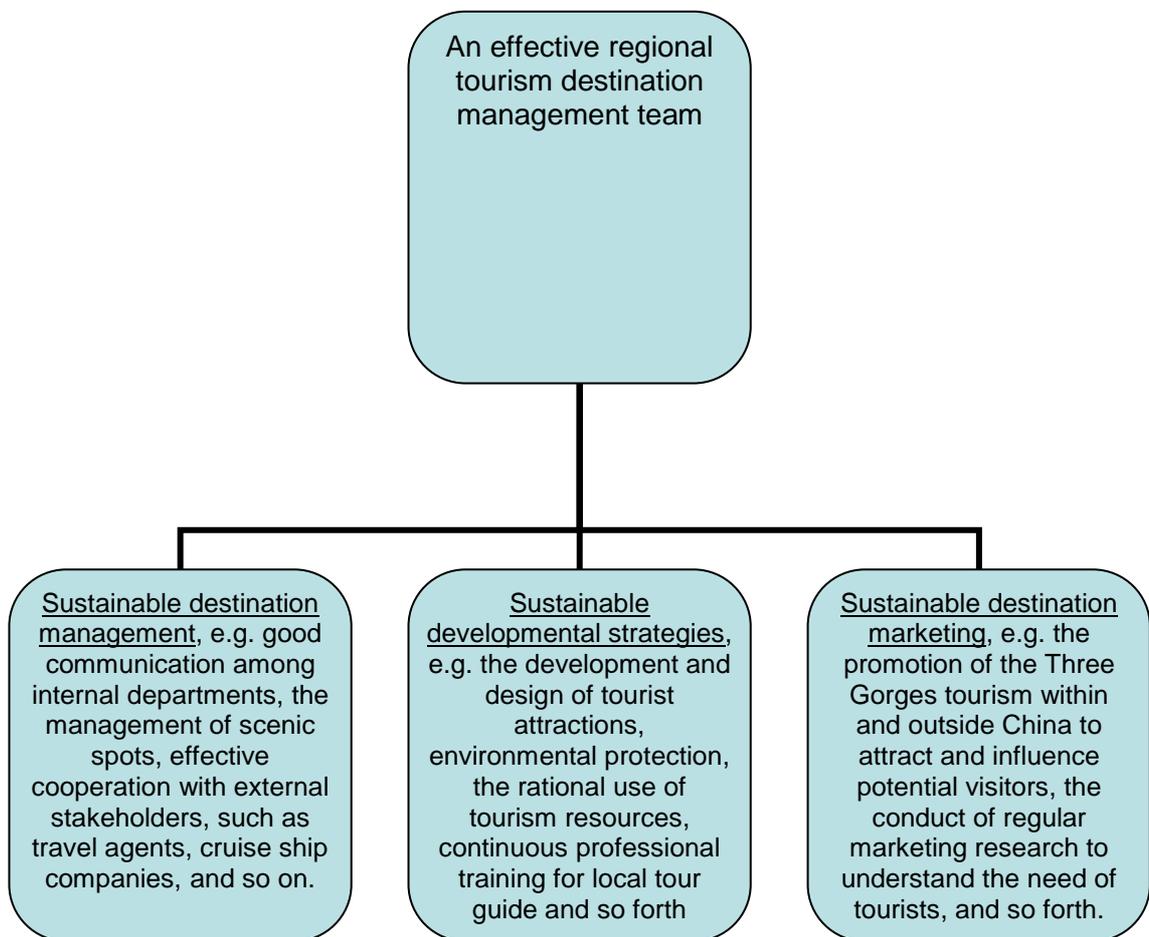
## **8.7 Final thoughts**

Li Bai, one of the most famous poets in Tang Dynasty, wrote many popular poems about Sichuan, including the Three Gorges. Today's Three Gorges, as described in one of Li Bai's one of poems, still remains such natural wonder: 'If one man guards the pass, ten thousand are unable to get through (一夫当关, 万夫莫开)...Walking on the narrow paths of Sichuan is as difficult as climbing up to heaven (蜀道之难, 难于上青天)' . Travelling in this region, many visitors still praise the steep terrain of the Three Gorges. However, today's Three Gorges has lost such a kind of artistic conception: 'In the boundless forest, rustling leaves are whirling down, swirling and twirling all around; on the endless Yangtze, rolling waves are dashing away, crashing and slashing all along (无边落木萧萧下, 不尽长江滚滚来)', a poem from another famous poet of Tang Dynasty, Du Fu.

Due to the construction of the Dam, the once rushing river in the Three Gorges region has now turned into a calm lake. Some original historical sites have now been either

flooded or relocated. Nevertheless, for many new visitors, such a transformation may not affect their travel experience. Therefore, it can be said that there are many opportunities for the development of new Three Gorges tourism, and that there is potential to develop the Three Gorges into a world-class tourist destination. However, such potential depends on a firm foundation, namely the establishment of a unified tourism management system. In other words, the success of the Three Gorges tourism is dependent on the establishment of an effective regional tourism destination management team which continually monitors, evaluates and reviews tourism performance and management strategies in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of tourism in the Three Gorges. Therefore, steps to ensure 'Success in Three Gorges Tourism' can be conceptualized as follows (see Figure 8.5):

**Figure 8.5** The success in Three Gorges tourism framework



As is well-known, the successful development of tourism at a destination is not an easy task. It requires effective policies and planning and a long-term commitment from all stakeholders. Nevertheless, effective and sustainable management combined with

good strategic planning and marketing promotion for the Three Gorges will contribute to the continual improvement and success of tourism in the Three Gorges region.

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# Appendices

## APPENDIX 1: FORTY-FIVE WORLD HERITAGE SITES IN CHINA

World Cultural Heritage Sites	
<p><b>Imperial Palaces of the Ming and Qing Dynasties in Beijing and Shenyang:</b> These remarkable architectural edifices offer important historical testimony to the history of the Qing Dynasty and to the cultural traditions of the Manchu and other tribes in the north of China.</p>	
<p><b>Mausoleum of the First Qin Emperor:</b> Qin (d. 210 B.C.), the first unifier of China, is buried, surrounded by the famous terracotta warriors, at the center of a complex designed to mirror the urban plan of the capital, Xianyan. Thousands of statues are masterpieces of realism and also of great historical interest.</p>	
<p><b>Mogao Caves:</b> Situated at a strategic point along the Silk Route, at the crossroads of trade as well as religious, cultural and intellectual influences, the 492 cells and cave sanctuaries are famous for their statues and wall paintings, spanning 1,000 years of Buddhist art.</p>	
<p><b>Peking Man Site at Zhoukoudian:</b> The site is not only an exceptional reminder of the prehistorical human societies of the Asian continent, but also illustrates the process of evolution.</p>	
<p><b>The Great Wall:</b> The Great Wall is the world's largest military structure, which was a united defense system against invasions from the north. Its historic and strategic importance is matched only by its architectural significance.</p>	
<p><b>Ancient Building Complex in the Wudang Mountains:</b> The palaces and temples exemplify the architectural and artistic achievements of China's Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties. The site contains Taoist buildings and represents the highest standards of Chinese art and architecture over a period of nearly 1,000 years.</p>	
<p><b>Historic Ensemble of the Potala Palace, Lhasa:</b> The Potala Palace, consisting of three sites, symbolizes Tibetan Buddhism and is a masterpiece of Tibetan art. The beauty and originality of the architecture of these sites, their rich ornamentation and harmonious integration in a striking landscape, add to their historic and religious interest.</p>	
<p><b>Mountain Resort and its Outlying Temples, Chengde:</b> Built between 1703 and 1792, it is a vast complex of palaces and administrative and ceremonial buildings. Temples of various architectural styles and imperial gardens blend harmoniously into a landscape of lakes, pastureland and forests. To its aesthetic interest, it is a rare historic vestige of the final development of feudal society in China.</p>	

<p><b>Temple and Cemetery of Confucius and the Kong Family Mansion in Qufu:</b> The temple was built to commemorate Quyuan, the great philosopher, politician and educator, in 478 B.C. The Qufu complex of monuments has retained its outstanding artistic and historic character due to the devotion of successive Chinese emperors over more than 2,000 years.</p>	
<p><b>Lushan National Park:</b> It is one of the spiritual centers of Chinese civilization. Buddhist and Taoist temples, along with landmarks of Confucianism, where the most eminent masters taught, blend effortlessly into a strikingly beautiful landscape which has inspired countless artists who developed the aesthetic approach to nature found in Chinese culture.</p>	
<p><b>Ancient City of Ping Yao:</b> Ping Yao is an exceptionally well-preserved example of a traditional Han Chinese city. Its urban fabric shows the evolution of architectural styles and town planning in Imperial China over five centuries. Of special interest are the imposing buildings associated with banking.</p>	
<p><b>Classical Gardens of Suzhou:</b> This design seeks to recreate natural landscapes in miniature. They are generally acknowledged to be masterpieces of the genre. Dating from the 11th-19th century, the gardens reflect the profound metaphysical importance of natural beauty in Chinese culture in their meticulous design.</p>	
<p><b>Old Town of Lijiang:</b> The old town is perfectly adapted to the uneven topography of this key commercial and strategic site and has retained a historic townscape of high quality and authenticity. Its architecture is noteworthy for the blending of elements from several cultures that have come together over many centuries. It also possesses an ancient water-supply system of great complexity and ingenuity that still functions effectively today.</p>	
<p><b>Summer Palace, an Imperial Garden in Beijing:</b> It is a masterpiece of Chinese landscape garden design. The natural landscape of hills and open water is combined with artificial features such as pavilions, halls, palaces, temples and bridges to form a harmonious ensemble of outstanding aesthetic value.</p>	
<p><b>Temple of Heaven: an Imperial Sacrificial Altar in Beijing:</b> Founded in the first half of the 15th century, it is a dignified complex of fine cult buildings set in gardens and surrounded by historic pine woods. It symbolizes the relationship between earth and heaven – the human world and God’s world – which stands at the heart of Chinese cosmogony, and also the special role played by the emperors within that relationship.</p>	
<p><b>Dazu Rock Carvings:</b> The place contains an exceptional series of rock carvings dating from the 9th to the 13th century. They are remarkable for their aesthetic quality, their rich diversity of subject matter, both secular and religious, and the light that they shed on everyday life in China during this period. They provide outstanding evidence of the harmonious synthesis of Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism.</p>	

<p><b>Ancient Villages in Southern Anhui – Xidi and Hongcun:</b> The two traditional villages preserve to a remarkable extent the appearance of non-urban settlements of a type that largely disappeared or was transformed during the last century. The street plan, architecture and decoration, and the integration of houses with comprehensive water systems are unique surviving examples.</p>	
<p><b>Imperial Tombs of the Ming and Qing Dynasties:</b> Three Imperial Tombs of the Qing Dynasty were built in the 17th century. Constructed for the founding emperors of the Qing Dynasty and their ancestors, the tombs follow the precepts of traditional Chinese geomancy and fengshui theory. The three tomb complexes and their numerous edifices combine traditions inherited from previous dynasties and new features of Manchu civilization.</p>	
<p><b>Longmen Grottoes:</b> It contains the largest and most impressive collection of Chinese art of the late Northern Wei and Tang Dynasties (316-907). These works, entirely devoted to the Buddhist religion, represent the high point of Chinese stone carving.</p>	
<p><b>Mount Qingcheng and the Dujiangyan Irrigation System:</b> Construction of the Dujiangyan irrigation system began in the 3rd century B.C. It still controls the waters of the Minjiang River and distributes it to the fertile farmland of the Chengdu plains. Mount Qingcheng was the birthplace of Taoism, which is celebrated in a series of ancient temples.</p>	
<p><b>Yungang Grottoes:</b> It represents the outstanding achievement of Buddhist cave art in China in the 5th and 6th centuries. The Five Caves created by Tan Yao, with their strict unity of layout and design, constitute a classical masterpiece of the first peak of Chinese Buddhist art.</p>	
<p><b>Capital Cities and Tombs of the Ancient Koguryo Kingdom:</b> The site includes archaeological remains of 40 tombs and three cities: Wunu Mountain City, Guonei City and Wandu Mountain City. Wandu Mountain City, one of the capitals of the Koguryo Kingdom, contains many vestiges. Some of the tombs have elaborate ceilings, designed to roof wide spaces without columns and carry the heavy load of a stone or earth tumulus (mound) which was placed above them.</p>	
<p><b>Historic Centre of Macao:</b> With its historic street, residential, religious and public Portuguese and Chinese buildings, the historic center of Macao provides a unique testimony to the meeting of aesthetic, cultural, architectural and technological influences from East and West. The site also contains Chinese oldest fortress and lighthouse. The site bears testimony to one of the earliest and longest-lasting encounters between China and the West based on the vibrancy of international trade.</p>	

<p><b>Yin Xu:</b> The archaeological site, close to Anyang City, some 500 km south of Beijing, is an ancient capital city of the late Shang Dynasty (1300 to 1046 B.C.). It testifies to the golden age of early Chinese culture, crafts and sciences, a time of great prosperity of the Chinese Bronze Age. The site includes the Palace and Royal Ancestral Shrines Area. Inscriptions on these oracle bones bear invaluable testimony to the development of one of the world's oldest writing systems, ancient beliefs and social systems.</p>	
<p><b>Kaiping Diaolou:</b> The diaolou of Kaiping are fortified multi-story towers, built by returning Chinese immigrants from America, Canada, Hong Kong and Malaysia. They display a fusion of Chinese and Western decorative forms. The towers were constructed in the 1920s and 1930s, when there were more than 3,000 of these structures. The diaolou served as housing and as protection against forays by bandits (and later the Japanese). Three separate forms can be distinguished: communal towers, residential towers and watchtowers.</p>	
<p><b>Fujian Tulou:</b> The Fujian Tulou is unique Chinese residential buildings constructed by the Hakka people from Fujian Province. The Tulou are enclosed by a thick, defensive earth wall and are communal buildings housing up to 80 families. They were mostly built between the 12th to the 20th centuries.</p>	
<p><b>Mount Wutai:</b> With its five flat peaks, Mount Wutai is a sacred Buddhist mountain. The cultural landscape is home to forty-one monasteries and includes the East Main Hall of Foguang Temple, the highest surviving timber building of the Tang dynasty, with life-size clay sculptures. Overall, the buildings on the site catalogue the way in which Buddhist architecture developed and influenced palace building in China for over a millennium. Temples have been built on this site from the 1st century AD to the early 20th century.</p>	
<p><b>Historic Monuments of Dengfeng in 'The Centre of Heaven and Earth':</b> Mount Songshang is considered to be the central sacred mountain of China. At the foot of this 1500 meter high mountain, close to the city of Dengfeng in Henan province and spread over a 40 square-kilometer circle, stand eight clusters of buildings and sites. Constructed over the course of nine dynasties, these buildings are reflections of different ways of perceiving the center of heaven and earth and the power of the mountain as a center for religious devotion. The historical monuments of Dengfeng include some of the best examples of ancient Chinese buildings devoted to ritual, science, technology and education.</p>	
<p><b>West Lake Cultural Landscape of Hangzhou:</b> it includes the West Lake and the hills surrounding its three sides, and has inspired famous poets, scholars and artists since the 9th century. It comprises numerous temples, pagodas, pavilions, gardens and ornamental trees, as well as causeways and artificial islands. The West Lake has influenced garden design in the rest of China as well as Japan and Korea over the centuries and bears an exceptional testimony to the cultural tradition of improving landscapes to create a series of vistas reflecting an idealized fusion between humans and nature.</p>	

<p><b>Site of Xanadu:</b> North of the Great Wall, the Site of Xanadu encompasses the remains of Kublai Khan's legendary capital city, designed by the Mongol ruler's Chinese advisor in 1256. The site was a unique attempt to assimilate the nomadic Mongolian and Han Chinese cultures. From this base, Kublai Khan established the Yuan dynasty that ruled China over a century, extending its boundaries across Asia. The religious debate that took place here resulted in the dissemination of Tibetan Buddhism over north-east Asia, a cultural and religious tradition still practiced in many areas today. The site was planned according to traditional Chinese <i>feng shui</i> in relation to the nearby mountains and river. It features the remains of the city, including temples, palaces, tombs, nomadic encampments and so forth.</p>	
<p><b>Honghe Hani Rice Terraces:</b> It is marked by spectacular terraces that cascade down the slopes of the towering Ailao Mountains to the banks of the Hong River. Over the past 1,300 years, the Hani people have developed a complex system of channels to bring water from the forested mountaintops to the terraces. They have also created an integrated farming system that involves buffalos, cattle, ducks, fish and eel and supports the production of red rice, the area's primary crop. The villages feature traditional thatched "mushroom" houses. The resilient land management system of the rice terraces demonstrates extraordinary harmony between people and their environment, both visually and ecologically, based on exceptional and long-standing social and religious structures.</p>	
<p><b>World Natural Heritage Sites</b></p>	
<p><b>Huanglong Scenic and Historic Interest Area:</b> It is made up of snow-capped peaks and the easternmost of all the Chinese glaciers. Its mountain landscape, diverse forest ecosystems can be found, as well as spectacular limestone formations, waterfalls and hot springs. The area also has a population of endangered animals, including the giant panda and the Sichuan golden snub-nosed monkey.</p>	
<p><b>Jiuzhaigou Valley Scenic and Historic Interest Area:</b> It comprises a series of diverse forest ecosystems. Its superb landscapes are particularly interesting for their series of narrow conic karst landforms and spectacular waterfalls. Some 140-bird species also inhabit the valley, as well as a number of endangered plant and animal species, including the giant panda and the Sichuan takin.</p>	
<p><b>Wulingyuan Scenic and Historic Interest Area:</b> The site is dominated by more than 3,000 narrow sandstone pillars and peaks. To the striking beauty of the landscape, the region is also noted for the fact that it is home to a number of endangered plant and animal species.</p>	
<p><b>Three Parallel Rivers of Yunnan Protected Areas:</b> The site features sections of the upper reaches of three of the great rivers of Asia: the Yangtze (Jinsha), Mekong and Salween run roughly parallel, north to south, through steep gorges. The site is an epicenter of Chinese biodiversity. It is also one of the richest temperate regions of the world in terms of biodiversity.</p>	

<p><b>Sichuan Giant Panda Sanctuaries:</b> The sanctuaries constitute the largest remaining contiguous habitat of the giant panda, a relic from the paleo-tropic forests of the Tertiary Era. It is also the species' most important site for captive breeding.</p>	
<p><b>South China Karst:</b> South China Karst can be considered as one of the two great karst regions of the world. Within this 500.000km<sup>2</sup> areas, Shilin is regarded as the world's best example of stone forests.</p>	
<p><b>Mount Sanqingshan National Park:</b> The Mount Sanqingshan National Park holds an outstanding scenery of granite peaks and pillars. The area also has numerous waterfalls, valleys, lakes and springs. The massif is covered with temperate forest, home to rare and endangered plant species. Its visual impact is enhanced by the occurrence of meteorological effects like bright halos on clouds and white rainbows.</p>	
<p><b>China Danxia:</b> It is the name given in China to landscapes developed on continental red terrigenous sedimentary beds influenced by endogenous forces (including uplift) and exogenous forces (including weathering and erosion). The inscribed site comprises six areas found in the sub-tropical zone of southwest China. They are characterized by spectacular red cliffs and a range of erosional landforms, including dramatic natural pillars, towers, ravines, valleys and waterfalls. These rugged landscapes have helped to conserve sub-tropical broad-leaved evergreen forests, and host many species of flora and fauna, about 400 of which are considered rare or threatened.</p>	
<p><b>Chengjiang Fossil Site:</b> Chengjiang's fossils in Yunnan province present the most complete record of an early Cambrian marine community with exceptionally preserved biota, displaying the anatomy of hard and soft tissues in a very wide variety of organisms, invertebrate and vertebrate. They record the early establishment of a complex marine ecosystem. The site documents at least sixteen phyla and a variety of enigmatic groups as well as about 196 species, presenting exceptional testimony to the rapid diversification of life on Earth 530 million years ago, when almost all of today's major animal groups emerged. It opens a palaeobiological window of great significance to scholarship.</p>	
<p><b>Xinjiang Tianshan:</b> Xinjiang Tianshan presents unique physical geographic features and scenically beautiful areas including spectacular snow and snowy mountains glacier-capped peaks, undisturbed forests and meadows, clear rivers and lakes and red bed canyons. These landscapes contrast with the vast adjacent desert landscapes, creating a striking visual contrast between hot and cold environments, dry and wet, desolate and luxuriant. The landforms and ecosystems of the site have been preserved since the Pliocene epoch and present an outstanding example of ongoing biological and ecological evolutionary processes. Xinjiang Tianshan is moreover an important habitat for endemic and relic flora species, some rare and endangered.</p>	

World Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites	
<p><b>Mount Taishan:</b> It was the object of an imperial cult for nearly 2,000 years, and the artistic masterpieces are in perfect harmony with the natural landscape. It has always been a source of inspiration for Chinese artists and scholars and symbolizes ancient Chinese civilizations and beliefs.</p>	
<p><b>Mount Huangshan:</b> It was acclaimed through art and literature during a good part of Chinese history. Today it is renowned for its magnificent scenery made up of many granite peaks and rocks emerging out of a sea of clouds.</p>	
<p><b>Mount Emei Scenic Area, including Leshan Giant Buddha Scenic Area:</b> The first Buddhist temple in China was built here in the 1st century A.D. in the beautiful surroundings of the summit Mount Emei. The addition of other temples turned the site into one of Buddhism's holiest sites. The most remarkable is the Giant Buddha of Leshan, the largest Buddha in the world, carved out of a hillside in the 8th century and looking down on the confluence of three rivers. Mount Emei is also notable for its exceptionally diverse vegetation, ranging from subtropical to subalpine pine forests. Some of the trees there are more than 1,000 years old.</p>	
<p><b>Mount Wuyi:</b> It is the most outstanding area for biodiversity conservation and a refuge for a large number of ancient, relict species, many of them endemic to China. The serene beauty of the dramatic gorges of the Nine Bend River provided the setting for the development and spread of neo-Confucianism, which has been influential in the cultures of East Asia since the 11th century. In the 1st century B.C. a large administrative capital was built by the Han dynasty rulers. Its massive walls enclose an archaeological site of great significance.</p>	

**Sources:** UNESCO (1992-2013)

**APPENDIX 2: THE INTRODUCTION AND THE STATUS QUO OF MAIN ATTRACTIONS IN THE THREE GORGES REGION**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Main attractions</b>	<b>The status quo after water storage</b>
<b>Fuling District, Chongqing</b>	The White Crane Ridge: an ancient device for measuring water levels of the Yangtze in China, the equivalent of a hydrometric station.	It has been submerged in the Three Gorges Reservoir. However, the inscriptions on the White Crane Ridge are on display in an underwater museum, which has been opened to the public on May 18, 2009.
<b>Fengdu County, Chongqing</b>	Fengdu Ghost Town: it has as many as 27 ancient temples on the Minshan Mountain. Among the temples, statues in the 'Netherworld' depict the lives of the living people, like going to court, prison, torture and so on. They were all designed in a unique style, vividly reflecting Chinese people's understanding of the ghost and God, heaven and hell.	It has been submerged till the foot of the Minshan mountain. Most scenes above the 'Door of Hell' remain their previous appearances. Nowadays, the Ghost Town has become an isolated land surrounded with water.
<b>Zhong County, Chongqing</b>	Shibaozhai Pagoda: this 12-story wooden building without any iron pin was constructed against the sheer cliff of Jade Seal Hill. It is reputed to be the 'Pearl on the Yangtze River', and listed as one of the 'Eight World Fantastic Buildings'.	A dyke has been built around the base of the tower to protect it from the rising water level. The Village has become an isolated land surrounded with water.
<b>Yunyang County, Chongqing</b>	The Zhang Fei Temple: it was originally constructed in honor of General Zhang Fei, a Chinese military leader, during the Three Kingdoms Period (220-280). Renowned as 'Place of Literary Works', Zhang Fei Temple is composed of several unique ancient buildings, which has a stature of Zhang Fei and lots of inscription poems, writings and paintings as well as other hundreds of cultural relics.	The temple has been submerged completely and moved brick by brick to a new higher site.
<b>Fengjie County, Chongqing</b>	Baidicheng: At the end of the Western Han Dynasty (206 B.C. – 24 A.D.), Gongsun Shu made himself the ruler of Sichuan Province. As the legend goes, he found a well when building the town, from which white vapor emitting looked like a white dragon flying up. So he renamed himself White King and the town Baidicheng (White King Town). Later, Liu Bei, the founding emperor of the Kingdom of Shu (221 – 263), along with his army, was defeated at baidicheng, where he entrusted his son to his prime minister Zhuge Liang before his death	The water has partially submerged the Town. Mt. Baidishan has become an isolated island surrounded with water. Nevertheless, the landscape of the Town becomes more beautiful than before.
<b>Along the Three Gorges</b>	The Hanging Coffins: The Three Gorges area is a unique zone for cliff coffins, with the most precious cultural significance. The course of the Yangtze River is the center of distribution for the coffins. The unsolved mystery of the cliff coffin custom displays profound cultural and historical meaning and the unique entombment custom of ancient nationalities in the Three Gorges.	Some coffins from different gorges were in danger of being submerged. Therefore, they have been moved to different places for preservation.
<b>The Qutang Gorge, Fengjie County, Chongqing</b>	Kui Gate: it is the entrance to the Qutang Gorge, and also a symbol of the Three Gorges. The gate is so named because Fengjie County was named Kuizhou in ancient times, for which the Qutang Gorge is also called 'Kui Gorge'. Kui Gate has always enjoyed the reputation of 'the Most Magnificent Gate in the World'. The scene of Kui Gate has already been set as the	Less impacted by the Dam.

	background of the 10-yuan bill RMB.	
	Chalk Wall: From the Song Dynasty onward, it was covered with a large amount of engraved inscriptions, which is more than hundreds meters wide and ten meters high. One of the most treasured inscriptions is Ode to the Resurgence of the Song of 980 words in Chinese characters engraved in the Song Dynasty. The inscriptions on the Wall not only display all styles of all schools of Chinese calligraphy, but also reveal the essence of the Chinese calligraphic arts in the past dynasties.	It has been covered by water. Some parts with characters have been cut off and preserved in the local museum.
	Meng Liang Ladder: It is a Z-shaped series of holes chiseled into the rock face, each hole measuring 33 cm deep, 24 cm wide and 21 cm high and with a 1-meter interval between the holes. They are arranged half way up the mountain and out of the reach of climbers. Meng Liang is a favorite of Yang Jiye, a famous general in the Song Dynasty (960-1279) who fought against barbarian invaders.	It has been covered by water.
	The Ancient Pathway: Most parts of the Ancient Pathway were engraved along the perpendicular cliffs with about 50-60 kilometers in length, 2-3 meters in width and scores of meters in height above the surface of the river. The length of the Pathway in Qutang Gorge section is about 10 kilometers long. In the ancient times, all communications in the Three Gorges region depended on the waterway. However, during the flood season, the pathway was the only passage in the Three Gorges region.	It has been covered by water.
	The Bellows Crevices: there are some vertical crevices on the precipice of the north bank at Qutang Gorge, in which there is something like bellows; therefore, the place is called 'Bellow Crevices'. It is said that these bellows once had been used by Lu Ban, the forefather of Chinese carpenters, for saw casting. In fact, these are coffins placed in the precipice crevices by ancient Ba.	Less impacted by the Dam
	Daxi Village: The Ruins of Daxi Culture lies at the east gate of Qutang Gorge, where several mausoleums were discovered in 1959. The historical unearthed artifacts, such as stoneware, bone ware, pottery ware, jade ware, and so on, display the Daxi culture of the New Stone Age 2000 year ago.	It has been covered by water.
<b>The Wu Gorge, Chongqing</b>	Mt. Wu: the clouds and drizzle around Mt. Wu are famous due to the special geographical environment. Wu Gorge is the well-known thunder-stricken and stormy area. Also since there are many high mountains on both banks and the deep valley, after raining, the moisture is very heavy and hard to disperse.	Less impacted by the Dam.
	Lesser Three Gorges: It is composed of the Longmen Gorge, Bawu Gorge and Dicu Gorge, which preserves the ecological environment best among all the scenic spots in the three gorges. With the characteristics of 'pure water, elegant mountains and pretty rocks', Lesser Three Gorges is known as 'Miracle of China'.	There is a little change of the Lesser Three Gorges. Although the scenery of Longmen Gorge and Bawu Gorge has been diminished, there is no effect on the scenery in Dicu Gorge.
	Goddess Peak: it is the most famous one among the twelve peaks and also called 'Observing the Clouds' Peak. It has two physically distinguishing features: on the one hand, it is the highest of the twelve peaks, resembling the over-dimensional but lifelike, slim and graceful figure of a maiden kneeling in front of a pillar; on the other hand, it can easily be identified by its gracefully flowing waterfall. Additionally, it has one mythological distinguishing feature, which is associated with an ancient myth, or legend.	Since it is above 900 meters compared with the sea level, the feature of the peak is not destroyed.

<b>Hubei Province</b>	Shennong Stream: Along with the grandeur, elegance and danger of the Yangtze River, the Stream has its own unique scenery. It has four natural gorges and each has unique characteristics. Along the Stream, the ancient village and the flavor of Tujia (the local ethnic minority) can also be visited.	Less impacted by the Dam.
	Zi Gui: with a long history and great personalities, Zigui County is the hometown of Qu Yuan, one of the four well-known literators of the world, and the birthplace of the outstanding talented beauty, Wang Zhaojun, in the Western Han Dynasty. The Qu Yuan Temple, build to memorize Qu Yuan, in Zi Gui contains a statue of the poet from the Ming Dynasty (1368 – 1644) and many stone inscriptions.	Part of the Zigui territory has been submerged. Residents have moved to the new county of Zigui, which abuts the Dam. The Qu Yuan Temple gate has been partially submerged. In order to protect the temple, it is to be moved to a new location Mt. Phoenix that faces the Dam.
<b>The Xiling Gorge, Hubei Province</b>	Tactics Books and Sword Gorge, and Bull's Liver and Horse's Lung Gorge: they were given such names due to the shape and color of rocks in the gorges, and historic legend and story about them.	Due to low peaks in both Gorges, they are covered by water in summer. There is no effect on the distant view in winter when the conservancy time is coming, but the close view of the Gorges' feature has been diminished. The coffins in the former have been moved to the Qu Yuan Memorial Hall in Zigui.
	Huangling Temple: it is the biggest and oldest ancient building in the Three Gorges, and also called Yellow Cow Shrine. It is said that the temple was built in honor of a divine cow that helped Yu the great in putting the local river under control.	Not affected by the Dam.
	Three Travelers' Cave: it is a magical limestone cave. The cave is so-called because of three celebrities in Tang Dynasty. They visited here and composed poems to remember the occasion in 819. So it is named as 'Three Travelers' Cave'. 137 years later, in Northern Song Dynasty (960 - 1127), another three eminent writers toured the cave together and also inscribed poem in the cave. So, they are regarded as another three respected travelers who visited this important cave.	Not affected by the Dam.

Source: Li (2009), China Dam News (2009), China Net (2004), China Travel Report (1998-2012), Travel China Guide (1998-2012), Chongqing Tourism Administration (2011)

### **APPENDIX 3: ADVANTAGES OF THE CASE STUDY APPROACH**

- Capacity to explore social processes as they unfold in organizations
- Understand social processes in their organizational context
- Exploring processes or behavior that is little understood
- Explore atypical processes
- Exploring behavior which is informal, secret or even illicit
- Providing a richness and uniqueness in data by using multiple methods, namely triangulation
- Flexibility in data collection strategy allows researchers to adapt their research strategy as the research proceeds
- The ability to treat the subject of study as a whole, rather than abstracting a limited set of pre-selected features

*Source:* Adapted from Finn, Elliott-White & Walton (2000: 82) and Veal (2011: 348)

## **APPENDIX 4: SURVEY QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS**

### **Three Gorges Tourism**

International Visitor Survey 2012

This survey represents part of an ongoing research project, undertaken by a PhD student from University of Central Lancashire, UK, into the impacts of the Three Gorges Dam on the Three Gorges Tourism in China. Its specific purpose is to explore inbound tourists' perceptions of China and their attitudes towards the Dam, to find out whether or not the transformed environment has impacted on their travel experience in the Three Gorges, and to identify how their experience may be improved. Your participation in this survey is very much appreciated. This survey is only for personal academic research, and all answers will be treated in the strictest confidence.

#### **Part 1**

1. Is this your first visit to China? (please tick)    Yes  (go to Question 2.)    **No**

If 'No', a) how many times have you previously been China? :    2    3    **4+** (please tick)

b) What was your purpose of visit last time? (please tick the appropriate box)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Study</b>                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Visit friends / relatives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure travel               | <input type="checkbox"/> Business                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |  |

c) Which city(ies) or place(s) have you been since your first visit? **\_Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Suzhou, Xi'An, Kunming, Chongqing, Shangri-la, Lijiang, Pingyao\_**\_\_\_\_\_

d) How long did you spend in China last time? **\_1 year\_**\_\_\_\_\_

e) When you come to China each time, do you feel the country has changed? **Yes**  No  (please tick). If 'Yes', f) could you please tell me what you feel the differences are? **\_It is more modern, clean, a lot of constructions and changes in buildings and streets\_**\_\_\_\_\_

2. What was your image of China prior to your visit? (please use THREE words to describe) **\_\_\_\_\_Populated, big, cheap\_\_\_\_\_**

3. What is your first impression of China after your arrival? (please use THREE words to describe) **\_\_\_\_\_Same as above\_\_\_\_\_**

4. What is your purpose of visit this time? (please tick the appropriate box)

- Study**
- Visit friends / relatives
- Leisure travel
- Business
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Which city(ies) or place(s) have you been/are you going to this time? **Beijing, Chongqing**\_\_\_\_\_

6. How long have you spent/will you spend in China this time? **6 months**\_\_\_\_\_

7. Please state the main reason for visiting China **Learning Chinese**\_\_\_\_\_

8. What sort of sites in China are you interested in? (please tick the appropriate box)

- Natural scenery**
- Historic and cultural heritage sites
- Townscape / cityscape**
- The habitation and custom of ethnic groups
- Rural scenery
- Mixed
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

9. Where / how did you get information about China? (please tick the appropriate box)

- Word of mouth / friends or relatives
- Leaflets/brochures from travel agents
- Internet search / browse**
- Local newspapers / magazines
- TV / radio
- Guidebook**
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## **Part 2**

10. Is this your first visit to the Three Gorges? **Yes**  No  (please tick)

If 'No', how many visits have you previously made here? : 2 3 4+ (please tick)

11. How many days have you spent/will you spend at the Three Gorges? **5 days**\_\_\_\_\_

12. Where did you board?

- In ChongQing
- In YiChang, Hubei Province**
- In other cities (Please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

13. Where / how did you first hear about the Three Gorges? (please tick the appropriate box)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Word of mouth / friends or relatives</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Leaflets/brochures from travel agents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internet search / browse                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Local newspapers / magazines          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TV / radio                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Guidebook                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____                |  |

14. Please state the main reason for visiting the Three Gorges **\_My father wanted to see the Three Gorges\_**\_\_\_\_\_

15. Where / how did you get relevant information about the Three Gorges? (please tick the appropriate box)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth / friends or relatives | <input type="checkbox"/> Leaflets/brochures from travel agents |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Internet search / browse</b>      | <input type="checkbox"/> Local newspapers / magazines          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guidebook                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____          |

16. During your travel, which part is your favorite at the Three Gorges? (please tick the appropriate box)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Wu Gorge</b>                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Qutang Gorge                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Xiling Gorge                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Little Three Gorges</b>   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historical and cultural heritage attractions | <input type="checkbox"/> Three Gorges Dam             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local custom from Tu ethnic group            | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |

17. What have you enjoyed most about your visit to the Three Gorges?

**The beautiful landscape**

18. What have you enjoyed least about your visit to the Three Gorges?

**There were not many historical attractions.**

19. In what ways, if any, do you think the Three Gorges could be improved to make your visit more enjoyable or satisfying?

**More tourist attractions, like museum, temples, parks to visit**

20. Please rate from 1 (not important at all) to 5 (very important) the importance to you of the following features of the Three Gorges:

Feature	Rank	Feature	Rank
Overall value for money	3	Rural atmosphere/scenery	4
Safe environment	3	Cultural and historical attractions	5
Local infrastructure	5	Local custom	4
Availability and quality of food/drinks	5	Special events / activities	4
Things to do on board	4	Friendly / welcoming	4
Environment around the area	5	Distinctive souvenirs	4
Wildlife at the area	2	Quality of selling products	4

**Part 3**

21. In your country, did you watch / hear negative reports about the Three Gorges Dam?

- Yes**       No (please tick)

If 'Yes', where did you get news? (please tick the appropriate box)

- Word of mouth / friends or relatives**       TV / radio  
 **Internet**       Local newspapers  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

22. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements (please tick in the appropriate column)

	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neither agree nor disagree	4 Agree	5 Strongly agree
I would like to choose a tour package to China instead of independent travel to China, as I am concerned about some factors, such as travel budget, language barriers, the Chinese political systems, and cultural				x	

differences.					
Before coming to China I was aware of the building of the Three Gorges Dam.		x			
The reports in my country about the Dam are objective and true.				x	
To build the Dam at the Three Gorges is understandable.			x		
It's a pity that I didn't visit the Three Gorges before the Dam was constructed.		x			
I was intrigued to see the Three Gorges Dam.			x		
I prefer to visit the natural landscape and historical heritage sites rather than man-made structures such as the Three Gorges Dam in this region.				x	
The benefits of the Dam outweigh its impacts on the local environment and heritage.				x	
It's a pity that some historical heritage sites have been submerged, and some historical relics have been moved into museum from the original places in the region.					x
My travel experience was affected due to the Dam.		x			
Some new destinations in this region will be developed. Thus, it is likely that I will re-visit the Three Gorges in the future.			x		
It's difficult to envisage the Three Gorges before the Dam was built.			x		
Overall, the Dam brings more negative impacts than positive impacts to this region.				x	
I would recommend friends or relatives to visit China,			x		

particularly the Three Gorges.					
China is a safe country to travel.				x	

**Part 4**

23. And finally, please could you provide the following information

Are you  Male  **Female** (please tick the appropriate box)

Your age (please tick the appropriate box)

Under 20  **20-29**  30-39  40-49  50-59  Over 60

Your nationality  **Brazilian**

Your occupation  **Student**

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

**APPENDIX 5: Summary of international visitors' different perceptions on each visit to China**

Positive comments	Both Positive and Critical comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Local people's attitude to international visitors and the development of education:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>People are more friendly and educated.</i></li> <li>- <i>We are impressed by the spoken English and hospitality of your guides.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Economy:</b> <i>The country is developing fast. The country keeps developing.</i></li> <li>• <b>Economy related to the change of lifestyle and the quality of life:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>People are taking on more of a western lifestyle.</i></li> <li>- <i>Change is in physical transformation. People are more affluent.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Economy related to urban construction:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Modernization of infrastructures</i></li> <li>- <i>Much infrastructure outside the cities has been improved tremendously.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Environment and social order:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>The country is cleaner, more systematic, and less chaotic.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Economy related to transportation system and tourism:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>I visited Guangzhou in 1995: total changes in transport – more cars, huge development in resources and tourism.</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Economy related to transportation system and the price of commodities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>There is better transportation, but higher price of products</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Economy related to transportation systems and local infrastructure:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>There are more and more new bridges and shopping centers. But there is also more traffic.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Economy related to urban construction, the price of commodities, and the quality of life:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Cities in China are modernized, but products are getting expensive. There is a gap between rich and poor people.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Economy related to local infrastructure and the use of transport:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Fewer bicycles, new buildings, modern railway</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Source:** Adapted from survey

**APPENDIX 6: Distinctive examples: visitors' pre-image of China vs. first impression of China after their arrival – similar feelings**

		<b>Pre-image of China</b>	<b>First impression of China</b>
<b>Similar feelings</b>	<b>Positive feelings</b>	History & Culture (mysterious, Kongfu, historical)	Economy (Prosperous)  Tourist attractions (beautiful)  Food (delicious)
		Economy (developing)  Population (populated)  Local people's attitude to international visitors (friendly)	Economy related to urban construction (modern, booming)  Local people's attitude to international visitors (friendly)
		Economy (growing)  Economy related to price of products (cheap)  Culture (cultural)	Economy related to urban environmental construction (tidy)  Local people's attitude to international visitors (polite, helpful)
	<b>Negative feelings</b>	Environmental pollution (dirty) Politics (communist, corrupt)	Economy related to urban construction and people's lifestyle (westernized) Politics (corrupt)  Neutral attitude to everything
		Environmental pollution (polluted)  Local people's attitude to international visitors (rude) Population (crowded)	Economy related to transportation system (traffic)  Environmental pollution (dirty)  Local people's attitude to international visitors (rude)
		Economy related to urban construction (old)  Environmental pollution (dirty) Politics (strict)	Economy related to urban construction (modern) Environmental pollution (smoky, polluted)

**Source:** Adapted from survey

**APPENDIX 7: Distinctive examples: visitors' pre-image of China vs. first impression of China after their arrival – more positive views**

		<b>Pre-image of China</b>	<b>First impression of China</b>
<b>More positive views</b>	<i><b>From positive feelings to more positive views</b></i>	History & Culture (historical) Environmental pollution (polluted) Population (populated)	Economy (busy) Tourist attractions (magnificent) History (historical)
		Territory (big) Economy related to urban construction (old) History & Culture (traditional)	Economy (booming) Economy related to urban construction (modern, new)
	<i><b>From negative feelings to positive views</b></i>	Economy (poor, cheap, agriculture)	Economy (cosmopolitan) Technology (advanced) Culture (cultural)
		Population (crowded) Economy (primitive, rural)	Economy related to urban construction (modern) Economy related to Urban environmental construction (clean) Social order (organized)
		Population (crowded) Territory (large) Environmental pollution (noisy)	Food (delicious) Local people's attitude to international visitors (friendly) Economy related to urban construction (modern)
		Environmental pollution (dirty) Distance from one country to another (distant) Economy (backward)	Economy related to technology (advancing) Economy related to urban construction (modern) Local people's attitude to international visitors (friendly)
		Economy(third-world, backward) Environmental pollution (dirty)	Economy related to urban environmental construction (clean) Economy related to urban construction (modern) Security issue (safe)

		Politics (ambitious, rigid) Human right (inequality)	Economy (busy) Economy related to urban construction (modern) Economy related to urban environmental construction (greenery)
		Politics (authoritarianism) Economy related to urban environmental construction (untidy) Social order (disorganized)	Politics (capable) Economy (vibrant, energetic)

**Source:** Adapted from survey

**APPENDIX 8: Distinctive examples: visitors' pre-image of China vs. first impression of China after their arrival – more negative views**

		<b>Pre-image of China</b>	<b>First impression of China</b>
<b>More negative views</b>	<i><b>From positive feelings to negative views</b></i>	Territory (big)	Economy (busy)
		Economy (busy)	Environmental pollution (unclean)
		Life and culture (colorful)	Population (crowded)
		Life and culture (colorful, Great Wall)	Weather (hot, humid)
		Sport (Olympics)	Population (overpopulated)
	History (historical)	Population (crowded)	
	All aspects (different)	Economy related to urban construction (modern)	
Territory (large)	Environmental pollution (polluted)		
<i><b>From negative feelings to more negative views</b></i>	Technology (advanced)	Social order (disorganized)	
	Population (crowded)	Population (crowded)	
	Social order (organized)	Environmental pollution (dirty)	
	Economy (barren)	Environmental pollution (smoggy, smelly)	
	Population (crowded)	Economy related to transportation system (traffic)	
	Territory (huge)		

**Source:** Adapted from survey

## **APPENDIX 9: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT OF SUPPLY SIDE**

<b>Name of the interviewee</b>	Mr Ruliang Kan
<b>Occupation</b>	Associate Professor of China Three Gorges University
<b>Date</b>	14 April 2011
<b>Interview Location</b>	Mr Kan's office in China Three Gorges University

***Interviewer: After Chinese government announced the construction of the Three Gorges dam in Yichang, there have been many negative reports about the Dam. These reports at that time largely affected the number of domestic and international tourisms to this region. What measures have been taken to improve the tourists', especially international tourists, positive image of the Three Gorges? Have local government done marketing survey to understand international tourists' perception of the Three Gorges tourism?***

*Interviewee: there are many negative reports about the construction of the Three Gorges dam. From the perspective of the world marketing, no matter the reports are positive or negative, it is a kind of marketing tool. There must be some positive reports about the Three Gorges dam, as the benefits from the Dam cannot be ignored, like preventing flood, improving navigation, and so forth. Indeed, it is also important to have a dialectical view on the negative impact of the Dam, because it really brought a lot of negative factor, particularly in the aspect of environment. Nevertheless, the central government and China Three Gorges Corporation have made efforts to cope with the negative impacts of the dam. For example, by using Internet, many relevant questions have been answered actively and scientifically by scientists and experts, including the issue about whether Wenchuan earthquake was caused by the dam. The local governments, Chognqing and Yichang, also adopted a variety of ways to promote the Three Gorges, including organizing promotional campaigns in the U.S.A and Canada, and increasing a number of advertisements on TV and Internet, and to rebuild international tourists' positive image of the Three Gorges.*

***Interviewer: what are the main impacts of the Three Gorges dam on the Three Gorges region and its tourism?***

*Interviewee: To date, western countries are concerned about two major impacts of the dam: large-scale migration and the construct of ecological environment. The central*

*government has made a significant investment in the resettlement of the local people. Now the new focus is on how to help local people start their new business or find a new job. There are some problems, but as a whole, the quality of life for majority of people has been improved significantly.*

*Western visitors show a great concern about ecological environment. China is now still in the era of industrialization; therefore, energy for us is extremely important. All along, the energy security and low-carbon have received a great attention. Particularly, Japan nuclear leak crisis reminds us that although nuclear power is a low carbon, it is not secure. This crisis shocked the whole world. As a result, the use of water resources is considered as the safest and most ecofriendly way to generate electricity.*

*The construction of the Dam also has a great influence on international tourists. International tourists are divided into different types. For example, in addition to the interests in China's culture and history, tourists from western countries advocate natural and original ecosystem. After the formation of the Three Gorges Reservoir, original ecosystem has definitely been affected. Nevertheless, this is a process and it takes time to recover. I believe that a new ecological environment will be formed in the future, if a proper guidance is provided for the future development. This will not cause much impact for western tourists. Additionally, there is another issue about cultural circle and localization. For example, South Korea and Japan are in the Chinese cultural circle. Tourists from those countries are more interested in China's culture and history, and less concerned about the ecological environment change.*

*Indeed, the main impacts of the Three Gorges Dam on the Three Gorges tourism can be shown as follows:*

*Firstly, the Dam itself has become a very important tourist destination and attracted a large number of domestic and international visitors each year. So far the Three Gorges Dam is the only destination of the Three Gorges reservoir area that has received more than a million visitors. Therefore, the Dam is not only a weather vane of Three Gorges tourism, but also a landmark product. From this perspective, the Three Gorges Dam, as an important tourist attraction, greatly contributes to the Three Gorges tourism.*

*Secondly, after the water storage in the region, it takes time to improve infrastructure in Three Gorges reservoir area, as tourism industry requires high-standard infrastructure. Therefore, during the construction, visitors' experience in the Three Gorges region has been directly affected. Nevertheless, in the aspect of transportation and traffic system, such as port terminal building, road traffic, bridge construction, railway transportation,*

*and airport construction, one-stop services of sea, land, and air transport have been formed and developed, which expand the capacity of the Three Gorges reservoir area, help enhancing quality of services and tourists' experience, and lay the foundations for the further development of new Three Gorges tourism. There are certainly various problems in the process of construction. However, with the completion of the project, the benefits should gradually outweigh the disadvantages. Thirdly, due to the construction of the Dam, there has been a great transformation of local environment and tourist attractions. Thus, to rebuild the Three Gorges tourism and to make it an international tourist destination has become crucial. Although some of the original landscape has been changed after the water storage in the Three Gorges reservoir area, in some aspects, new landscapes have been formed, such as lake bifurcation, harbors, and leisure resorts. The mode of tourism in China is experiencing a transformation from sightseeing travel to leisure travel. As a result, for the Three Gorges tourism, a smooth transition will be more conducive to satisfy the demand of tourism consumption.*

***Interviewer: Many towns and cities have been flooded and the original landscapes of Three Gorges have been transformed. Has the government made new strategies to rebuilt Three Gorges tourism in order to attract more international visitors? What has the government done so far?***

*Interviewee: The Chinese government worked out 'The Development Planning of the Three Gorges Regional Tourism' in 2002. Then in 2008, Hubei Province introduced 'The Planning of Hubei Province Yangtze Three Gorges International Destination'. Chongqing also introduced a series of planning for the development of new Three Gorges tourism. All kinds of planning indicate that both central government and local governments have strong willingness to rebuild the Three Gorges tourism and to make it international tourism destination eventually. Governments have already realized the importance of the development of leisure tourism in this region, as it can be developed sustainably. As a result, local governments are making efforts to develop leisure tourism in this region.*

***Interviewer: The transformation of environment in this region has affected the supply of tourism resources. What policies have been developed to protect the environment of the Three Gorges region?***

*Interviewee: Chinese government organized and worked out 'Three Gorges Project Follow-Up Plan' in 2009, in which four main issues in Three Gorges reservoir were stressed: first, the ecological and environmental construction and protection; second, the prevention of geological disasters; third, the richness and stable condition of migrants; and forth, the harmonious development of socioeconomic in the region. Chinese government is very concerned about these issues.*

***Interviewer: Is there any tourism plan or policy for the Three Gorges tourism? Who or which department is responsible for those policies and plans?***

*Interviewee: There is "Three Gorges Regional Tourism Development Plan" for the development of new Three Gorges tourism, which was promulgated in August 2004. The central government has taken a series of actions to develop the regional tourism, to protect environment, and to ensure the richness and stable condition of migrants. However, there is not a separate policy for Three Gorges tourism. The existing policy has been incorporated with the policy of local economic development.*

***The interviewer: Is local tourism policies different from the policies made by the central government? What are the differences?***

*Interviewee: Tourism policy formulated by the state is in macro-level, whereas tourism policy made by the local government is microscopic, emphasizing the details and implementation. Local governments usually consider local interests. For example, although the official requirement is to develop a unified brand of the Three Gorges, due to the difference of the focus, particularly on local interest, in the specific marketing strategies local governments still design and explore new travel routes, and make tourism promotion advertising separately.*

***Interviewer: So far, are there any laws/regulations/policies made to protect the environment of the Three Gorges region?***

*Interviewee: State Council Three Gorges Project Construction Committee and the Land and Resources Department take responsibility for the establishment of regulations/policies of the Three Gorges region. They worked out 'The Plan of Yangtze*

*River Three Gorges Scenic Area', which has not been promulgated. This Plan focuses on the protection of the landscape and environment of the Three Gorges region and the development of Three Gorges tourism.*

***Interviewer: There are still a lot of controversies about the negative effects of the Three Gorges dam, particularly its impacts on earthquake hazards, natural and geographical disasters and environmental pollution. Have local governments set up a special crisis management team to prevent potential crises and to take emergency treatment? If so, how do they operate?***

*Interviewee: Because of the recent series of crises, including Japan nuclear leak, central and local governments have paid much attention to emergency management. Hubei and Chongqing municipal governments have made a series of contingency plans. Government and all relevant departments have set up a linkage mechanism. Once the crisis occurs, the relevant departments and personnel will be deployed to deal with the crisis. They are organized through a network platform.*

***Interviewer: Two governments, Chongqing Municipality and Hubei Province have decided to jointly develop the new Three Gorges tourism. What is about the cooperation? What are the advantages and disadvantages?***

*Interviewee: This cooperation is official-level cooperation, including jointly organizing 'Yangtze River Three Gorges International Tourism Festival', the integrated management of the market in the Three Gorges reservoir area, the improvement of two regions' transportation and traffic systems, and marketing abroad. However, there is still a discrepancy due to local interests. In particular in some business investment, there have been some contradictions due to the difference of interests.*

***Interviewer: What is about the development of cruise ship in the Three Gorges region?***

*Interviewee: In the Three Gorges reservoir area, cruise ship is not only a type of transport but also a kind of tourism product. So far, the fastest mode of transportation is rail. On the contrary, if visitors choose cruise ship for their travel, they need to spend more time on the ship. In the Three Gorges reservoir, cruise ship is not the only mode*

*of transportation for domestic visitors. Alternatively, they can choose other ways, such as by train, and by bus. However, cruise ship is the best choice for international visitors. Therefore, the government has requested to further improve the quality of cruise ships by eliminating a number of low-end cruise ships, remaining mid-end cruise ships, and further develop high-end cruise ships, which can provide international visitors with special experience. Furthermore, jet boats should also be developed in order to meet the different needs of tourists. Nowadays, local government is trying to develop yacht clubs, which will allow tourists to have a different experience.*

*The development in the number of cruise ship must be submitted to local government for approval, but the operation right has to be audit by both the Ministry of Transportation and the cruise company.*

## **APPENDIX 10: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT OF DEMAND SIDE**

<b>Type of tourist</b>	International tourist
<b>Nationality of interviewee</b>	British
<b>Date</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> October 2012
<b>Location</b>	On a cruise ship in the Three Gorges region

***Interviewer: What is your nationality?***

*The interviewee: I am British.*

***Interviewer: Did you travel to other countries in last two years? Where have you been?***

*Interviewee: Once or twice a year to Australia. I stayed in China most of time.*

***Interviewer: Why did you choose China as a destination? Do you think China is a safe country for travel?***

*Interviewee: At that time I did not have much to do at Australia. Some friends suggested me to go to China and to teach English there. Compared with most of other countries, China is a safe country for visit.*

***Interviewer: What's your image of China before your travel?***

*Interviewee: The first I'd been to China was 14 years ago. At that time, I thought China was a big country and a booming place.*

***Interviewer: What's your first impression of China after your arrival?***

*Interviewee: When I was there first time, it was beginning to boom. The number of public transportation, like taxies, got increased. But it's shame that taxies were used more frequently than bicycles (in Chengdu).*

***Interviewer: So, is there any difference between your image of China and your real experience in China? If 'Yes', please tell what the differences are.***

*Interviewee: No. There are no differences.*

***Interviewer: Have you been the Three Gorges before? If 'Yes', when? What was your impression of the Three Gorges? Do you think there are big differences between your image and the real visit of the Three Gorges? If 'Yes', what are the differences?***

*Interviewee: Yes. I've been there twice. Before visiting the Three Gorges, I thought it was a small place. But after visiting there, I just realized it was a huge tourist attraction. The first time was before the construction of the dam. The river was relatively low and narrow. When I saw surrounding sceneries, they were just so close to me, but the mountains looked very high. The second time is this time. I travel from Chongqing to Shanghai. When I arrived at WanSheng (now called Wanzhou), the river looked much higher and wider than before. The views changed hugely. There are many new towns emerging along the Three Gorges, but I still prefer to see old towns. It is shame to see those old buildings are pushed down and flooded by the river. When I was in the lesser Three Gorges before the construction of the dam, I could see lots of graves and rocks. But for the second visit this time, the water got much higher and flooded the lower ground. I was really interested in coffin; however, some coffins have been moved to museum.*

***Interviewer: Why did you choose the Three Gorges as a part of your destinations?***

*Interviewee: Because I am living and working in Chengdu, which is close to Chongqing. Also, the Three Gorges is one of the hottest attractions in China and my friends recommended this attraction to me.*

***Interviewer: Did you hear of some negative news about the Three Gorges Dam before your travel to this region? Where did you hear about it? Do you think the news told you the truth?***

*Interviewee: Yes. I heard about the negative news about the Dam from both country's TV and newspapers. But I don't think the dam made the Three Gorges less attractive. Contrarily, it makes the Gorges more attractive. Particularly, I think it will be good for fishing industry, as there is plenty of water. There were so many issues arise, and some news were very objective and told true stories, like information about wild lives*

*and old towns. Some people discussed that the dam caused the Wenchuan earthquake. But I disagree with their view and think such inference is ridiculous. Nevertheless, I believe the news about the environmental impact of the dam on the region were quite right. Although central government has made efforts to minimize the pollution and things look OK so far, they still have long way to go and no one can say those negative impacts can be avoided.*

***Interviewer: Have you visited the Dam this time? If 'Yes', what's your perception of the dam? Do you think there were big differences between your image and your real experience of the Dam? What were the differences?***

*Interviewee: Yes, I have been the Dam. Before visiting the Dam, I was just so curious about how the river could be blocked during the construction of the Dam. And then I read lots of newspapers to get know about the dam. That's why I did not really listen to what the tour guide said about the dam much when I was there. Nevertheless, the Dam itself, including five ship locks, is really impressive.*

***Interviewer: During your travel in this region, what was/were your major concern(s)? (eg. Environmental issue, local people's living conditions, wildlife in this region, the transformation of sceneries, disappeared historical sites, local custom like Tu ethnic group, local infrastructures....). And why do you think it is important to you?***

*Interviewee: I was only concerned about local people's living conditions and those disappeared historical sites, as two parts were affected by the Dam significantly.*

***Interviewer: Do you enjoy your travel in the Three Gorges region? Which part of the travel did you enjoy most and which part of the travel was less attractive to you? Why did you think they are attractive or less attractive?***

*Interviewee: Yes. I enjoyed the whole travel in the Three Gorges region. Particularly, if you didn't expect much before your travel, you would get lots of surprises. So I really enjoyed the travel there and there were no complaints.*

***Interviewer: Could you please give some recommendations, which you think can improve the development of the Three Gorges Tourism?***

*Interviewee: Provide international visitors with more chance to see local customs. Local infrastructures are good, apart from toilets. I like natural things, so suggest do not change natural things too much; otherwise, they won't be original ones and won't be attractive anymore. Also there are a lot of 4 or 5 star hotels developed, but from my point of view, it is not necessary to build such number of luxury hotels. 3 star hotels can provide basic stuff to tourists and tourists are more concerned about the attractions during their travel, less interested in whether they are living in a 4 or 5 star hotel.*