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China-Italy Destination Wedding

New opportunities for the luxury tourism market

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Abstract

The Chinese destination wedding market is growing rapidly, first were the south east's destinations, especially the islands, such as Bali and Phuket, and now the continued research of "westernization", has also affected one of the most conservative markets: the wedding market; including in their desires some European locations, such as Italy.

Through the use of previous studies, government research and statistics and, above all, interview with professionals of the field with their impressions and actual urges, the author has attempted to synthetize the base of the destination wedding market, which is the tourism or better the luxury tourism market, and its peculiarity.

The purpose of this work is to give an overview on the destination wedding market, both in China and Italy, so that it will be possible to trace the differences and needs of the markets and respond with the most appropriate offer to the couples.

It is hoped this work will help both markets cooperation and knowledge, and improves the offers of our country, and professionals to meet the needs of the Chinese couples and achieve economic growth.

前言

本论文的主旨是研究旅行婚礼（又称目的地婚礼），在意大利的旅游市场上占据着特殊的地位。不过，作为一种新兴旅游市场，有待进一步的探索与管理。

目前，有关旅行结婚这一新兴旅游市场的资料十分匮乏，在意大利更是如此，即便是在境外进行旅游市场相关研究的个体机构，也很少涉足这一领域。这一现状给本论文的撰写带来了极大的困难。正如文中对产业链以及市场运作的介绍那样，本论文中的数据和研究结果，都是许多从事这一行业的专业人士不懈努力的结果，感谢他们对我无私的帮助。

如上文所述，旅行婚礼在旅游行业中占有特殊的地位，有志于从事这一行业的人员需要充分理解并协助实现新人的愿望。这也是本论文的主要目的所在，聚焦有意来意大利旅行结婚的中国夫妇，解读他们的愿望，实现他们的梦想。

我撰写本论文的初衷源自我对中国的热爱，热爱她的语言和文化；更源自于对婚礼本身的喜爱，从婚礼筹划到与新人之间建立关系。我希望能尽早将这份热爱变成一份职业，所以，我希望这篇论文在对我个人未来有所帮助的同时，亦能帮到那些像我一样有志于在将来从事与旅游结婚相关的工作的人。希望本论文中对专业人士的采访，以及行业数据，能够让人们更好地了解旅行结婚这一新兴旅游市场，并且找到进入这一领域的途径。

基于有限的研究资料，运用实证分析和比较归纳的研究方法，本论文通过对中国旅游市场、中意旅游市场、以及两国旅行结婚新兴市场的研究，从而得出这一行业的基本特色和有用信息。

旅游业是最能体现毛泽东执政时期结束之后中国的社会和经济变迁的因素之一，它将毛泽东时代和 1978 年之后开始的邓小平时代划分开来，后者更具有创新性。有两句话可以高度概括这两个时期，前者是毛泽东在六十年代所宣扬的“吃饭不要钱就是共产主义”，后者则是邓小平在八十年代前后提出来的“致富光荣”，为中国的经济发展翻开了新篇章。

从此，中国向世界敞开了大门，而华人的足迹开始遍布全球。单从来欧洲旅游这一方面来讲，2004年是一个重要的转折点，因为在这一年中国将欧洲国家加入了中国公民旅游目的地国家计划（ADS）。之后的几年里，申根签证的申请和获取流程不断简化，中国对西方的开放程度越来越高，大量中国游客从此走出国门，畅游世界。

毛泽东时代刚刚过去的那几年，中国游客相对保守，喜欢选择附近的国家和地区去旅行，比如香港、澳门、泰国以及其他东南亚国家（因为签证申请流程比较简单，比如印度尼西亚，甚至可以选择落地签）。但是，中国的年青一代则倾向于探索西方国家，去了解当地的思维模式与文化，这为欧洲的旅游行业，特别是意大利的旅游行业带来了很大的契机，在这样的旅游大环境下，旅行婚礼，亦称海外婚礼应运而生，成为旅游市场上一道瑰丽的风景线。这种旅行方式通常属于奢华游，主要的顾客群体为千禧一代。

本论文将探讨中国游客海外旅游的变迁历程，从而揭示华人游客对意大利旅游行业的重要意义，主要目的在于进一步探讨旅游业这个大市场该如何去接纳旅行结婚这个新兴市场，从而提高这一旅行方式的认知度，让意大利成为更多游客的目的地。

本论文对国际情况和旅行的方方面面做了大体的描述与分析，以便有志于投身旅行结婚这一新兴市场的人群，特别是倾向于华人夫妇旅行结婚的群体可以更好地了解行情，并参与其中。本论文按照时间顺序展开，因此读者可以更好地了解旅行结婚这一新兴旅游市场的发展历程，了解它背后的精神意义与文化魅力。从而提出一个务实的战略方案，提供实用的业务反馈、商业伙伴、从业人员和高品质服务，以满足客户的需求。

本论文共分四章，外加引言和总结，以下是论文内容的简要介绍：

具体而言，第一章的主要目的是全面且清晰地介绍中式婚礼的历史和传统，我们将详细描述婚礼仪式、典礼和礼仪等。尤其是现在在中国依然流行的婚礼仪

式，比如敬茶的礼仪。然后，我们会着重介绍婚礼的服饰和首饰，这也是中式婚礼的魅力所在，彰显着它的传统与象征意义。

第二章真正展开论文的主题，首先以 1980 年至今的发展数据为依托，向读者介绍中国游客海外旅行的宏观状况。之后对中国奢华游市场进行分析，主要是发展状况和参与者现状，从而引出本论文的核心内容，也就是海外旅行婚礼这一新兴旅游市场。本章的结尾，会对两位海外婚礼设计师的采访进行对比，一位来自中国大陆，另一位来自香港。

第三章和第二章的结构相似，但是探讨的主要话题是中国的旅游市场，特别是入境旅游市场。本章将对中国游客进行分类：从传统的 15 天 3 国团队游，到更注重文化体验的自助游或散客旅行。第三章也会谈及奢华游的话题，话题的主要对象依然是中国游客，涉及他们在意大利的旅行开销和近三十年间的变化情况。层层深入直至本论文的核心话题，也就是海外旅行结婚，但是本章先以一组宏观的统计数据和未来一年的预期为切入点，以该市场中最重要参与者的分析为起点，以便得出可行的工作方案，在与来意旅行结婚的中国夫妻接洽之前，就能明确最重要的事项。

第四章是论文实用性最强的章节，实际上，本章节从一开始就会谈及活跃于该新兴市场产业链条上的重要人物，内容涉及产业链的运营和常见的产业类型，比如旅行结婚的短产业链条和长产业链条。第二部分的主要话题为如何进入这个新型的旅游市场，比如参加国内外的商业展会，以及进行相关的研究。因此，本章节将会介绍几门相关的课程，参与课程的人员可以取得欧洲或者国家机构颁发的相关认证。然后，为了让有志于从事这一行业的人员有一个更加清晰的了解，还对创建品牌的种种渠道进行了分析，通过最佳的广告推广活动，让我们的品牌被中国顾客了解并取得对方的青睐。本章节的重点是通过对中国市场上最受喜爱的婚庆品牌的分析，介绍最高效的沟通渠道，从而让读者了解如何利用这些渠道实现自己的工作目标。

最后，通过详细的数据分析和专业人士访谈记录的比较得出本论文的研究结论，了解意大利在该市场上的优势，以便做到取长补短，但是要真正落实这项工作可谓任重道远。此处我也提出了个人的一点见解，希望能对优化意大利的旅游结婚市场有所贡献。

旅游结婚这一新兴的旅游模式，很可能会成为新的动力并成为意大利旅游业的重中之重，这种小型的旅游市场能让意大利的一切美好留在中国游客的内心深处，并且让意大利成为旅行结婚的首选国家。实际上，中国夫妇选择来意大利旅游结婚，正是因为意大利悠久的历史，灿烂的文化 and 多彩的文学（维罗纳就是一个很好的例子，主要是因为罗密欧与朱丽叶的故事），而且这个新兴的旅行市场可以让游客了解更多具有意大利特色的商品。

同时，我们迫切需要找到新的解决方案，以便吸引到更多的顾客群体，更好地管理这个新兴旅游市场。

Chapter 1: Introductory analysis on the Chinese wedding

1.1 Historical background

“Wedding was recognized as the “root” or foundation, of all ritual”¹

The marriage as rite has its roots in the pre-imperial era, according to the *Li Ji* ², under the Zhou Dynasty is already possible to see some of the ceremonial rites still used in today’s weddings.

In pre-imperial and imperial Era, the marriage and his meaning to the families is changed repeatedly. First was intended to be “a bond of love between two surnames”³to secure the continuance of the family line and the blessing to the ancestral temple; in this period both dowries and betrothal gifts were as large as the importance of the marriage and the couple’s social background.

During Tang Dynasty it started to change and the Emperor set some new laws, to ensure the marriage was not only a sale contract, where, usually, the wife was literally sell to her new family, where she could be the wife, a concubine or just a maid. It is important to say that only during Song Dynasty they really started to come into use. In this period, the word “contract” regarding the marriage was prohibited even if the “price” of the wife and groom were still important. In fact, in order to follow the Song traditions, the dowry must be specified in the first proposal.^{4 5}

The biggest difference from the first imperial period to the Song Dynasty was that the family lineage lost its importance in the consort selection, being replaced by the working position, better if it was for the State.

¹Susan MANN, *Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society*, Chapter Six, *Grooming a Daughter for Marriage*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1991, pag. 207.

² Kǒng Fūzǐ, (孔夫子), *Li ji* (礼记), is one of the Five Classic and along with *Zhouli* and *Yili* are known as the “Three Li”, in this collection of texts it is also include the description of all the ceremonial rites of the Zhou Dynasty, and “The Meaning of the Marriage Ceremony”(昏義), Eastern Zhou (770-256 bC).

³ Kǒng Fūzǐ, (孔夫子), *Li ji* (礼记), “The Meaning of the Marriage Ceremony”(昏義), cit. , Eastern Zhou (770-256 bC).

⁴ Wu Zimu (吴自牧), *Meng Liang Lu* (梦梁录), Shanghai, 1922.

⁵ Part of the so called “three letters” (三书): betrothal letter (聘书), gift letter (礼书), wedding letter (迎书).

Every region and social class had its own traditions and ceremonies but as said before, the common ground between all the pre-imperial and imperial dynasties wedding were the rituals.

For the so called “upper four ranks” the model was the “Great Wedding”, which followed the Chinese Imperial tradition, namely a 20 days long feast, in which every citizen was involved; for example, everyone in the empire had to wear red and green on the actual wedding day and all the officials wore special robe to mark the auspicious event. Even the ancestors were notified of the event, through a sacrifice at the State altars of Heaven and Earth. On the other hand, the lowest classes followed a “modest wedding” described as “just three cups of weak tea and a bow at the family shrine”, same rituals in order to honor the new family and the ancestor but, to their own possibilities.⁶

Every ranks in different ways used to performe the “six rituals”⁷ to get married, the rituals were well explained in the Li Ji and were a necessary condition for the validity of the marriage, in Song Dynasty those rituals were simplified and reduced to three: selection(*cǎizé* 采择), evaluation (*nàbì* 纳币), welcoming (*qīnyīng* 亲迎).

The *Qinying* (亲迎) ritual was performed during the wedding day and is practically the bride being welcomed by the groom (often someone of his family) at his home, later also indicated as the wedding ceremony and considered one of the three most eventful days in a person’s life⁸. In this day, two sedan chairs were taken to the bride’s house (one for her and one for her little brother, or another young men of her family) followed by the grooms father. Once arrived to the couple’s house, before the real ceremony took place, the bride had to wait for some time (usually hours) inside her sedan chair to test her patience and forbearance.

After entering the new house, the bride had to perform four other rituals:

- First, with the bridegroom, have to worship heaven and earth in front of the entrance by making three obeisance together (usually bridegroom on the left and bride on the right).
- Second, they kowtow to the ancestral tablets of the bridegroom family and low bow to each other

⁶ Evelyne S. RAWSKI, Marriage and Inequality in Chinese Society, Chapter Five, Ch’ing Imperial Marriage and Problem of Rulership, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1991, pp. 171-194.

⁷ Also known as three letters and six etiquettes (三书六礼): proposal (纳彩), matching (问名) birthdates and full names with the help of a matchmaker to know if the marriage would be propicious (纳吉), bride price (纳征) settle betrothal gifts, ask for the date (请期) the family consult a fortune teller (风水先生) to fix the proper wedding date, welcoming (亲迎) the bride at her new home.

⁸ Other two are birth and death.

- Third, she performed the tea ceremony by kowtow and served tea to the parents and senior members of the bridegroom's family⁹

After those three kowtow rituals (could also take some hours, depending on how many relatives there were) the couple were led into the bridal chamber, preceded by two little boys¹⁰ holding a huge red, dragon-and-phoenix candle and were made to sit side by side, where they saw each other vis-à-vis, for the first time (*zuòfùgùì* 坐富贵). In the bridal chamber, in front of the female attendants, they took a few sips of wine from their respective cups before they exchanged and dried it to show their intimacy and affection for each other.

The last step of this first day of ceremonies, was the dinner, this was the first time the bride took a dinner with her bridegroom, his relatives and friends (*chīnuǎntángfàn* 吃暖堂饭).

The second day's rituals were all about the bride's virginity or not, with a female attendant presenting to the bridegroom's parents a piece of white silk stained with her blood.

The third and last day of ceremonies, was dedicated to the bride's family, the couple went to their home with the purpose of making obeisance to them, the bride served them tea, before the males attendants dined together in honor of the new son-in-law.

This kind of marriage, based on the six rituals, changed only after 1949, when the civil war between communist and nationalist came to an end.

In 1950 the new Marriage law¹¹ outlawed arranged marriage, which anyway still used the principle of "matching doors and windows"¹²with almost only objective criteria, as the social status of the groom, but at that time the couple could meet one time before the wedding.

The new wedding had no pre-nuptial rituals, no money given to the couple (which symbolized that was only a "heart affair"). The ceremonies were still divided into 3 days, in which, the first day, the bride and her maids were accompanied by the bridegroom and his best men, to the place where the ceremonies were to be performed, here the couple sat in the center with one master and one introducer each. The ceremony began with the couple bowing three times in front of the master and one to each other, after this, they could exchange wedding rings between

⁹ Modern detailed ceremony explained in paragraph 1.2.

¹⁰ Parents of both boys must be living, they symbolized a wish of fertility for the new couple. Still somehow used nowadays, when the bridal chamber is done, children are invited into the room as omen of fertility.

¹¹ Niida NOBORU, "Land, Reform and New Marriage Law in China", The Journal of Institute of Developing Economies, Wiley-Blackwell, Tokyo, 2010.

¹²Christina ZHOU, XIAO BANG, article "Marry first, then fall in love: the evolution of love and marriage in China since Mao Zedong's Era", ABC Australia, 2018.

them, and set seals on the marriage documents. The last part of ceremony were the speeches (one of the witnesses, one of the guest and last the bridegroom's master) with the lecture of duties of husband and wife and the gratitude for who attended the wedding.

As in the old-fashioned wedding, the third day, the bride's parents gave a dinner to welcome the new son-in-law, this was the first "homecoming" of her married daughter and, differently from the old-fashioned wedding, she and the female attendants could dine in the same table with the mans.

1.2 Today's Wedding customs and traditions

“*lǎo xié tóu bái* 老偕头白” (grow old together in harmony)

After all the changes described in the previous chapter, the opening to the west and the new desire of westernization, mainly arising from better-off family's youth, results in new and old traditions, matching together to form the modern wedding.

In this mishmash of new and old, the first thing to point out is the possibility to choose between a traditional wedding, a modern wedding, a "naked marriage"¹³ or a destination wedding, that is to say, a wedding in another country, that could be in Asia or all over the world.

What has remained in the modern wedding are some symbols and rituals, tailored to the present time:

- *Choose an auspicious wedding date.* Choose a favorable date for the wedding could assure a happy and harmonious marriage. In today's marriage often an expert as a *fēngshuǐxiānsheng* 风水先生 is still used but, it's even possible to buy Chinese Almanac containing predictions for the entire year which are sold by street vendors (the difference is that the almanac are not matching with the bride and bridegroom's birth date).

For the majority of the couples, it is just important to pay attention to some rules, for example, a year with double spring or leap month¹⁴(the last "double spring" year was

¹³ Christina C. "Marriage in Modern China", Brighton, University of Brighton Blog, 2018.

Chinese slang coined in 2008 to describe a couple that still does not have any assets (no ring, no ceremony, no honeymoon, no home and no car) usually necessary in a traditional wedding.

¹⁴ In the lunisolar calendar, the leap month is an extra month added to usual 12 months because solar year is slightly longer than 12 month, this years are also called "double spring", meaning is a lunar year that count two *lichun* 立春 (start of spring) .

2017, and the next will be 2020, and the leap month will be in April) is auspicious for wedding. On the contrary, marriage in a Blind year (without the *lìchūn* 立春), has others auspicious days but, would be less blessed.

It is also better to avoid January (for the conflict with the Spring Festival), the ghost festivals (*Qingming*, *Yu* and *Lan Pen*) and the *Xiàyuán Jié* 下元节 (Spirit Festival).

In addition to these rules, there are many others to be taken into account, concerning bride and groom's birth date and zodiac signs.¹⁵

- *Prepare the wedding bed.* Two or three days before the actual wedding, the relatives, usually a woman of “good-fortune” (with living husband, children and grandchildren) installed the bridal bed in the bridal room. The bed has to be covered with a new, red linen with dragon and phoenix¹⁶ or floral embroidery. On it has to be placed a plate with auspicious food (such as lotus seeds and red dates) together with two *hóngbāo* 红包 (red packets of money) containing an amount with number “9”, put on the pillow.¹⁷ For the couple's fertility, in some, more traditional families, a boy jumps on the bed, or, depending on the area, some children enter the bridal room to play together for some minutes.

- *Chinese tea ceremony.* The most important tradition and ritual during a Chinese wedding, is the tea ceremony, the meaning of this ceremony is to pay respect and show appreciation towards the family. When the couple prepares the ceremony, needs to choose some items, two cushions (usually red and with auspicious characters, such as *fú* 福 or *xǐ* 囍¹⁸) to kneel on. The tea set that is meant to be a keepsake for the couple's

¹⁵ “What does the dragon and phoenix symbolize in feng shui, in “The Crabby Nook”, © 2019 <https://thecrabbynook.com/what-does-the-dragon-and-phoenix-symbolize-in-feng-shui/> , 26/01/2019.

¹⁶ Symbol of the perfect couple, they complete each other in forming yin and yang balance to harvest successful matrimonial bliss. What does the dragon and phoenix symbolize in feng shui, in “The Crabby Nook”, © 2019 <https://thecrabbynook.com/what-does-the-dragon-and-phoenix-symbolize-in-feng-shui/> , 26/01/2019.

¹⁷ Nikki “*zhōngshì hūnlǐ chuántǒng: yǒuguān ān chuáng nǐ yào zhīdào de shì* 中式婚礼传统: 有关安床你要知道的事.” (Chinese Wedding Traditions: All About Matrimonial Bed Ceremony and Why It's Important), brideandbreakfast.hk, © 2015-2016 <https://brideandbreakfast.hk/2018/07/26/chinese-wedding-traditions-all-about-matrimonial-bed-ceremony-and-why-its-important/> , 26/07/2018.

¹⁸ The Chinese character *fú* 福 means good fortune and happiness, while the meaning of *xǐ* 囍 is “double happiness” and it is a traditional symbol of good luck in the Chinese wedding.

new life together, obviously also this one has to be adorned with auspicious colors and symbols (red, gold and dragon and phoenix are the most chosen).¹⁹

The only important thing in choosing the tea is not to choose a diathetic one, and then put one unpeeled lotus seed (symbolizing maternity) and one red date (representing fortune) in each tea cup.



Figure 1 wedding tea ceremony (source: www.weddingshots.com.au)

In the modern ceremony, the couple skips the part in which they have to pray and goes directly to the tea ceremony at the bride's home, here the couple has to kneel, the groom in front of the bride's father and the bride in front of her mother. Also new in the modern ceremony is that the first to serve the tea is the groom (in the traditional ritual only the bride serves parents and relatives) and then the bride, both have to serve the tea with both hands, first to the father and then to the mother.²⁰

It is customary, after drinking tea that the parents give words of blessing and gifts (usually *hóngbāo* 红包 or jewelry). After serving the bride's parents, the couple serves grandparents, uncles and aunts, then elder sibling and cousins).

¹⁹ Lau MERRYL, "zhōngshì hūnlǐ chuántǒng: jìngchá 中式婚礼传统: 敬茶" (Chinese Wedding Traditions: Tea Ceremony), brideandbreakfast.hk, © 2015-2016 <https://brideandbreakfast.hk/zh-hant/2015/08/27/chinese-wedding-traditions-tea-ceremony/>, 05/08/2018.

²⁰ PENG Meiling 彭美玲, LU Dunhua 吕敦华, LUO Jianwei 罗健蔚, *Hunjia lisu mianmianguan 婚嫁礼俗面面观* (Wedding Traditions, Customs & Rituals), Taipei, *Guojia Chubanshe* 国家出版社, 2008, pp. 52-53.

This three are only some of the traditions still in use, every region has its own rituals, but those are the most important and traditional in the Mainland China. In Hong Kong and Taiwan, for example, traditions and mostly customs are different and already more “western”.

1.3 Traditional Wedding Dress

In the last years, almost all the Chinese couples use a western wedding dress, depending on the family and couple, some brides use a “western-style” model but in the Chinese auspicious color, red, others more westernized, wear a white wedding dress. As the traditional Chinese dresses and accessories (such as *qípáo* 旗袍²¹ and *lóngfèng guà* 龙凤褂²²), are slowly fallen into disuse after the imperial era, now are popular again but with a different use and in different shapes. The traditional qipao, now available both in long and short model, is now used as a dress for ceremony but also in social gatherings or elegant meal.

The millennials couples now love to photoshoot with traditional dresses, mainly for the pre-wedding shoot, usually they both wear traditional wedding dresses, and pose for funny photos, in their homeland or, if possible, also on a little island in the middle of the ocean.

The bride’s dress has changed repeatedly in the various dynasties, the most important and knowing models are the one of Tang Dynasty (*chāidiàn lǐfú* 钗钿礼服) and of Ming Dynasty (*fèngguān xiápèi* 凤冠霞帔)²³. During Tang Dynasty the bride’s dress was usually green (the groom wore a red dress) the sleeve were made of many layers and were long, this type of dress was developed in late Tang and is the stylistic base for the Japanese Kimono. The most important accessory was the hairpin, usually made by metals and jewelry, was a heavy and gold crown, adorned with flower and others auspicious symbols, like phoenix etc.

In the Ming Dynasty, the wedding was like a civil examination for the man, so he wore a ninth-rank officer costume, and the bride was a little bit less excessive. It was red and gold embroidered, sleeves are not as long as the previous and the total dress was less heavy, because

²¹ The traditional Chinese women dress, used for ceremonies and important occasions, it is the female equivalent of *chángshān* 长衫, the traditional unlined long gown for men.

²² It is a sort of bonnet decorated with jewels and embroidered with the phoenix, symbol of feminine nobility. Mariangela FORTEZZA, Libro bianco sul turismo cinese in Italia, Chapter 3.5, Turismo dei matrimony in Italia: un’occasione di promozione e valorizzazione territoriale, Chinese Friendly Edition, 2014, pag. 266.

²³ Embroidered tasseled cape, usually worn by noble women as part of their ceremonial dress. YUE Mantianxin 月满天心, *Meiren zui* 美人醉 (Inebriety of the Beauty), Beijing, Beijing Book Co. Inc., 2015.

of a unique layer with which was made, instead of two or three layers of the one of the Late Tang Dynasty. Still of great importance was the phoenix coronet, also made with metals and jewelry, usually hand painted and inlaid.

The total attire included, in addition to the phoenix coronet and the red dress, the red gown and a red veil, as well as red shoes and a descendent bag.

After the Imperial era, from 1920 the body-hugging one-piece *Qi Pao* 旗袍²⁴ or *Kei Po*²⁵, became popular thanks to the lady in Shanghai's well-to-do society, this dress was made using tailoring techniques that combine Western patternmaking skills with Chinese handcraft techniques.

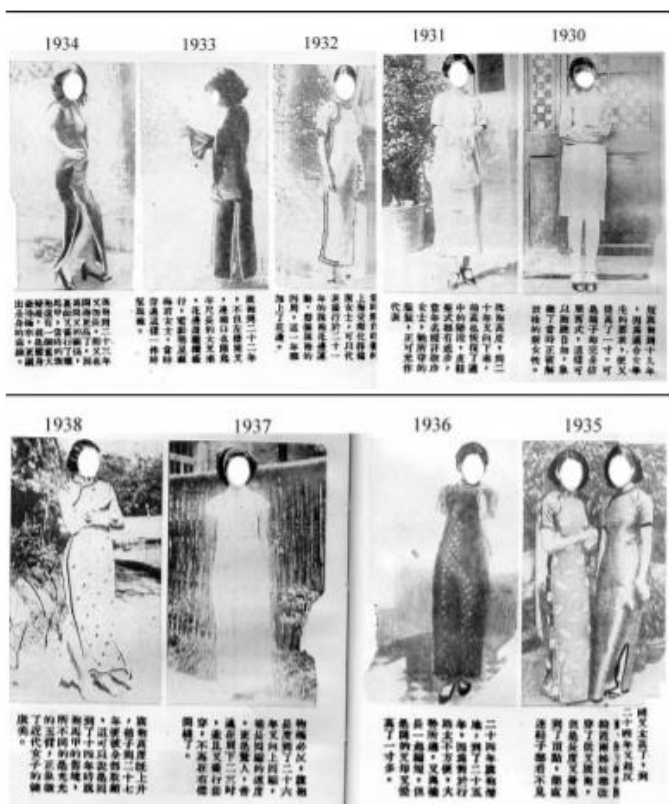


Figure 2: evolution of qipao (1930-1940) (source: YANG Chuichu , *The meaning of qi pao as traditional dress: Chinese and Taiwanese perspectives*, Iowa, Iowa State University, 2007).

The evolution of this dress over the years was strictly connected with western fashion, from 1920 to 1930 it became increasingly short, from the ankle it arrived just under the knees, then again from 1930 it got back to the original length. The sleeve's style and length also changed

²⁴ In Guangdong and Hong Kong the Cantonese word for it is Cheongsam 長衫, to describe “a long top garment that falls to the ankle”, from YANG Chuichu , *The meaning of qi pao as traditional dress: Chinese and Taiwanese perspectives*, Iowa, Iowa State University, 2007.

²⁵ Term used in Hong Kong, described by LAU Meryll, in “*zhōngshì hūnlǐ chuántǒng*: Qún Guà 中式婚礼传统: 裙褂” (Chinese Wedding Traditions: Qun Gua), [brideandbreakfast.hk](https://brideandbreakfast.hk/zh-hant/2016/01/28/chinese-wedding-traditions-qun-gua/), © 2015-2016, <https://brideandbreakfast.hk/zh-hant/2016/01/28/chinese-wedding-traditions-qun-gua/> ,26/07/2018.

over time, starting without sleeves, in 1930 it was usually long and after 1935 it became a short sleeve.

Now a day, the qipao is surely less in use but still worn for special occasions and for weddings in Mainland China. The traditional cut of a qipao is not simple and not comfortable to wear, that is the reason why the modern brides often opt for a new spin on it, so that can be more flattering for their body shape. Now it is also possible to choose daring cuts and 3D embellishment. The qipao handmade and hand embroidered, as the traditional one, usually made in silk, can costs thousands of renminbi.

Some brides instead of changing the silhouette of the qipao, choose to use a western fabric qipao to change up their look, for example, the most used fabric in the latest years is red lace.

The last dress to talk about is the *Qún Guà* 裙褂²⁶, the most important element in a modern-traditional wedding ceremony, is a two-pieces wedding dress which name means “long skirt and top coat”, its origin is in Guangdong and it is often called Gua 褂. Traditionally this is the most expensive gifts from the bride’s family; it symbolize fertility and represent the wealth and reputation of the family. It is usually finely embroidered with gold, silver, red and pink to form auspicious pattern as: dragon and phoenix (symbolizing an happy and successful marriage), pomegranate (for fertility as this type of fruit is full of seeds), peony or lotus flower (symbolize beauty, prosperity and fertility), other auspicious animals like bats, gold fish, butterflies or birds (for a good pairing, wealth and luck).

Originally included a black jacket and a red dress, after 1960 this became the formal dress for the bride’s mother and the bride’s *Qún Guà* 裙褂 became fully red, the traditional attire requires from three to eight months to be finished and a master tailor and embroiderer, the more thicker is the embroidery the more expensive is the *Guà*. A well-off family can also opt for a *Guà* with

²⁶ LAU Merry, in “*zhōngshì hūnlǐ chuántǒng: Qún guà* 中式婚礼传统: 裙褂” (Chinese Wedding Traditions: Qun Gua), brideandbreakfast.hk, © 2015-2016, <https://brideandbreakfast.hk/zh-hant/2016/01/28/chinese-wedding-traditions-qun-gua/>, 26/07/2018.

barely some trace of the original red silk of the base of the dress, in such a case the gown can require even more than one year to be finished and cost a little fortune to the family.



Figure 3: dressing ritual with Qun Gua (source: brideandbreakfast.hk)

1.3.1 Wedding Accessories and Jewelry

In the past, the bride was presented with a box of nine little auspicious items for her new life; usually those were put into a beautiful red box finely decorated in gold. Each items represented a well wish for the marriage:

- Scale: the beginning of wedded bliss
- Mirror : harmony
- Happiness basket: abundance
- Scissors: a wish of a wealthy life
- Abacus: wishes of financial stability
- Embroidered shoes: fidelity and harmony
- Comb: mutual understanding for a peaceful life together
- Ruler: success in career and prosperity
- Peanuts: prosperity and long life

In the present day, the groom family's gifts to the bride are cash and jewelry, usually the gold set includes necklace, bracelet, ring and earrings. In the tradition, the jewelry represent the

ability of the new family to provide for the bride and the new family, and the welcoming into the new family.

As the jewelry are so important to the bride and for the success of the wedding, the only type of gold that can be used is the 24-karat gold, anything less pure is seen as not appropriate. The jewelry, as well as the total look and location has to be decorated with auspicious symbol, as before, dragon and phoenix, floral designs (mostly lily and lotus), but also mandarin ducks and golden pig.

The oldest jewelry brand in China (Chow Tai Fook's) started in Shanghai in 1848, counts that more than the 40 percent of their income in Mainland China are attributable to wedding²⁷. According to the owner of the brand, a lot of their clients use gold as an international currency and is common to sell gold back to the jeweler. This kind easy resale (they do not even need to have the receipt), as well as the transparent and clear information about the price of gold, has buoyed sales to the China's middle-class.

According to HKTDC (Hong Kong Trade and Development Centre) in 2018, wedding rings accounted over 50% of the total diamond consumption in China, and almost the 80% on the total is for wedding needs. The major request in Mainland China comes from Beijing and Shanghai, where the 48% of interviewed women ranked diamond jewelry as their higher desire, second only to Hong Kong where the percentage is of 61%.²⁸, but diamond jeweler are not only a women affair, according to a De Beer survey, the 67% of men aged between 30 and 44 years old in China wish to have diamonds.

Generally, in 2017, a wedding ring can cost from 10.000 to 100.000 RMB and the new trend, expected to increase in 2018, is the customized wedding ring²⁹.

In contrast with the western traditions, Chinese do not wear their proposal or wedding ring everyday but just for important occasion, they prefer to leave them at home, well-hidden and safe.³⁰.

²⁷ AU DESIREE, The glow of 24-Karat gold jewelry, The New York Times, 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/23/fashion/the-glow-of-24-karat-gold-jewelry.html> (03/01/2019)

²⁸ David GOODMAN, The new rich in China: Future rulers, present lives, Routledge, 2008, pp. 193-196.

²⁹ Michelle YUAN, "The bigger the better" say Chinese girls and diamond companies, in Forbes.com, 2016, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/myuan/2016/01/31/the-bigger-the-better-says-chinese-girls-and-diamond-companies/#788576d1440e>, 04/02/2019.

³⁰ David GOODMAN, The new rich in China: Future rulers, present lives, Routledge, 2008, pag. 198.

Chapter 2: Tourism and Wedding-induced tourism in China

2.1 Introductory analysis on Chinese Outbound tourism

The Chinese tourism market stayed almost only on the inbound level from 1980 to 1990; during that time, in fact, the only authorized destinations were Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore.³¹ Since 2004, the only European authorized countries were Malta, Turkey (since 2002), Germany, Croatia and Hungary (since 2003). Only in 2004, the PRC concludes the ADS EU-China agreement³² (Authorized Destination Status), by adding 26 countries (including Italy). According to CNTA³³, at the present day, the authorized countries are totally 125, with Sudan and Uruguay added in 2017.

According to the CTA statistics, in 2018, more than 140 million of Chinese tourist traveled overseas, increased by 13,5% compared to the previous year; the forecast for 2019 is of about 180 million of overseas tourists.

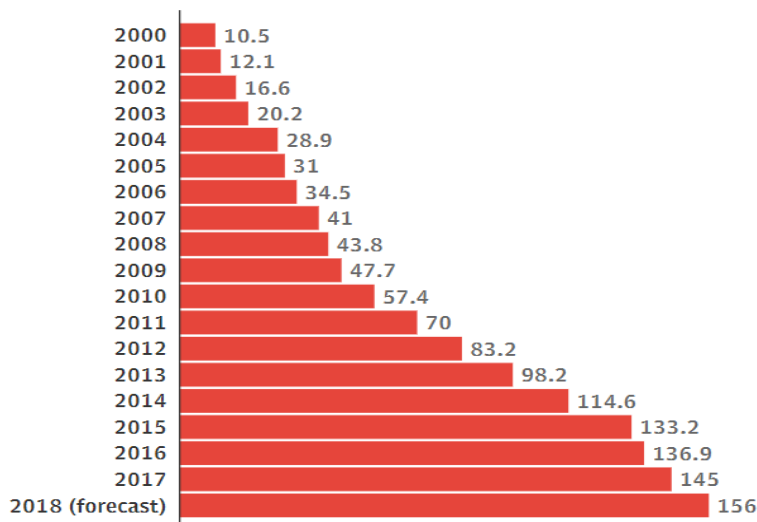


Figure 4: Annual overseas visits in millions (source: COTRI)

³¹ Giancarlo DALL'ARA, Patrizia DIONISIO, Come accogliere i turisti cinesi. Introduzione alle relazioni con il "mercato turistico più grande del mondo", FrancoAngeli, Milano, 2012, pag.54.

³² The Authorized Destination Status is an agreement, which defines the destinations approved by the government. Before 2004 in China it was impossible to obtain a group visa for the EU, only the single visa could be issued.

³³ China National Tourism Administration, from 2008, assisted by the specialized bureau of China Tourism Academy (CTA). <http://www.en.cnta.gov.cn/> and <http://www.foreignercn.com/>.

In line with the latest statistics of CONTRI³⁴, the top ten destinations for the Chinese are Hong Kong (with almost 13.000.000 arrivals from Mainland China in 2018), second Macau (6.500.000 arrivals from Mainland China in 2018), followed by the Asian countries Thailand, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam and Singapore. In this top ten list, the first western country is USA with about 950.000 arrivals from the Mainland China, followed by the only European country in the list, namely Italy with approximately 900.000 arrivals.

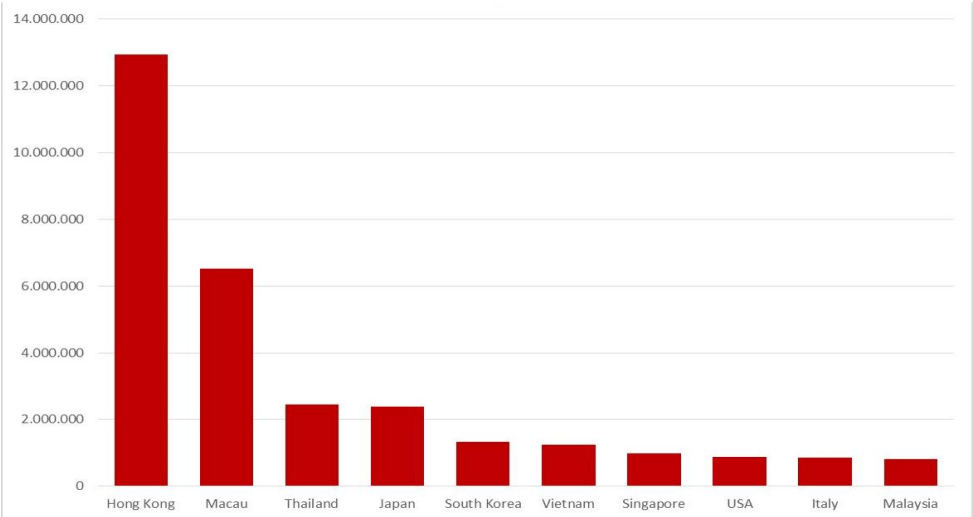


Figure 5: top ten destination for arrivals from Mainland China in 2018 (source: CONTRI)

What most distinguishes the Chinese market from the others is its remarkable development rate, despite being a relatively new market, it acts as a mature market³⁵, with mature consumers, who aimed at the service value. The Chinese market firstly saw an inbound tourism development, also driven by specific government policies, followed by an outbound tourism characterized by standard clauses³⁶, until it gets to the present, marked by the new digital technologies. In the last few years, the trend is the online travel agencies, which propose, in addition to the standard tour, a lot of new packages, including new niche markets, such as the ecotourism or green tourism (still luxury-oriented)³⁷, food tourism and wine tourism.

³⁴ China Outbound Tourism Research Institute <http://www.chinaoutbound.com/>.

³⁵ Usually a market is mature when it reach a state of equilibrium, in absence of significant growth or lack of innovation. In the Chinese case, the tourism market although an important growth rate, encourage the prices reduction, also giving rise to a more mature consumer, who pay closer attention to the service’s quality.

³⁶ More countries in only a few days, a “short but intense” holiday to visit the greatest possible number of touristic destinations, usually an organized tour, not too expensive.

³⁷ Samantha SHANKMAN, For Chinese tourist, going green is a luxury, in Jing Travel, 2018, <https://jingtravel.com/for-chinese-tourists-going-green-is-a-luxury/>, 31/01/2019.

From 2006 to 2016 the overseas travel expenditure grew about eleven times, in 2016 was observed in 261 billion dollars³⁸, expected to surpass the 500 billion dollars in 2024 according to the latest research³⁹. Situation aided by the rising income of the middle-class and the new and simpler policy for Visa,⁴⁰ confirming its primacy in terms of outbound tourism market value (overcoming in 2010, both USA and Germany, with a total of 100 billion dollar against approximately 80 billion dollars for the other two)⁴¹. In 2017, the Chinese tourists their average travel budget was about 5.565 dollars per person, raised by 3% in 2018, becoming 5.715 dollars per person. According to Nielsen research⁴² the 2017 budget was divided in three major fields, shopping was the first as in the previous years, occupying the 25% on the total sum, followed by 19% spent in accommodations and the 16% in dining, the other fields were (in descending order of proportion of expenditure) tourist attraction, local transportation, recreation, communication/ internet charge and other.

The latest panel survey of CTA, covering the year 2018, divided the travel budget in the same fields, but for the first time the top three changed in an unexpected way, at the first place there is culture with a 24%, followed by accommodations (21%) and shopping with a 16%, dining is just behind with a 14%, this evidence reflects the mutation of the tourist's behavior becoming a so called "mature shopping behavior"⁴³.

In the same way, the demographics of the Chinese outbound tourism is changed, as well as the way they travelled the world; in 2014 the 56% of the outbound travelers were aged 35 to 44 years old, followed by post-70s (26,4%) and millennials⁴⁴ with only the 11,3% on the total. Completely changed in 2018 with the millennials that increased more than once, reaching 29%, at the first place there is still the "Generation X", that is to say the generation born after seventies

³⁸ UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization) statistic, reported by Melissa CYRILL, China's outbound tourism market: new opening proposed for foreign investors, in China Briefing, 2018, <https://www.china-briefing.com/news/china-outbound-tourism-market-wholly-foreign-ownership/>, 31/01/2019.

³⁹ Laura WOOD, China Outbound Tourism Market 2018-2024: Purpose of visit, tourists visits, spending top 10 countries and forecast, Business Wire: Berkshire Hathaway Company, 2018.

⁴⁰ China New Work Policy, in INS-global expansion simplified, 2018, <https://ins-globalconsulting.com/chinas-new-work-visa/>, 13/12/2018.

⁴¹ Georg A. WOLFGANG, Prestige, Respect, Investment. How hospitality and service the Chinese way will make or break business in the coming years, Routledge, 2013, p. 11.

⁴² Nielsen Consumer Finance Research, Outbound Chinese tourism and consumption trend, survey commissioned by Alipay, 2017.

⁴³ The consumer pay more attention to the selection, with a longer decision making process.

⁴⁴ Also known as "Generation Y" or Net Generation, are the demographic age group that follows "Generation X", used to apply the individuals born between 1987 and 1999.

and before 1987 with a big decrease of almost 10%, occupying a 48% of the total, ultimately, the age group over fifty years old, which occupies a 23%.⁴⁵

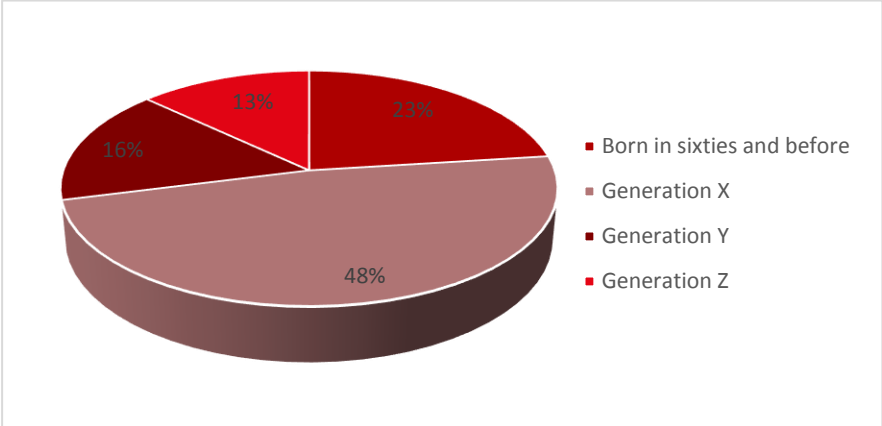


Figure 6: Chinese outbound tourism composition for age (data source: 2017 Outbound Tourism Big Data Report)

Only from 2017 to 2018, the Chinese FITs (Free Independent Travelers) increased importantly from the 42% to the 70% on all outbound travelers, with the segment of the group tour travelers decrease by about 14% (from 44% in 2017 to 30% in 2018).⁴⁶ Usually, the group travelers choose this kind of travel only for language barriers, while FIT are young “white collar”⁴⁷, confident experienced travelers with better language skills and good traveler planner.

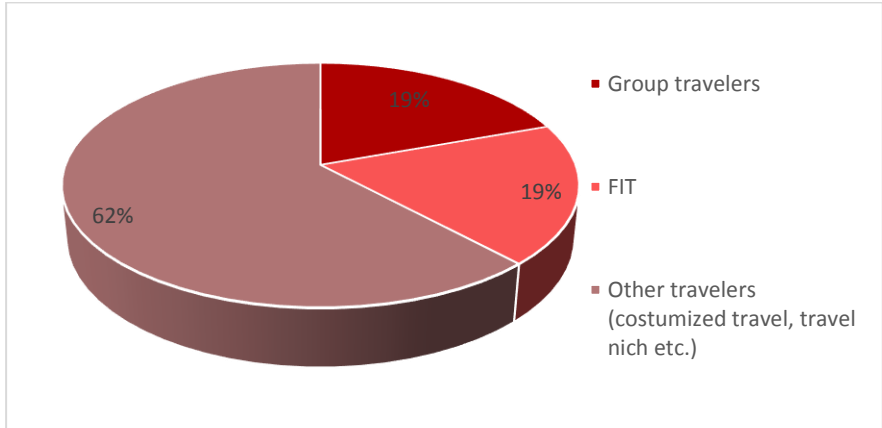


Figure 7: Preferred type of holiday from Chinese outbound travelers (source: Ctrip, CTA Report)

This important change on the demographic target, reflects the general changes of the last few years, including the new way of travel, no longer only group tour but also, individual travel,

⁴⁵ Rocky FU, Rise of the China outbound tourism, China Internet Watch, 2014, <https://www.chinainternetwork.com/8832/outbound-travelers/>, 31/01/2019.

⁴⁶ Ctrip, CTA, 2017 China Outbound Tourism Travel Report: Joint report Ctrip and China Tourism Academy, 2017, pag. 2.

⁴⁷ The new segment of expenditure power, medium-high class, more cultured, better educated and with better language skills. Giulio ABBATE, Libro bianco sul turismo cinese in italia, Chapter 3.4, Come i turisti cinesi viaggiano 5 stelle in Italia, Chinese Friendly Edizioni, 2014, pag. 250.

self-planned and with a different focus, for example, a CTA research states that the FITs, prefer to spend in experiencing the culture of the destination country in order to enrich their culture knowledge of the country concerned.⁴⁸

The FIT's decision-making process is based on internet, and can be divided in two major actions, the first is the search for information, ergo the use of search engines and the booking with the consequent online payment. The major search engine use in China is Baidu with a market share equal to the 80% by revenues, followed at a distance by Sogou (6,6%) and 360 (3,3%).⁴⁹ The total amount of search is composed for a 79% by mobile search; while in terms of social networks, still at the first place there is WeChat with the 87% on all access.⁵⁰ Those kind of data are important in order to know the Chinese's habits and answer to their needs with the right digital marketing plan, that is the reason why, this aspect will be more treated in Chapter 4.3 and 4.3.1 dedicated to communication channels for the tourism market.

2.1.1 Chinese luxury tourism market

To comprehend the meaning of luxe for Chinese people, it is necessary to understand the changes occurred in the country in the last sixty years. China went from thirty years of communism to thirty years of capitalism and it will pass through thirty years of consumerism. First after 1949, when Japan set China free and secondly from 1976, after Mao Zedong death, consumers suffered a big instability in society and economy.

Given the events, money started to become much more important and to gain real power; some of the today's most powerful men are grown up in this historic context and in response to the old society based on a shared prosperity, they tend to spend money in order to impress and show dominance.

They are followed by the already mentioned "Generation X", a generation "raised by Mao but trained by Bill Gates"⁵¹ with deep insecurities, which they fill making money and succeeding.

⁴⁸ Giancarlo DALL'ARA, Libro bianco sul turismo cinese in italia, China Friendly International S.L., 2014, p. 12-23.

⁴⁹ China search engine market in 2018: 79% driven by mobile search, in China Internet Watch, 2018, <https://www.chinainternetwork.com/24311/china-search-engine-market-q1-2018-79-driven-mobile-search/>, 01/02/2019.

⁵⁰ CNNIC, Statistical Report on internet development in China, China Internet Network Information Center, 2018, pag.54.

⁵¹ Luca CATARINICCHIA, Libro bianco sul turismo cinese in Italia. Chapter 3.3 l'evoluzione dei desideri del turista cinese: ostentazione di potere vs esperienza spirituale, Chinese Friendly Edizioni, 2014, pp. 238-239.

The latest “Generation Y” is the first born in consumerist society, which believes in consumerism as a status symbol. In every generation, the real objective is to demonstrate their belonging to an elitist class, but they changed the concept of lux between generations, from just opulence to more abstract wishes.

The average monthly income in China is 6.320 RMB in 2017 (937 USD)⁵², which is the reason why the concept of rich and VIP are different between China and the majority of western countries in Europe and America, an average monthly income for a “white collar”, or medium class, is about 8000 RMB (1190 USD). As a white collar, living in China assure a good level of wealthy and comfort, but they are totally different from a normal European “rich”, that is why they cannot afford a luxury travel.

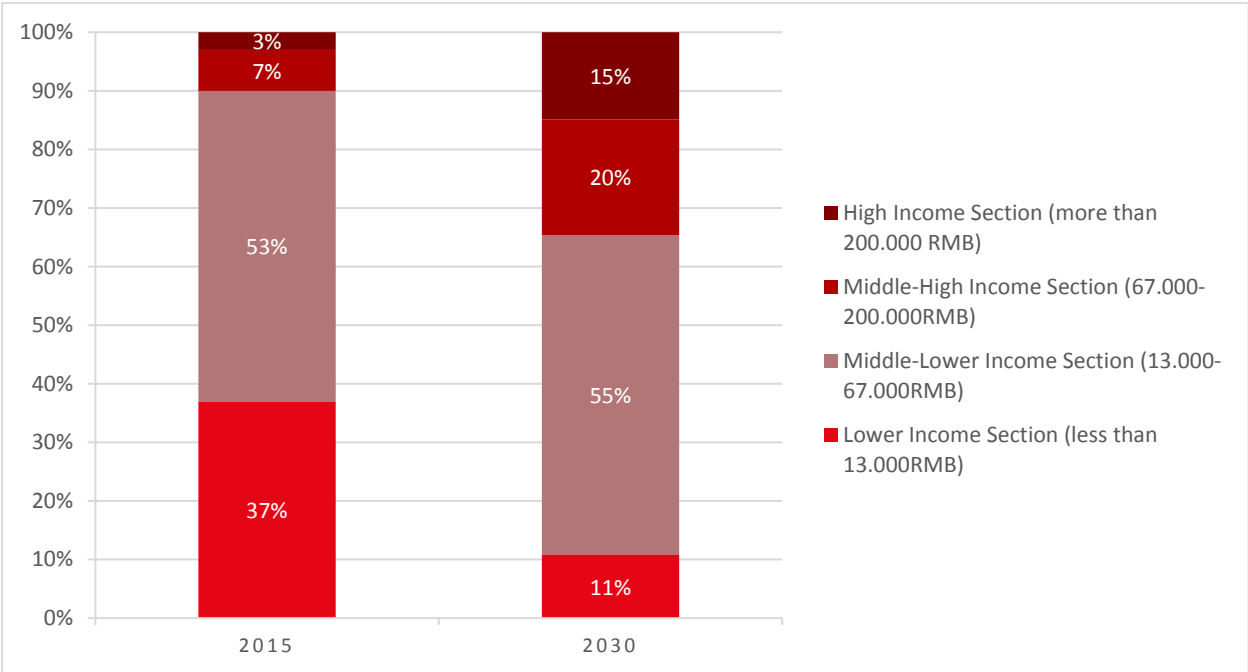


Figure 8: division into income groups, from 2015 to 2030 previsions in percentage (data source: The Economist Intelligence Unit)

The only target in China that can pay for a luxury travel, is the high budget target, with a personal heritage of more than 1million dollars; all this segmentation is useful to distinguish the real luxury traveler from the medium budget, which want far beyond they can afford (due to the fact that in China, they can live as wealthy families).

According to Hurun Report, Chinese luxury traveler take an average of three trips a year for a medium stay of 26 days a time. They spend on average 350.000 RMB, plus 180.000 RMB for

⁵² CEIC, China’s Monthly Earnings,2018, <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/china/monthly-earnings>, 1/02/2019.

shopping in the country concerned. They fly mostly in the business class of Air China (50%) (Talking about domestic transport), and in business or first class if consider international airlines, where Emirates is the first choice (23%).⁵³ As five years ago,⁵⁴ The Ritz Carlton is still the top luxury hotel for high-end travelers, followed by Banyan Tree and Four Seasons.

Chinese high-end travelers prefer to try local cuisine for the 39%, they are more curious and open-minded, followed by Japanese cuisine and Sichuan and Hebei cuisine. The first European style is Italian cuisine, at the fifth place and a percentage of 16% (increased by 6% in only one year).⁵⁵

2.2 Wedding market and wedding – induced tourism from China to other countries

In 2017, more than 50% of couples, on about 10 million married every year, refer to a Wedding Planner for the organization, according to an IBISWorld Survey; in the same year the total value of the wedding market in China was calculated in 1.567 Billion RMB, increased by 7,5% from 2016⁵⁶.

Today the Wedding industry is one of the most flourishing in China and with Millennials achieved marriageable age in this year, data from China Wedding Industry Development Report show that the average spending for wedding is growing all the time reaching over 80.000 RMB last year⁵⁷. Chinese couples increasingly choose a fusion wedding with both Chinese tradition and western trends, according to “China Wedding Status Survey 2017” (2017 中国人婚礼状况调研报告) the 63,8% of Chinese women now prefer a western-style or a Chinese-western mixed style of weddings,⁵⁸ seen as more relaxed and fun . This kind of data are important and

⁵³ Hurun Report 2018: China Luxury Outbound Tourism, in cpp luxury, 2018 <https://cpp-luxury.com/the-chinese-luxury-traveler-2018-trends-by-hurun-report/> , 30/11/2018.

⁵⁴ In Hurun Report 2014, the Ritz Carlton was already in the top three, together with Shangri-La and Peninsula.

⁵⁵ Hurun Report released the Chinese Luxury Traveler 2018 Report, in hurun.net, 2019, <http://www.hurun.net/EN/Article/Details?num=A405F6502C2D> , 15/01/2019.

⁵⁶ Zhiyan Consulting Group, “2018-2024 nián zhōngguó hūnqìng hángyè yánjiū jí tóuzī qiánjǐng yùcè bàogào 2018/2024 年中国婚庆行业研究及投资前景预测报告”(Chinese Wedding Industry research and investment forecast from 2018 to 2024), Zhiyan Consulting Edition 智研咨询集团, 2018.

⁵⁷ Sophia MITROKOSTAS, How much weddings cost in 14 place around the world, in Insider, 2018 <https://www.thisinsider.com/weddings-cost-around-the-world-2018-8> , 02/02/2019.

⁵⁸ Daxue Consulting, [interview] inside the new big business of Chinese weddings, in “daxueconsulting.com”, 2017, <http://daxueconsulting.com/chinese-wedding/> , 8/01/2019.

distinctive of a developing society, in which, domestic and external wedding planners can work together to realize the couple's dream wedding.

As Raul Vazquez⁵⁹ said

Every bride in China wants to walk down an aisle in a white dress [...] brides are inspired in what they see in the west and from Chinese celebrities, who often select this kind of mixed wedding [...]. In China, getting married is a big deal, so its ok to spend a little money.

Chinese celebrities' weddings are one of the most powerful "Word of mouth" marketing in China, in fact, Chinese people, millennials and Generation Z (born after 2000) at most, are highly influenced by their favorite celebrities and from the so called "KOL" (Key Opinion Leaders)⁶⁰ or influencers.

Some good examples of how celebrities influence the wedding and destination wedding market are Yang Ying, also known as Angelababy⁶¹, and Huang Xiaoming, in west she is known as the "Kim Kardashian of China". Their wedding is one of the most discussed in the last three years, they spent over 30 million dollars for it (2000 invited) in Shanghai. They have chosen for a fusion wedding⁶², mentioned before, and have added a pre-wedding photoshoot in Paris, that assure almost the double of view on Paris's Chinese social network and promotes a lot of destination wedding and pre-wedding shooting in France.⁶³

The year after, another celebrity couple get people talked about their wedding, Nicki (Wu Qilong) and Liu Shishi (Cecilia Liu), who opt for a destination wedding, with a pre-wedding photoshoot in New Zealand and 3 different party in Bali. First was the pre-wedding party in a traditional way, second the ceremony on a flower-decorated beach and third the banquet, she totally wore three different gowns, the first Chinese traditional attire embroidered in red and gold with dragon, phoenix and flowers; second the western-style white dress and at last a long

⁵⁹ President of Wedding Beautiful China, one of the biggest wedding-planning business based in Beijing, now count 350 network in 39 cities across China, with an average wedding budget of 200.000 RMB for their clients.

⁶⁰ Also called influencer, they often have a more direct relationship with their audience than the celebrity brand ambassador.

⁶¹ Model, actress and singer based in Hong Kong as her husband.

⁶² She wore a Cinderella-style white dress from Dior and a few Elie Saab couture gowns in Paris.

⁶³ "Angelababy hūnlǐ 2yì, Liú Shīshī hūnlǐ 12yì, ér tā de hūnlǐ nǐ wúfǎ xiǎngxiàng Angelababy 婚礼 2 亿, 刘诗诗婚礼 12 亿, 而她的婚礼你无法想象", in Baijiahao, 2018, <http://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1596618028450944032&wfr=spider&for=pc>, 14/12/2018.

red qipao, which she used to cut the cake. This was a 3million value wedding and brought Bali wedding prices to increase by 60%.⁶⁴

As seen in this two examples, destination wedding is now in vogue, not only among Chinese celebrities but also among high-end couples; two American wedding planners, Maggie Daniels and Carrie Loveless, made the first definition of destination wedding in their wedding-planning book in 2017

Occurs when a couple decides to hold their wedding in a location where neither one of them resides. Generally, an exotic or popular tourism destination is chosen and the wedding often merges into the honeymoon.⁶⁵

The destination wedding to Europe, as a niche industry in the tourism field, became more popular in China after 2004 when the PRC concludes the ADS EU-China agreement⁶⁶ (Authorized Destination Status), since it created a new and more confident feeling in traveling through Europe.

As the wedding tourism is a relatively new and niche industry, data about this are hard to find and usually not updated, according to last estimates⁶⁷, age target for destination wedding is the same registered for the cultural and leisure tourism. On the podium, the proportion aged between 25 and 34, immediately followed by the cluster aged between 35 and 44; direct consequence of an ever-growing wealthy class, in which the millennials rule culturally and economically, this data reveal the new high-end class, which is the most important consumer segment for the wedding-induced tourism industry.

Around 60%⁶⁸ of the Chinese millennials are planning to marry abroad, usually the reason why they prefer overseas wedding is to run away from the rigidity of a traditional wedding and affirming their autonomy and leeway.

⁶⁴ “*Wú Qilóng bǎ Liú Shīshī chǒng shàngtiān, zhìyú hūnlǐ de kāixiāo, Wú Qilóng fànguà shuō, wú shàngxiàn* 吴奇隆把刘诗诗宠上天，至于婚礼的开销，吴奇隆放话说，无上限”，in Baijiahao, 2017, <http://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1586094014534145865&wfr=spider&for=pc>, 14/12/2018.

⁶⁵ Maggie DANIELS, Carrie LOVELESS, *Wedding Planning and Management: Consultancy for Diverse Client*, Elsevier Inc., 2007, pag. 84.

⁶⁶ The Authorized Destination Status is an agreement, which defines the destinations approved by the government. Before 2004 in China it was impossible to obtain a group visa for the EU, only the single visa could be issued.

⁶⁷ Mariangela FORTEZZA, *Libro bianco sul turismo cinese in Italia, 3.5 turismo dei matrimoni in Italia: un'occasione di promozione e valorizzazione territoriale*, China Friendly International S.L., 2014, pag. 263.

⁶⁸ Ctrip, CTA, survey 2017, in citrip.com, 2018, <http://www.ctaweb.org/html/2018-2/2018-2-26-11-57-78366.html>, 12/11/2018.

As for the age target, also, the destination preferences are similar between leisure tourism and wedding tourism; in fact, according to a Ctrip survey, the top choices for the destination wedding are the neighborhoods state. Such as, Thailand and Indonesia, mainly for their peaceful islands, full of beautiful sceneries and white sands, Japan and South Korea for the cultural similarity and even Singapore, more modern and with magnificent skylines.

Another important factor, which makes couples choose neighborhoods countries, is the easiness with which they can have the Visa, for example Indonesia, do not even require a Visa for Chinese, Japan, Thailand and South Korea have application facilities for who stay less than fifteen days.⁶⁹



Figure 9 Average wedding expenses in Yuan in the major cities and in the mainland China (source: daxueconsulting.com)

For their dream wedding, the Chinese families are prepared to spend unbelievable sums. Thanks to the one-child policy one peculiar phenomenon has grown, the “little emperor syndrome”⁷⁰, meaning that the family provides everything he/she wants. They want to contribute financially to the wedding day to make it the best of their child life. Since is only one child, all the savings made for this long-awaited moment are nor shared, and couple can see their budget increase considerably.

⁶⁹ Data from <https://visafreecountries.com/chinese-passport> , last updated 02/01/2019.

⁷⁰ GMA Group, Wedding in China: a \$400 billion market”, in “MarketingtoChina”, 2018, <https://www.marketingtochina.com/trend-wedding-china/> , 8/01/2019.

The largest expenditure go to photoshoots⁷¹, foods and flowers⁷², as seen before, pre-wedding photoshoots are increasingly important and a lot of Chinese couples are willing to travel, not just across the country, but also halfway around the world, to take the best photos for their invitation and memories.

In general, a starting package of roughly 40,000 RMB (US\$5,780) would include the ceremony, photography, videography, reception, make-up and venue decoration.⁷³

Expert predictions says that this market will worth more than 400 billion dollars by 2020 (that will also be a “double spring” year), but overall the wedding budget has already grown by 4000 percent in the last 30 years, since China opened up to globalization.

2.3 Interview with Yumi Nishiwaki owner of I Wish Wedding and Toria Lee owner of Timeless Evant Design: a comparison between Mainland China and Hong Kong.

In getting the interviews I choose to apply a standard interview model given below, I set questions in order to understand how much and how a Chinese wedding planner works with European and in particular Italian market. The interview with Yumi Nishiwaki, born in Japan and now owner of I Wish Wedding, was held at 7th December 2018, in Beijing, SOHO district.

Date	
Location	
Name	
Mansion	
Language	

⁷¹ It is interesting to know that the first wedding photoshoot was the one of Cixi, a Xianfaeng’s concubine become empress in 1861.

⁷² Daxue Consulting, [interview] inside the new big business of Chinese weddings, in “daxueconsulting.com”, 2017, <http://daxueconsulting.com/chinese-wedding/>, 8/01/2019.

⁷³ Jing Daily, What Chinese Consumers Want in a Dream Destination Wedding: interview with Jon Santangelo, in “JingDaily.com”, 2017, <https://jingdaily.com/chinese-consumers-destination-wedding/>, 30/12/2018.

Opening year and first years business
When started with destination wedding and why
How do you manage the couple's request?
How much do they know about the destination they choose?
How many couple choose Italy? Usually, why?
How much is the average budget for a wedding in Italy?

How much is the average budget for a standard wedding and a luxury wedding in China?
What do you offer to the couples who want to marry in Italy or Europe?
Do you find some difficulties in working in Italy? And if yes, why?

It is the main meta for a lot of upper middle class and upper class couples who want to realize their dream wedding.

Yumi Nishiwaka is a Japanese woman, living in Beijing for more than 30 years and above all, is the founder of I Wish Wedding.

The most important thing in my job, is to be prepared to the constantly changing market needs, in the last ten years I changed my work in a lot of way and I reply to these changes of the market and its westernization using the natural adaptability and ability to listen of my team.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Joyce WONG, Traditional Chinese Hair Combing Ceremony: Here’s all Your Questions Answered, in “AsiaWeddingNetwork”, 2016, <http://asiaweddingnetwork.com/en/magazine/expert-advice/1381-traditional-chinese-hair-combing-ceremony-here-s-all-your-questions-answered> , 27/07/2018.

When I first opened in Beijing in 2004, I mainly worked with Chinese young couples (mostly between 23 and 30 years old) who asked for a traditional Chinese wedding, with red dresses, accessories and decorations, with some of the most important traditional ceremonies, such as the tea ceremony and the hair combing ceremony ⁷⁵.

After some year of good work, I found myself in a totally new market, which was changing every second, when the couples started to prefer a Chinese-western mixed style. Then I rise the occasion, setting off a new and complete offer of destination wedding.

Today I work in both inbound and outbound wedding market, with approximately 100 wedding in the mainland China and 20 European wedding a year, with more than 100 partners all over the world. [...]

The couples who choose a domestic wedding, usually prefer a more traditional marriage, with an average invited number of about 120 people and an average expenditure of 90,000 RMB (11.700 Euro). Generally, the domestic request is for an all-inclusive package, which covers the wedding from the organization (from 1 to 12 months of preparations) to the wedding day. [...]

In this case, the style is mostly Chinese, with gold and red, but with some western goodies, such as the macarons, that in the Chinese view symbolize the premium western desserts.

The greatest worry of our couples is to have good photos and videos, which can be shared through the social media, mostly wechat, and showed to family and friends.

This can be linked to what has been said before, is important to show opulence and wealth for the Chinese couple, and that is why they prefer to spend a huge sum to have a good photographer.

Typically, they ask also for a pre-wedding photoshoot, which consists in funny or elegant photos, in their hometown or in a touristic location with good landscapes, reproducing some real life situation, such as join the school together, or representing the imperial lifestyle, with traditional dresses, hair combing and make-up. Often those pictures are used for the wedding invitations and during the wedding ceremony and banquet. [...]

For the couples who choose overseas wedding, we offer almost 100 location in 17 country all over the world, in antique castles, romantic locations, some little private island and historical sites. [...] at the

⁷⁵ First, this ceremony symbolized the passage to adulthood and was performed at 20 years old for the boys and at 15 years old for the girls, when the early marriages became prevalent, it was decided to perform it right before the wedding. Usually the ceremonies are conduct separately at their respective homes, in different time depending on their dialect group and by a woman of good fortune. What's necessary for the ritual is a pair of dragon and phoenix candles, well-wishers foods, such as dates thuja leaves, lotus seeds and dried longans and the combing equipment (round combs, mirror, red string , ruler and a sewing kit). For the total ceremony see footnote 33.

same time, this kind of wedding can also comprehend the honeymoon, with photographer, cinematographers [...].

The packages that we offer are many and varied; on my web site the customer can find inspirations and choose between destination wedding or luxury wedding in mainland China. In the section of destination wedding the most popular choice are Thailand, Bali and other little islands in South Asia, for which a visa is not necessary or easy to obtain, also because in these locations it is easier for the couple to bring family and close friends. America is the first choice for the same-sex marriage and Europe is the new en vogue preference for millennials who prefer cultural and historical locations.



Figure 10: Venice photoshoot of I Wish Wedding (source: iwishwedding.com)

Our most popular package for Bali is the wedding on the Nusa Dua Kayumanis private beach, which includes the ceremony (usually symbolic), make-up artist, photographer, cameramen, toasts and various drinks and transfer from and to the ceremony, for 22.050 RMB (about 3.000 Euro) [...].

The European market is still new, some country are better prepared than others, for example France and Greece are easier markets for us, with more suppliers ready to cooperate [...]. We only have nine locations in Italy, mostly located in Tuscany, Venice and Rome, and the average number of wedding in Italy is three or four a year.

To be honest, when the couple decides for Europe, usually does not have a clear idea, so I have the opportunity and due to help them choose the perfect location, generally, what makes me suggest France or other European country rather than Italy is the supplier availability. I usually contact the locations I think that could be a right choice for my new couple and then propose only those available, without staring on a specific country.

The Chinese perception of Italy and France is similar, that's why usually my suggestion is the decisive factor, in terms of costs, Italy is a little bit cheaper and the photographers, that are one of the most important thing in the wedding, are vastly superior. What sometimes make the difference, is the simplicity with which we can find the partners and we can cooperate with them, in Italy suppliers are still a few and we are struggling to find more wedding planner to work with.

The available country in Europe are Italy, France, Greece and Spain , but is possible to ask for a new locations and Yumi will arrange all the wedding on the couple's requests.

Some other packages offer are the proposal package and the photoshoot package. The photoshoot package starts from 5.900 RMB for a photoshoot in Santorini (Greece) that includes, photo, the dresses rental, make-up and hair combing and the transfer; culminating in the most expansive package, which costs 24.800 RMB for a photoshoot in Barcelona (Spain) including only, transfer, photo and hair/make-up.

The way we work is simple and safe, we work on basicly four steps to make our clients realize their dreams, the first step is to have a good communication; we have to understand their needs and desires. The second step, is the organization and the call to action, we shape their dreams weddings, to make them have happy memories. Third step is to remember them not feeling overwhelmed but enjoy every moment of the organization. Then the final and firth step, but also the most important, the wedding day is their day, they just have to enjoy it and we and our partners will work together to make their dreams come true.

At last, she hopes in a developing offer from Italy, she would like to have new partnership in Milan and other peculiar cities, for example in south Italy and, if possible, to fix one of the most insidious problem, the dresses rental. The trip, bringing back all that big and heavy dresses is hard, but if she can rent them in arrival country, then she is disposed to pay an higher sum.



Figure 11: I Wish Wedding its logo (source: iwishwedding.net)

The other interview with Toria Lee, born in Hong Kong and married with an Australian man is the owner of Timeless Event Design, together with her husband. The interviewed was held at 6th December 2018, at the Basic Coffe, in Jianwai SOHO, Beijing.

Toria was there for the last wedding of the year, a couple based in Hong Kong for business but originally from Beijing, therefor they decide to marry in Beijing with their families and friends, but also un Hong Kong with their new family, their friends and collegues.

I worked in this market since I was twenty years old; I started in one of the most knowing wedding planner of Hong Kong and there I learned how to understand the real desires of the couples, also if they still don't know them. In 2013 I founded Timeless Event Design with my fiancé, who two years later became my husband. We marry in Australia and here I met a totally different idea of wedding, that was the first time I thought about destination wedding. [...]

I like to help my couples in describing their journey together, through the wedding. My team and me like to bring the couple's vision alive, in this sense is important to listen to them. We carefully selecting our suppliers and fit the wish of the couple within their budget. [...] we design, plan, style and orchestrate the total wedding.

We approach to the destination wedding in the same way we approach to a normal wedding. We have a specific style that focus on elegant, nature and romantic aesthetics, whit which we manage every event. When a couple comes to me asking for a destination wedding in Europe, usually has already a country request, actually, they generally don't know which city they want but they already visited the country.

Specifically talking about Italy, we plan more or less five weddings a year, but is increasing continuously, for the next year we already have six Italian wedding booked and we aspect to receive others request. At this moment, we only have suppliers in Venice, Rome and Florence but we are looking for new partnership.

[...] we usually do not work with other wedding planner, we manage the organization directly from Hong Kong with the suppliers, but it is happened to work with other wedding planner, overall for big luxury wedding or wedding in more secret and intimate locations, in that case it is essential to have a local eye to help us.

We do not work with packages, we offer three different kind of wedding planning, the all-inclusive service includes design, planning and styling, then we have a middle service, which is only design and styling or, we propose a monthly coordination, which comprehends the wedding day. It is difficult to give an average price as it depends on the couple choice, but more or less for a Hong Kong wedding the price is 150.000 HKD (17.000 Euro) and for an Italian wedding the price is never less than 170.000 HKD (20.000 Euro).

[...] when we plan a wedding in Italy, usually the problem with some supplier is the communication, the different time zones and language are difficult to manage also in other European countries but on your side you have one of the impeccable taste in the world and our style really matches with your locations. If I had to find something that I hope to improve in the relation with Italy is the research of make-up artist and dresses, the make-up artist are still close to a Mediterranean style of make-up, which is not the favorite from our brides.



T I M E L E S S .

Figure 12: Timeless Event Design its logo (timelesseventdesign.com)

Chapter 3: Tourism and Wedding-induced tourism in Italy

3.1 Introductory analysis on the Chinese tourism in Italy

To understand the market of the destination wedding in Italy and its attractiveness for the Chinese couples, it's important to understand the last changes in the tourism market, how the Chinese tourist changed, in terms of expenditure, interests and expectations.

As already mentioned, the first real approach to the tourism for the Chinese come with Deng Xiaoping's politics. In fact, during Mao's rule, travel was seen as unnecessary and only for high society, that is why, only institutional visits were permitted.

Since 2004 ask for a Visa to come to Italy was still tricky but not impossible, except for the group Visa, which were illegal, in this year the government concluded the ADS EU-China agreement, including Europe in the permitted country.

In 2014 the authorized countries and regions were already 150. The biggest boost to the massive tourism there was in 2010, when the vast majority of travelers remained in Asia (90% of all the tourists) of which the 70% in Hong Kong and Macao.⁷⁶ What is significant is that, also in those years of settling, Europe was the first of the overseas destinations; in 2011, Italy was the first destination in Europe for Chinese visitors number (excluding Russia, which confines with China and also has a market share of approximately 1,15%) , with an increase of 32,75%. In 2011, the Chinese tourists in Italy were the 2,8% on all the foreign visitors; This growth was reconfirmed in 2012 with an increased demand of Visa by 18,49%.⁷⁷ From the beginning, Italy was one of the most chosen in Europe, floating in the top three with Russia and France, in 2010 the Chinese tourists in Italy have been about 1 million, while in 2014 have increased by 50% reaching the total amount of more than 1,5 million of Chinese tourists⁷⁸.

⁷⁶ Giancarlo DALL'ARA, Patrizia DIONIISIO, *Coma accogliere i turisti cinesi: introduzione alle relazioni con il "mercato turistico più grande del mondo"*, FrancoAngeli s.r.l., Milano, 2012, pag. 14-20

⁷⁷ Luca ZORLONI, *Libro Bianco sul Turismo Cinese in Italia. 2.5 analisi e statistiche: numeri del turismo cinese in Italia*, Chinese Friendly Edizioni, 2014, pag.187

⁷⁸ Filippo FASULO, Alberto ROSSI, *IX Rapporto annuale CeSIF- Edizione 2018, Cina: scenari e prospettive per le imprese*, Fondazione Italia Cina, San Giuliano Milanese (MI), 2018, pag. 286-294

There are a lot of interesting possibilities for the Italian tourism market in dialogue with this relatively new power. Some peculiarities of the Chinese tourism can be useful for economic growth, such as the deseasonalisation, thanks to the traditional holiday periods, which are different from ours. Usually, the summer vacations are for government employees and industrial workers (in addition to students), in autumn, when the normal Italian touristic season ends, Chinese celebrate the National day, precisely on 1st October, which usher in the Golden Week⁷⁹; at last, in winter, between 21th January and 21th February, Chinese have one week off for the New Year.

From 2010 to the present day, almost everything regarding the Chinese tourism market has changed; the first thing that becomes clear is the increase of single travelers.

An interesting proposal of segmentation of the Chinese tourists comes from Pierfelice Rosato and Silvia Gravili, according to their research, in 2014, the average Chinese tourist is between 25 and 44, with a good level of instruction (more than 70% has a college degree). This kind of tourist is particularly careful, worried about safety and hygiene and accurate in the selection of the destination, counting mainly on Tour Operators (TO) and magazines, with special care to the “word of mouth”⁸⁰.

The segmentation proposed by Rosato and Gravili is based on the analysis of the major factors of attraction on the Chinese long-haul tourist’s perception:

- Fishermen with dry paws : is generally the tourist travelling in tour, was born between 1950 and 1960, he typically arrives in Italy after seeing France and/or Germany (because of the big airports of Paris and Frankfurt), and remains here only a few days, visiting two, three or also four cities. His decision-making process is based on the package price and the travel agency’s reputation.
- Vessels Connoisseurs: economically wealthy, often has already been in Italy for work or study and above all they are “Made in Italy” fans. They have high expectation in terms of service’s quality and comfort, that is why they refer to TO and travel agency.

⁷⁹ Implemented in 2000, the Golden Week is a National Holiday, starting on 1st October. Can be 7 or 8 days long, depending on the Mid-Autumn Festival day. This day was primarily intended to help expand the domestic tourism market and to give the opportunity to make long-distance family visits. Now is usually enjoyed in addition to accrued vacations to make overseas trip or visit

⁸⁰ Usually referred to the social networks, the word of mouth marketing is the recommendation made by a satisfied customer of a good or service, it is obviously not payed and now considered one of the most effective form of promotion.

They prefer a package full of activity, but with some free time to devote to sports or shopping.

- Kites with the long string: is the fast-growing segment, composed by the Free and Independent Travelers (FIT). They prefer to visit only one country, flying in first class and staying only in 5 stars hotels, often they travel with their staff. Average age is 38 years old. They want a relaxing and customized tour with high standard of quality. They are also interesting in unknown destinations, but of excellence.
- River's Crocodiles: the last segment is composed by the so called "Y generation", less stuck on traditions than their parents, are interested in the western culture, they are usually alone or with friends in a sort of "Grand Tour", choosing homestays. The most important thing for them is to have a Wi-Fi connection. Their primary sources are the web, social network and blog where they can find all the information about their destination.

The real matter of this segmentation is to understand which could be the right approach to this market, and in term of wedding-tourism market, the segmentation is useful to understand how to communicate with this tourists, which kind of marketing is the best for the target to reach.

Referring to age, average spending and taste, it is possible to plan the right marketing strategy and also know, which kind of service to propose, depending on the client's segment.

As mentioned before, there are some segments, which are attracted from unknown destinations; this is strictly linked to the tourism's niches, such as music, opera, wine & food etc., year after year those niches become more requested.

In the last few years, a lot of attention is given to the uncontaminated nature, with wide-open spaces and no pollution, a sort of "ritual inversion"⁸¹.

Last but not least, the 2018 statistics reveal that Chinese are the most spending tourists in Italy, exactly the 30% on all tax-free sales, followed by Russia with only the 14%; in 2017 the average Chinese ticket increase to 1002 euro.

⁸¹ The need to experiment something totally different from our everyday life; for example, a Chinese living in Beijing, looking for an uncontaminated nature destination.

Table 1 Fonte ISTAT, non-residential tourists' origins

PAESE DI RESIDENZA	Numero di presenze		Quote % di presenze		Variazione % di presenze
	2016	2017	2016	2017	2017 / 2016
Germania	56.568.609	59.327.839	14,0	14,1	4,9
Francia	13.375.435	13.629.514	3,3	3,2	1,9
Regno Unito	13.050.367	13.252.332	3,2	3,2	1,5
Stati Uniti	11.471.854	12.659.011	2,8	3,0	10,3
Paesi Bassi	10.862.942	10.918.181	2,7	2,6	0,5
Svizzera e Liechtenstein	10.481.733	10.810.696	2,6	2,6	3,1
Austria	9.003.336	9.436.079	2,2	2,2	4,8
Polonia	5.010.696	5.528.454	1,2	1,3	10,3
Spagna	5.012.402	5.175.006	1,2	1,2	3,2
Russia	4.027.391	5.075.809	1,0	1,2	26,0
Cina	4.472.992	5.027.945	1,1	1,2	12,4

As clear in this ISTAT table, in 2017 China is the third Non-European country in terms of number of presences in Italy (5.027.945), after USA (12.659.011) and Russia (5.075.809), but increasing by 12,4% from 2016.

3.1.1 Chinese luxury tourism market in Italy

For a simpler segmentation, economists divided the Chinese tourists into two segments, which are tourists 1.0 and tourists 2.0.⁸²

The former is, as obvious, the Chinese tourist of the origins, which means the one who stays in group, visiting more countries and cities in only ten or fifteen days. This segment is composed by the massive tourism, which usually prefers economic tours with a lower quality. They are extreme sightseers, meaning that the only thing that counts is to make photos to something their family and friends will envy, without coming into contact with people and culture of the country. As already saw, the trip defines or confirms their social status.

⁸² Luca CATARINICCHIA, Libro bianco sul turismo cinese in Italia. 3.3 L'evoluzione dei desideri del turista cinese: ostentazione di potere vs esperienza spirituale, Chinese Friendly Edizioni, 2014, pag. 235-236.

The latter is, the most important type of tourist, the one who comes back two or three times, who wants to know better the culture and history of his destination and to have time also to relax in it. They stay more and spends more, are richer and more cultured and pretend a higher quality of services. This segment looks forward to have a new experience, in special locations, with special adventures and above all, they are ready to pay more for all this. They ask for emotions.

In the last few years, particularly the tourists 2.0, count on social network, blog and forum to choose the right destination and price, giving a big importance to the “word of mouth” and their family’s and friends’ point of view and experience. Often they also book all their trip on internet.

Talking about luxury tourism, we focus on the second segment, the tourists 2.0, starting from the words of Lorne Blyth, director of Flavors of Italy Ltd

Luxury travel is about having time to enjoy the landscape; an opportunity to luxuriate in culture, to stretch out, observe and literally loose your self in the place you are visiting. One of my personal luxurious treats in Italy is to start the day with a real cappuccino, served at the right temperature, not boiling hot, but just drinkable, accompanied by a freshly made pastry. Perfetto⁸³

Then, an experience, the possibility to act as a real resident, to relax into the environment and to feel at home; finally, the rarity is the essence of luxury.

It is possible to distinguish between four types of luxury consumer:

- Nouveau riches: meaning new riches, who believe in the importance of luxury brand and want to show them to demonstrate their status.
- Understaters: already expert in the luxury field, they are a niche of originals, want to define their selves in an international group of sophisticated.
- Connoisseurs: they see money and richness as a means and not as an objective. They look for a customized and personal experience with a high luxury quality.
- Spirituals: usually grown up in other countries, in an acculturated and artistic environment, they look at the luxury goods just as comfort and want spiritual experience.

Statistics in 2013, registered 2.900.000 millionaires, mostly concentrated in the first tier cities and 67.000 super riches (more than 100 million RMB) equally divided in first, second and third

⁸³ Paul JOHNSON, 10 definitions of “luxury travel” from within the industry, in Travel Miscellany, 2013, <https://www.aluxurytravelblog.com/2013/03/26/so-what-is-luxury-travel/>, 20/01/2019.

tier cities. In this year, Italy was in the top ten choices for the Chinese luxury travelers with a 7,3%, preceded by France at the first place with a 11,8%, Swiss and UK with both about a 8%.

In the same year the majority of luxury travel lasted from five to eight nights (58%), the 37% lasted from five to fifteen nights and only the 5% lasted for less than five days. The 50% of this kind of travelers flew in business class, while the other 50% was equally divided between first and economy class. They were usually in little groups from three to maximum ten persons (48%).⁸⁴

The same research for 2018, reveals that high-end travelers prefer to visit Europe (39%), followed by the Americas (36% increased by the 5% compared to 2017) and Africa with the 27% and an incredible increase of 14% compares to 2017. With Italy still in the top 3, secondly only to France, that overtakes us, thanks to a better communication in China, mostly using the Chinese social network.

For the next Chinese New Year the most chosen destinations are Australia, Thailand and New Zealand, while a 29% will stay at home.

In 2014, Italy obtained great advantages from the television format “Diva hit the road” (花儿与少年 huaer yu shao nian) of Hunan TV (湖南卫视 Hunan Weishi), where a group of seven Chinese celebrities go on a fabulous trip through Italy and Spain. This program have permitted to the Chinese (young target from 18 to 35 years old) to experience the most beautiful Italian landscapes and have a taste of the Italian culture. Since the seven guys were some of the most famous celebrities in China, Italy has been confirmed as a high-end destination.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) found that spending from Chinese travelers abroad in 2018 makes up 21% of all tourism spending worldwide, also with an average tickets value higher than the others.

According to Global Blue report 2018, Chinese overseas travelers in Italy, prefer to go shopping in Milan, mostly in Via Montenapoleone, where they find the best Italian brand. Global Blue, together with MonteNapoleone District, organizes the “Sales Cultural Training China” that in 2018 found a continue increase for Chinese tax free, totally raised about 2,3%. While only in

⁸⁴ Giulio ABBATE, Libro bianco sul turismo cinese in Italia. 3.4 come i turisti cinesi viaggiano 5 stelle in Italia, riportato in “Hurun Report Chinese Luxury Consumer Survey 2014”, Chinese Friendly Edizioni, 2014, pag. 260-261.

Italy, from 2016 to 2018, the number of tax free increase year by year and register a total raise of 1%.⁸⁵

Following Milan, Global Blue found Rome, Florence and Venice on the top of the list of the Chinese favorite cities for shopping in Italy

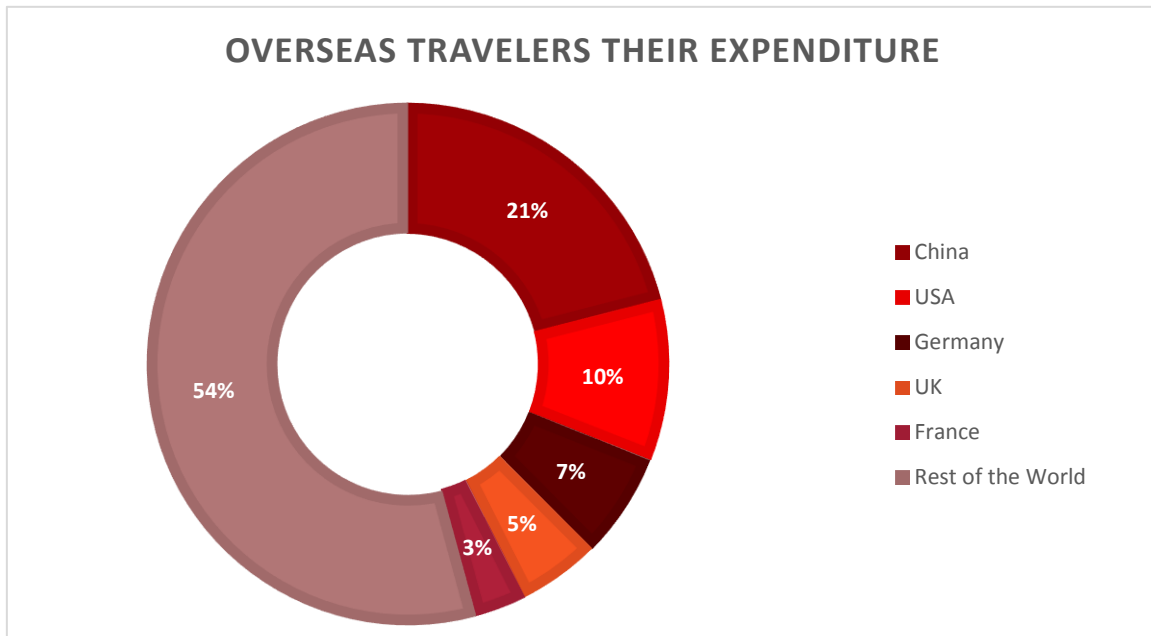


Figure 13: overseas travelers their expenditure in percentage (data source: UNWTO 2017 tourism report)

With their research, it is also possible to see some of the trends, which define the 2018 luxury tourism from China. The 60% of Chinese luxury tourists are planning their trip by themselves, with an increasing number of women and young. Because of this, they are increasingly digital-savvy and want to find information and recommendation, not only on the website but also on the social network, particularly on Wechat (微信 weixin).

A trend that never changes for Chinese is the spending for shopping, to buy western brand with good prices is still the priority with 25% of their total budget (other countries prefer to spend for accommodation and dining).

⁸⁵ APCOM, Global Blue, shopping dei cinesi a +2,3% nel Quadrilatero, in Fashion Network, 2018, <https://it.fashionnetwork.com/news/Global-Blue-shopping-dei-cinesi-a-2-3-nel-Quadrilatero,983365.html#.XFgJvIVKj3g> , 02/02/2019.

The last, and probably most important trend is the origin of these travelers, if in 2014 the origin area where mostly three, with Beijing at the first place, followed by Shanghai and Guangzhou, after less than five years, new cities are emerging as large urban centers and have a growing population and growing average income.

What is essential to capture the attention of this new luxury tourism is to be prepared; this kind of traveler plans all the holiday before leaving its country, for this reason all the vendors need to think not only about the travelling phase but primarily about the planning phase, and consequently adapt their marketing communication.

3.2 Introductive analysis on destination wedding in Italy

At the end of 2017, JFC counted 7.147 destination wedding celebrated in Italy, decreased by 4,7% compared to 2016, but with an increase of 2,3% on the turnover, with a total of about 368 million euros. The total wedding-induced number of arrival in Italy is of 336.232 persons.⁸⁶

Usually, the destination wedding are divided in three different typologies, which are standard wedding with the 76,2% with a total turnover of about 137 million euros, luxury wedding, the 19,4% on the total, which earns 178 million euros and at last, the top-class luxury wedding, only the 4,4% on the total number of destination weddings, but which cashes about 70 million euros that is more than the half of standard weddings.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ JFC, Wedding tourism and Cineturismo: quale valore e quali prospettive per l'industria dei viaggi nazionale?, in jfc.it, 2018 <http://www.jfc.it/ricerche-istituzionali/wedding-tourism-e-cineturismo-quale-valore-e-quali-prospettive-per-lindustria-dei-viaggi-nazionale/>, 12/12/2018.

⁸⁷ Wedding tourism e Cineturismo: quale valore e quali prospettive per l'industria dei viaggi nazionale?, in jfc.it, 2018, <http://www.jfc.it/ricerche-istituzionali/wedding-tourism-e-cineturismo-quale-valore-e-quali-prospettive-per-lindustria-dei-viaggi-nazionale/> 03/02/2019.

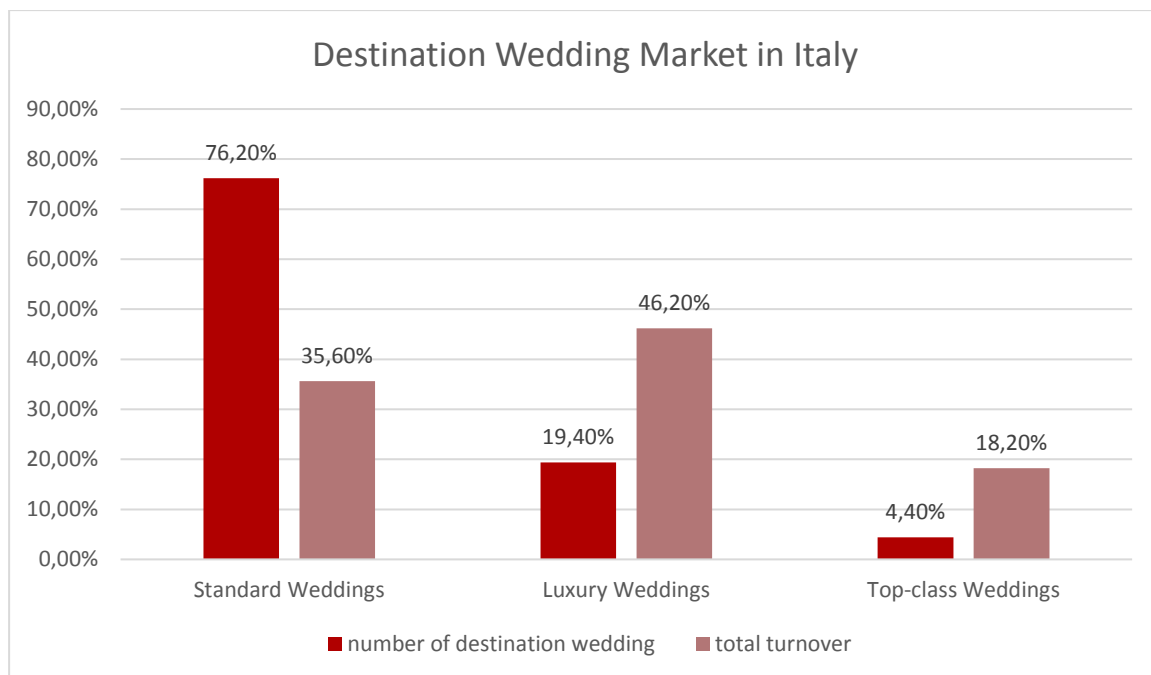


Figure 14: destination-wedding market in Italy, percentage of number of wedding and turnover (data source: jfc.it)

The average expenditure for wedding tourism in Italy is of 55.000 euros, but a lot of couples choose a simple and fast wedding, which costs on average 1.200euros, Swiss, Austrian and Germans are those who prefer this kind of formula. The top-class luxury wedding trend is driven by Indian, who can spend millions for a Bollywood style wedding in Italy, followed by Chinese couples.⁸⁸

The couples who choose a destination wedding in Italy are mostly from USA the 24,4% on the total, followed by UK with 21,9%, together cover almost the 50% of the destination wedding, the third place is occupied by Germany, but with only 5,9% on the total weddings, in this list China takes the sixteenth place with just 1,5%.⁸⁹

When the couple comes to marry in Italy, usually, chooses artistic and historical cities, well known all over the world. In the list of preferred Italian cities and regions for destination wedding, the first place is for Tuscany, where the majority is for Florence, but with a lot of interesting results for Tuscany's hill and ranch,. Followed by, for the first time in the top three, Amalfi coast, thanks to an active promotion of the Campania region, which for example in 2017 offered a Campania's excellence tour, starting from Naples and visiting, in addition to other,

⁸⁸ Nik FES, Wedding tourism gaining momentum in Italy, in tourism-review.com, 2018, <https://www.tourism-review.com/wedding-tourism-in-italy-is-booming-news10504> , 14/12/2018.

⁸⁹ Wedding tourism e Cineturismo: quale valore e quali prospettive per l'industria dei viaggi nazionale?, in jfc.it, 2018, <http://www.jfc.it/ricerche-istituzionali/wedding-tourism-e-cineturismo-quale-valore-e-quali-prospettive-per-lindustria-dei-viaggi-nazionale/> 03/02/2019.

Sorrento and Capri (the most favorite cities in the region⁹⁰). Third stands Veneto, with as, as expected, Venice and Verona as preferred.

Another interesting in the list is Puglia, at the sixth place, which had the greater increase, also due to some new policy in the tourism field, such as the project “Puglia for China”.

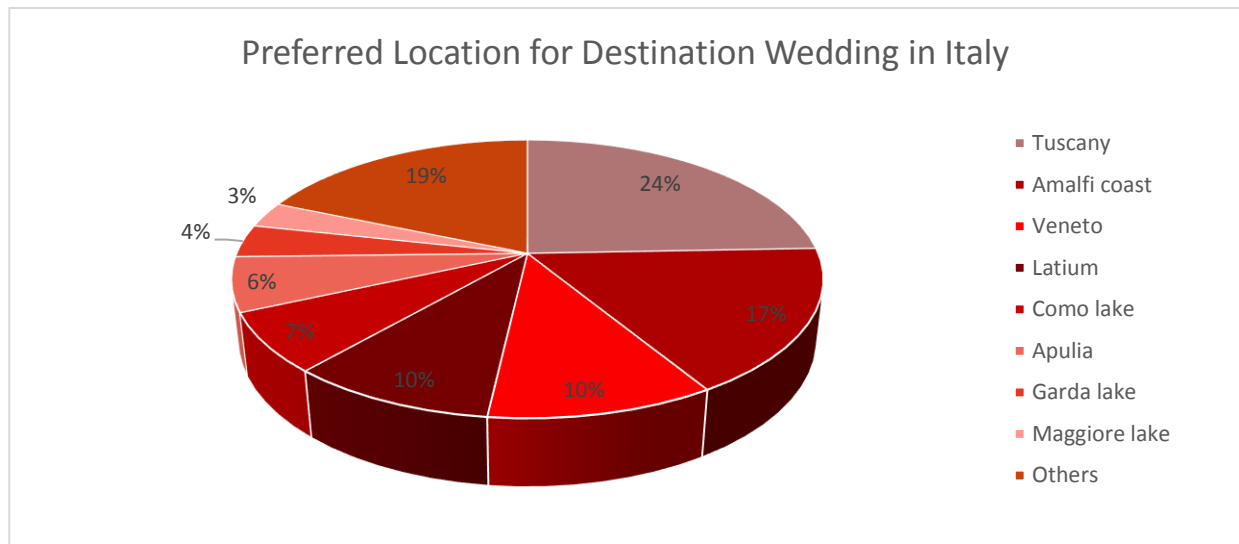


Figure 15: Preference on Italian cities and region in percentage (data source: jfc.it)

The data about the favorite locations in which celebrate the wedding reveal that they loved the architectural heritage of Italy in every shapes, the percentage are almost equally divided on the total supply. Villas and historical mansions are chosen in the 20,4% of cases, occupied the first place, immediately followed by farmhouses (18,6%) and hotels (13,3%), also a high demand for castles and fortresses, the 10,6% on the supply.

This, in a way, also reflect the reasons why they choose Italy, in fact, the top three motivations are food and wine (15,8%), amazing locations (11,3%) and Italian lifestyle (10%).

Going into the specifics of a wedding, the preferences for the celebration are divided into three different type. The first is the symbolic ritual, chose by the majority of the couples (a percentage of 45,4%), usually with a ritual, which symbolize the union, among the most popular can be found the two color sand, or two color water ritual, or also the two candle ritual⁹¹. The civil ceremony is the choice of 31,4% of couples, this ceremony can be performed in the Town Hall,

⁹⁰ Un tour tra le eccellenze della Campania: gli agenti di viaggio cinesi tra le bellezze della Costa d' Amalfi, in [ilvescovado.it](https://www.ilvescovado.it), 2017, <https://www.ilvescovado.it/sezioni-25/turismo-14/un-tour-tra-le-eccellenze-della-campania-gli-agen-68428/article> , 14/12/2018.

⁹¹ For the sand ritual, the couple has two different sand color, one each, and they unite the sand in another bigger vase, often celebrated for extended families with child, who have another sand color to unite to the parents' sand. The candle ritual is performed with three (or more, if there are children) candle, two smaller candle to the couple and one bigger to symbolize the union. Wedding: Spiritual, Religious and Symbolic Ceremonies, in [Garzablancaresort.com](https://www.garzablancaresort.com), 2017, <https://www.garzablancaresort.com/blog/weddings-articles/weddings-spiritual-religious-symbolic-ceremonies> , 03/02/2019.

in city-owned gardens and parks or also abandoned church, with the municipality permission. At last the religious rite, chosen by 23,2% of the couples.

In 2018, JFC foresaw an increase of 6,8%, almost 8.000 weddings expected, with the most interesting increase from the market of Russia, Brazil, Holland and China. Overall, new opportunities for the Italian “*Borghi*” or villages, small but typical, often entirely reserved for the wedding.

3.2.1 Wedding-induced tourism from China

Wedding tourism in Italy is growing each year and as mentioned before, JFC found that China is at the sixteenth place on the list of provenances for destination wedding in Italy, occupying only the 1,5% on the total, in 2017, but the same report reveals that China is expected to be the country with the greatest increase in 2018.

In general, almost all Chinese couples decide to rely on a Wedding Planner (WP) or a Destination Wedding Planner (DWP)⁹², who generally is a more professional figure in the field of destination wedding, thanks to a major knowledge of languages and different cultures. Of central importance is the Wedding Travel Coordinator (WTC)⁹³ a new figure, who takes care of the couple and all the services for them and has a best knowledge of their culture and tradition.

According to experts and destination wedding professionals, the Chinese couple, when choosing a long-haul destination wedding, prefer to make it exclusive, with a few guests, usually about thirty between relatives and friends, only the 4% of the destination weddings exceed a hundred guests and generally concern the top-class luxury wedding, with a high budget.

The first client of destination wedding is the generation Y (Y shidai Y 时代) or Millennials, more open to new adventures and cultures, and curious about the Italian lifestyle, seen as more relaxed and rich. They are at most second-generation rich (fu erdai 富二代) or children of government representative, with a spirit of emulation, mostly influenced by social networks. This data also reflect the data regarding the sales channel, at first place JFC found internet and social networks, with the 40,2% on the total booking, secondly, also a Millennials peculiarity, the “word of mouth”, thanks to family and friends, but also influenced by KOLs (18,1%), following there are local referents or promoters (15,4%) and travel agencies (12,2%).

⁹² Nozze da favola: sempre più cinesi scelgono l'Italia per il fatidico sì, in secoloditalia.it, 2017, www.secoloditalia.it/2017/01/nozze-cinesi/, 30/01/2019.

⁹³ More information about this professional figure in chapter 4.

The favorite locations are Rome, Venice and Verona, because of Romeo and Juliet; and for these dreamy events, they usually prefer historical mansions, such as castles or typical ranches and resorts surrounded by nature, the most important thing in choosing the location is the possibility to stay overnight, for the couple and their guests.

The typical trends on a Chinese wedding, and also a good opportunity to broaden the offer, is the pre-wedding, usually some days before the wedding day, the Chinese couple has a photoshoots dedicated day, in one or more historical cities. In these photos, they wear their wedding gowns and pose for funny and romantic pictures. If the pre-wedding photoshoots is taken some months before (it is also possible to come in Italy only for the shooting), then they use one or more of these picture for their invitation, other hand, if they took the photo shooting only a few day before, they like to show one of this picture at the wedding ceremony.⁹⁴ This is why, of key importance, is the photographer, who has to know the Chinese expectation, that are completely different from the western.



Figure 16: American-Chinese wedding on lake maggiore
(source: italian lakes wediing)



Figure 17: pre-wedding photo shooting in Venice
(source: photoweds.com)

In the last few years, new trends are taking place among Chinese couples, for example, the proposal, thanks to the mentioned emulation needs, the groom-to-be organizes the proposal in an overseas destination, preferring (in Italy) our historical and most-known monuments as landscape.

⁹⁴Cinesi in Italia, il sogno è sposarsi a Venezia, in ansa.it, 2018, cerimonia http://www.ansa.it/canale_lifestyle/notizie/lusso/2018/01/19/cinesi-in-italia-sogno-e-sposarsi-a-venezia_e87f041b-a76f-423f-8411-a5af3255347f.html , 1/01/2019.

According to JFC, the 82% of the couples choose to stay after the wedding, booking a tour for their honeymoon. Generally speaking, while relatives and friends stay on average 3,5 days, the couple average permanence is about 8,4 days. They mostly choose to stay in Italy and relax with a high-end holiday, surrounded by our nature and history.

The time of day they prefer for the wedding, usually depend on their hometown, in general, who was born in North China, prefer to celebrate the wedding in the morning, while the couples who live in regions, which are at south of Shanghai, prefer to marry in the afternoon. The couples who are particularly superstitious and set in tradition, also like to choose the ceremony hour in order to make it be the most auspicious possible, for example, Andrea Naralba,⁹⁵ Wedding Planner and Destination Wedding Planner in Milan, in the interview for JFC reminds a couple who chose to start their ceremony exactly at 10:18.

As for time and the, already mentioned, selection of the most auspicious day for the wedding ceremony, it is also important to know the meaning of Chinese numerology, in order to avoid any gaffes and bad luck for the couple. In this terms, one of the most known example, is the number 4, in fact the pronunciation is *sì* 四 similar to *sǐ*, 死 meaning death, as for the number 14 that can be also pronounce *yào sǐ* 要死 same words of “I want to die”. Its opposite is 8, pronounced *bā* 八, which reminds *fā* 发, that is to say, success, furthermore, 88 in western characters is similar to the mentioned above, *shuāng xǐ* 囍,⁹⁶ so it is perfect to be used in Chinese wedding. As well as 8, also 9 *jiǔ* 九 similar to *jiǔ* 久, meaning “long lasting” is the most favorite character for wedding.

Other auspicious numbers are 0 *líng* 零, as the starting of all things, 2 *ér* 二, because traditionally, Chinese think that all that is good comes in pair, 3 *sān* 三, which reminds the word *shēng* 生 that means “life”. 6 *liù* 六 particularly of good-luck, for business as it is similar to *liú* 流(smooth) and 7 *qī* 七, good especially for the sentimental dimension, as it as a similar pronunciation to *qǐ* 起, meaning together. Other numbers to avoid, especially during a wedding, are 1 *yī* 一, 5 *wǔ* 五, as they symbolized, loneliness and lack.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Wedding tourism e Cineturismo: quale valore e quali prospettive per l'industria dei viaggi nazionale?, in jfc.it, 2018, <http://www.jfc.it/ricerche-istituzionali/wedding-tourism-e-cineturismo-quale-valore-e-quali-prospettive-per-lindustria-dei-viaggi-nazionale/> 03/02/2019.

⁹⁶ Cecilia LORUSSO, Numeri in cinese:ecco cosa significano, in east media, 2018, <http://www.east-media.net/numeri-in-cinese-significato/>, 28/08/2018.

⁹⁷ Numerologia cinese e altri significati, in ACAM.it, 2013, <http://www.acam.it/numerologia-cinese-e-altri-significati/>, 18/12/2018.

More details to which pay attention in organizing a Chinese wedding are, colors, flowers and obviously the selection of the supplier. In terms of colors, it is common knowledge that red is the favorite color of Chinese, that is because, since ancient times, it was used for the imperial palace, as well as for ceremonial wear, red is believed to be blessed, symbolizing benevolence and able of casting out demons. Also good for some details are gold and yellow, known as the imperial color, it is a symbol of power, often used for Chinese new year greeting card and for a new born boy, in fact, differently from western tradition, where the baby boy is completely dressed in light blue, in China his trousseau is yellow.⁹⁸ The color to which to pay more attention is green, in fact, particularly associated to the hat, in the popular expression *dài lǜmào* 戴绿帽⁹⁹ (wear a green hat) as the meaning of “be betrayed”. A different matter are blue and white, usually associated to the meaning of immortality and, for this reason, used during funerals; especially for white, the new wave of westernization, is changing the tradition, in fact, is more than usual to find a Chinese bride with a western white dress.

As revealed by the professionals interviewed, the Chinese couple usually prefer to come to Italy with their wedding dresses bought in China, particularly because of Italian prices, but for a complete understanding of this phenomenon, as well as personal knowledge, it is good to know that usually, the bride has at least three different outfits. The first to be used, in the morning, is the *Qún Guà* or a *Qí Páo* depending on the bride’s origins, often tied to a red veil. The second gown, usually wore during the ceremony, is more western-style, it is often white, without any veil, but with a long train. The last dress, used during the night’s festivities, is a return to the tradition; in fact it is usually a long red gown, often a qipao.

The groom, wearing make-up as well, stimulated by the sense of emulation, started to wear white gowns, especially in Hong Kong and Macau, where the different regulation on internet allow them a better knowledge of western trends.

⁹⁸ Cecilia LORUSSO, Colori in Cina: il loro significato nella cultura cinese, 2018, <http://www.east-media.net/colori-in-cina-significato/>, 28/08/2018.

⁹⁹ Lémàozi shì shénme yìsi 6 zhǒng nánren zuì yì bèi dàilǜmàozi 绿帽子是什么意思 6 种男人最易被戴绿帽子 (what does “wear a green hat” means? 6 type of men who probably wear a green hat), in Jingyanben, 2017, <http://www.jingyanben.com/teach/221161>, 01/09/2018.

Chapter 4: Analysis of the final-offer

4.1 Sector is professional point figures

As seen in the previous chapters, the destination wedding market is composed by a lot of different professional figures, starting from the Wedding Planner (WP) or Destination Wedding Planner (DWP) the supply chain expands and branches off in Tour Operator (TO), Wedding Travel Coordinator (WTC), as well as, the standard suppliers, such as photographer, flower designer etc.

It is possible to enter this market in two different ways, first is B2C (Business to Consumer) and the second is B2B Business to Business). In the case of destination wedding, particularly with Chinese, it is difficult to enter the market as a B2C, it is difficult to reach the Chinese clients through their main communication channel, both because of the language barrier and for the State-owned internet provider that controls internet, rendering all the normal digital marketing channel, totally pointless.¹⁰⁰

In this terms, the only way, or better, the more useful way to enter this market is B2B. The so called “short supply chain” of this commerce transaction is composed from territory, craftwork, location, reception facilities, tourist services, transport and hospitality of the place concerned, while the “long supply chain” includes, at the first step the “short supply chain”, followed WP, TO and Destination Management Company (DMC). At the fourth step, it is found the Wedding House, the TO again and the Web Agency; between these two crucial steps there is the wholesaler. Finally, at the end of the supply chain there is the aim of the work, the client.

Analyzing the supply chain from the beginning to the end, the WP is the first figure to explain, this professional has the responsibility of the communication with the client. It offers advice at the first step, then plans the wedding event, including travel, selecting the perfect suppliers and by handling contracts. It organizes the wedding ceremony, is the art director and the problem solver of the event. Its major ability at the end is to supervise the wedding day, making all follow the time schedule. At the same level the DWP, has the same tasks and duties of the WP, but also languages knowledge and touristic skills, it has to know how to harmonize Chinese tradition and Italian-style wedding.

¹⁰⁰ Bianca TRUSIANI, during the course “Wedding Travel Coordinator: China Specialist” held by Ec Target.

The Tour Operator is typically a key role in the touristic supply chain, its duties are to combine all the services for travelers in a single package, for example combining a charter flight, with transport from/to airport and accommodation, making a holiday package. In the destination wedding the TO's sole referent is the DWP, with whom it discusses the practical organization of the travel part of the wedding, such as flights, transports and accommodation, but also the possible honeymoon.

The last constituent of this second step of the supply chain is the DMC, it is similar to the TO, is a travel professional services company, which has a local knowledge (that usually, TO does not have) and works with experts specifically in the event organization.



Figure 18: the long supply chain of B2B Destination Wedding Market

At last, the Wedding House (WH) is a facility, which offers various wedding services, from the flower designer, wedding designer, photographer to the location, it is usually assisted by a Wedding planner or a similar figure that directly works together with the couple.

The only figure that is not indicated in the supply chain, but still important to know to work in this market is the WTC or Wedding Travel Coordinator. With travel and language skills, the WTC is the cultural mediator, the key figure who shall coordinate the couple and the total group of guests for one or more days, but most important is the person who checks and executes what is planned by the WP or DWP, which is its direct reference. The WTC is totally different from the WP, it does not have any direct contact with the couple, at least not before the day of their arrival, it also does not plan the wedding and does not organize any travel aspect of the event.

Then, the practical steps to go are finding the right suppliers and partners, expert TO or DMC, but also a good photographer for the Chinese needs. A wedding flower designer, who knows the meaning of the flower in the east, for example, the most used flowers for the Chinese bride bouquet are roses and lilies, but a good suggestion for something different can be made by peonies and lotus flower, also auspicious flowers for the Chinese tradition.

4.1.1 Vocational training needed to work in this market

In the world, the training to become a destination wedding planner, or a supporting figure in the supply chain, are a lots; in Italy, being a relatively new market, in which almost the 31% on the total wedding planner, has decide to work (often with few competences), the specific training are still a few.

Some of the most known and reliable academy, which offer these courses are:

- *Wedding & events academy*:¹⁰¹ with the course “destination wedding PRO”, that gives a general point of view about the destination wedding market, with data and forecasts, as well as a professional training, especially about European, Russian and Jewish wedding. This course is also acknowledged by Asso.Euro.We.P.P. (European Association for Professional Wedding Planners).

- *Italy Destination Wedding*:¹⁰² The course promoted by Italy Destination Wedding is in partnership with Università Popolare Organizzazione e Gestione Turistica (Organization and Touristic Managing Popular University), which is already registered at the CNUP (Confederazione Nazionale Università Popolare – Popular University National Confederation). The course, specifically for DWP, is five days long, but it is only for professionals like WP, event planners or Hotels. The course is divided in three steps; the first one is just the DWP course, the second is a three days specialization and the last is an upgrade of two days, with which it is possible to complete the training. All these courses are designed by Bianca Trusiani,¹⁰³ owner of Wedding & Travel and one of the first in connecting TO and wedding in 2012, she is a leading figure in the Italian destination wedding market.

¹⁰¹ Francesca RESCINITI, <http://www.wea.academy/corsi/>, 02/02/2019.

¹⁰² Bianca TRUSIANI, <http://www.italydestinationwedding.it/formazione/>, 02/02/2019.

¹⁰³ Bianca TRUSIANI is the Charmain of Scientific and Technical Commetee of Buy Wedding in Italy, a travel agent specialized in tailor-made and TO manager, she worked for three years at the Italian MAE (Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Brand owner of Wedding & Travel®, ItalyDestinationWedding® and Wedding Made in

- *Elisa Mocci Events Academy*:¹⁰⁴ Elisa Mocci is an important DWP in the Italian sphere, her headquarter is in Sardinia, where she also holds the basic wedding planner classes. Plus to these courses, she proposes an advanced course to become destination wedding planner, it is held in Milan and Rome, a four days course, where the participants will know and work with the best brand of the luxury wedding market. For all the courses the Elisa Mocci Events Academy shall issue a certificate pursuant to the European sectoral legislation.

- *The Destiny of Wedding*:¹⁰⁵ the newest training, only for professional figures, planned and designed by Veronica Tasciotti Amati, one of the best Destination Wedding Planner in Italy and a sinologist. The first edition will be held in Santa Margherita Ligure from 1st to 5th April 2019. The course is realized in partnership with LUISS and Buy Wedding, after the classes with Veronica and other international professionals, the class will have the opportunity to organize a real wedding.

These four wedding planning academies are the most known and prestigious in the Italian market, their common ground is the professionalism and the willingness to train competent professionals, in fact, they all rely on national and international professionals to assure the attendants are fully trained. Another major issue in choosing a good training is the certification, it is important that the certification has been recognized from European and national sector organizations and Associations.

4.2 Different types of destination wedding from China

The destination weddings from China are divided in different types, some of which have already been mentioned in this thesis, for a better understanding, listed below in a chronological order.

The first service that a DWP offers, is the proposal, this service is in great expansion in China, mostly between Millennials, in order to imitate their favorite celebrities. As in the western

Italy®. Together with Veronica Tasciotti, she also devised the new DW figure, the WTC (Wedding Travel Coordinator).

¹⁰⁴ Elisa MOCCI, <https://www.elisamoccieventsacademy.com/corsodestination-wedding-planner> , 02/02/2019.

¹⁰⁵ Veronica TASCOTTI AMATI, <https://www.thedestinyofwedding.com/> , 02/02/2019.

fantasy, also the Chinese want a proposal that has to be far from the everyday reality, something that can impress, not only the partner but also family and friends.

Usually, the preferred settings in Italy are places of worship and of cultural heritage, such as in front of the Colosseum, or in the middle of San Marco Square in Venice, but in the last few years, as for the new trends of the outbound tourism, also Chinese looking for something private. The new proposal trend (according to professionals, still only the 15% on all Chinese proposal service) are the proposal in the nature, such as on the top of a mountain or in the snow and the proposal on the beach. In this kind of services is essential to have a top photographer and cinematographers, together with a prepared team of wedding designer, wedding planner and floral designer.

One of the Chinese favorite services is the pre-wedding photoshoot, as we already said, this is a typical part of a Chinese wedding, they also use the pictures for their invitation or to show them during the ceremony and banquet. The importance that Chinese couples give to the pre-wedding photoshoot is well explained in the documentary “China Love”, presented at the Sydney Film Festival¹⁰⁶, in which Olivia Martin Maguire documents all the phases and all the couple’s feels through a photographic collection.

Here it is possible to find one of the biggest differences between Chinese and western preferences, but also between Chinese and, specifically, Italian photographer; the couples often want fantasy-based pre-wedding photoshoot, nothing to do with “capture the reality”, which is the Italian mantra for the photoshoots. Almost the 90% of the couples take their photos in giant factories in China, using fake backdrops¹⁰⁷, in the remaining 10% almost the 4% choose Europe, and in the same time choose a more realistic style of photos, but it is important to understand and follow the needs and tastes of the couple. This is one of the problems in planning weddings and/or photo shoots in Italy, where the photograph is an artist, and as an artist is reluctant in changing his style. A good compromise can be found in the new trend, such as the underwater

¹⁰⁶ Rebecca KAMM, China’s pre-wedding photo shoots are something else, 2018, https://www.vice.com/en_au/article/wj7kex/chinas-pre-wedding-photo-shoots-are-something-else , 21/01/2019.

¹⁰⁷ Olivia MARTIN MAGUIRE, during an interview with VICE, https://www.vice.com/en_au/article/wj7kex/chinas-pre-wedding-photo-shoots-are-something-else , 12/01/2019.

photoshoot¹⁰⁸, really popular in China, and innovative for the Italian market. The couple can spend up to 4.000.000 RMB for the pre-wedding photo shoot.¹⁰⁹



Figure 19: underwater pre-wedding photo shoot by Olivia Mc Guire (source:honey.nine.com.au)

Which brings us to the real wedding, we already talked about numerology and symbolisms, usually, when the couple choose an Italian wedding, they rely entirely to the WP. Generally, a Chinese Wedding Planner, who as partners in Italy, the DWP in Italy rarely has a direct contact with the couple, before they come to Italy, the DWP only refers to the Chinese WP that presents the couple's desire. It is also possible, mostly through social media and websites that the couple comes in direct contact with the Italian DWP, in both cases, for an easily understanding and mainly, for the first meeting, the WP have some wedding packages, which can give an idea of the services that can be included in the wedding.

In addition to the normal wedding, there is also a peculiar kind of event, usually chosen by the middle class, is the collective wedding or mass wedding, which practically is a wedding ceremony in which several couples are married in the same time. This kind of wedding is obviously cheaper than a normal one, and often it also includes the honeymoon.

¹⁰⁸ Rebecca KAMM, China's pre-wedding photo shoots are something else, 2018, https://www.vice.com/en_au/article/wj7kex/chinas-pre-wedding-photo-shoots-are-something-else , 21/01/2019.

¹⁰⁹ Natalie OLIVERI, Why Chinese couples love their pre-wedding photos, which look nothing but reality, in Honey Latest, 2018, <https://honey.nine.com.au/2018/09/28/14/50/why-chinese-couples-love-staged-fantasy-based-pre-wedding-photographs> , 21/01/2019.

One of the most known Chinese massive collective wedding was held in Thailand in 2012, when 160 couples married in the first joint mass ceremony of this scale.¹¹⁰ This certainly is not the most romantic and intimate way to marry, but an event of this magnitude has the power to attract a lot of interest and visibility in social media, as well as print media and television. In Italy it has never been done, and this is a kind of wedding that requires more than one permit from the Municipality, and a lot of paperwork, but it could also be an opportunity to cast Italy in the top destinations for weddings all over the world.

4.2.1 Example of wedding packages

In order to give a complete overview on the Destination Wedding offer, it was considered that some examples of what kind of services can be included in a wedding package could be useful. The examples with prices shown below are mostly from Chinese Destination Wedding planners, as most of Italian WP prefer not to show the price on their websites (also because it is difficult to set a price, which usually depends on the kind of wedding chosen by the couple), in this regard, the example must be taken as merely indicative.

After an internet research conducted from China, using their mainly search engine “Baidu”, it is possible to find some destination wedding planners and to make a distinction between DWP for a mass tourism and DWP for high-end couple.

The major difference that is possible to find between these two types of websites is that the DWP, who are principally based on the mass tourism propose an home page a lot simpler compared to their opposite. The first thing that the client can see is a simple search engine where it is possible to choose where they want to marry, with which kind of ceremony, in which year and season, how many invited and which kind of services do you want to be included in the package, such as wedding dresses, banquet and honeymoon.

In this kind of websites, usually there is also a chat, where is possible to talk with the client service, in order to have suggestions or ask about the websites and their packages, and it is also possible to have a quotation directly on the mobile telephone number, both on wechat or skype. This DWP diverges also for the image style, generally, are little, not as professional as the other

¹¹⁰ Chinese couples to have massive collective wedding in Thailand, 2013, <https://coconuts.co/bangkok/news/chinese-couples-have-massive-collective-wedding-thailand-again/>, 02/02/2019.

ones and, over all, they are just a few, the focus of the websites is on the request, not on the image.

It is important to say, that in almost all these homepages we can find Italy in the top ten of destinations, the only European state before Italy is Greece (which, in the last few years, has invested a lot on this niche market), and the others are usually, Indonesia, Thailand, New Zealand and some islands.

In this category, the most illustrative one is, qwedding.cn, totally China-owned, it shows some prices but only regarding the basic packages, not available for Italy, where for example the cost for a basic package including ceremony, make-up and hairstyle and the photoshoot service in Bali starts at 15.000 RMB (about 2.000 Euros). While an all-inclusive package, for example the one they propose in Siena, has no price on the websites and it is necessary to ask for the quotation through mobile phone, better on wechat. To give a complete idea of which kind of proposal they can set for Italy, here below is the presentation of the Siena chapel's package.

This location is available for both morning and afternoon/evening ceremony, what is important to point out is that this kind of service is available only in Italian or English (that can also be a problem for some clients) and the location can accommodate up to forty guests. What is included for the pre-wedding is:

- Customized itinerary
- Flights tickets and accommodation (only for one destination)
- Chaperone from the airport
- Wedding rehearsal

During the wedding day:

- Car transfer
- Ceremony and location (western style)
- Italian wedding with celebrant and best man if necessary
- Flower ceremony
- Bouquet (one piece) and boutonnière (one piece)
- All the documentation and paperwork, in addition to a mementos certificate
- Make-up and hairstyling from China
- Photographer (eight hours)
- Cameraman (eight hours)

In addition to these services, they shall provide about four hundred pictures, a romantic micro movie and a wedding documentary; it is possible to ask for wedding dresses and honeymoon. Usually, the wedding banquet is not included, they include only a toast with the guests, but it is possible to add the banquet on request. A similar package in Thailand costs about 500.000 RMB (about 65.000 Euros) for thirty guests.

Moving on up to the middle class DWP, we can find something more similar to the western websites, aesthetically smoother and straight shooter. It is possible to use the example of I wish wedding (iwishwed.net), here, as for the one just discussed, we can find five destinations in Europe, in which Italy is the third, Asia and South Asia with almost ten destinations, America and New Zealand.

I wish wedding is just one of the few DWP, who provides all the packages prices, also thanks to a more standardized offer, every package is customizable but they easily give an idea of the prices to the client. They have almost ten offers in Italy and the price starts at 46.500 RMB (about 6.000 Euros) for a package in Rome, that includes ceremony, make-up and hairstyle, transfer, photographs and just a little “after party” with Prosecco and some finger-food. The cost for Italy can reach 82.200 RMB (about 11.000 Euros) for Siena, including ceremony, make-up, hairstyle, photoshoot, toast, banquet and the first wedding night for two people.

There’s no package in Italy that includes the wedding dress, as we already mentioned in the second chapter, in general, the Italian prices for renting a wedding dress are too high, so they prefer to bring them from China.

Last, in the China research, is the luxury destination wedding, most of these websites deal with both luxury tourism and luxury destination wedding, and are really similar to the western websites, aesthetically pleasing and with a sense of desire and lux, which appears from all the pictures; the most interesting are uniqueway.com and movelux.cn. The first is totally from China, and organizes weddings in Europe and Asia, there are almost no information about the wedding packages so they mostly work on request from the clients. On the website, they describe their services, from the planning to the honeymoon and here it is also possible to find a lot of feedbacks and pictures from the previous couples.

In the homepage, one of the first things that is possible to see, is a certificate of excellence for the year 2018, issued by the European Wedding Association partner of European Wedding Academy, which demonstrates the importance given to the reliability from the Chinese.

Movelux is one of the most interesting websites and the second result in almost all the Baidu's researches, but what is really important is that the owner and almost all the team is Italian, with the headquarter in Milan and two branches in Venice and Rome. Their website domain is .cn, this implies that they have a branch or a representative office in China, but wherever it is, it is not mentioned in the website, where the only telephone numbers available are Italians, one of which, available 24 hours a day.

The offer is clearly from Italy, they do not have any package and all the request and quotation can be available only through email or mobile phone.

Finally yet importantly, there are also the Italian destination wedding offers, there are a lot of DWP in Italy, but the majority does not work with the Chinese couples, one on all is Europe Wedding, with which I have been in contact a couple times. In these occasions have been founded out their point of view about the destination wedding for Chinese couple is

We tried, but compared to the organization for an American or Anglo-Saxon wedding is far more complicated, there is too much paperwork to think about [...]. Others difficulties are to establish good and long-term partnerships, they want to see you and require a lot more time, both for the language problem and for the different way to conceive the business [...]. For the way in which we work, have to deal with a Chinese TO that already has a standard package, is not profitable, it could be deleterious to our agency.

Of the same mind were also the other two DWP interviewed, one operating on the Lake Maggiore (Piedmont) and the other operating in Venice (Mestre), both work with American, European and with Russian, but they find too hard to work with Chinese couples.

Their offer, usually, is divided into three different type of services, in particular, to give an example, here below is reported the Europe Wedding's services, divided into three category:

The first category is the Dynamic Wedding Package, which include only the basic services, such as the wedding program schedule, the booking of the location and the assistance for the wedding paperwork. Secondly, they offer a Relax Wedding Package that, in addition to the previous package add a three-hour photoshoot and a basic flower service (1 bouquet and 1 boutonnière). The last package is the most complete, the photoshoot can be up to four hour, plus a wedding ceremony flower centerpiece, music, manicure, make-up and hairstyle and a suite for the wedding.

In all these packages, the location and banquet are not included, because the price can change importantly between one location or another.

A kind idea from Europe Wedding is a little gift for every package, such as a toast with an Italian prosecco for the Dynamic package, one-hour musician for the Relax package and a luxury transfer for the bride in the case of Couture package.

Between the Italian DWP, which work with Chinese couples, the most interesting are Elisa Mocci and Veronica Tasciotti Amati; Elisa is a young Wedding Designer and Planner and is named in the top five of Italian Luxury Wedding Planner for ELLE brides, she works in a team of three talented women. In their website is possible to know them, to know their works and ability, but it is not possible to see standard packages or have prices, you have to desire their work because they are unquestionably one of the best Italian DWP and they will plan the perfect day on your request. As obvious, this is a top-level service and this is the reason why the prices are not even necessary, because it will be a high price in line with what they offer.

Veronica Tasciotti Amati, is the perfect example of what an ideal Destination Wedding Planner for Chinese has to be, she is a sinologist specialized in commercial negotiation. In 2016 founds the brand Veronica Amati, as for the others, where the service is of top quality, the price are not showed, because it is impossible to standardize the wedding, she and her team will tailor the wedding on the couple desire. On the website, as for Elisa, it is possible to find information about the team and the work they take on, it is clear and colorful, the client can easily find all the information and it is the only one, among those analyzed in Italy, which is translated also in Chinese.

4.3 Communication channels: marketing strategies for the Italian Destination Wedding

In order to completely understand the functioning of this niche market, it is important to know how the professionals, who actually work in this field, do marketing. There are various aspect to analyze, regarding marketing in China, as China passed from a planned economy with centralized conduction to a free-market driven economy, the actual Chinese management is both influenced by overseas management systems and close to Taoism, Confucianism and in all the relations (guānxi 关系) involved in those systems.

All these influences internal and external, affect the way Chinese do and perceive marketing, to integrate a new brand in this market, it is necessary to implement specific strategies based on the Chinese market and consumer. In this direction, knowing dynamics and characters of the

Chinese market is the first step (macro-level analysis) and then move on to a micro-level analysis on the sector concerned.¹¹¹ Since this market is marked by interculturalism, sometimes this aspect prevails on the economic one, then is important what Matteo Ricci teaches

To operate in China, first is necessary to “become Chinese”¹¹²

To become Chinese is the aim of this marketing work, it is essential to know them, to know their behavior and learn how to use this knowledge in the right way.

One of the first channel for the brand marketing in China is to find the proper partners. In this sense, it is necessary to know some aspects of the Chinese market, such as collectivism, based on relations (*guānxi* 关系), situational communication and a low-risk attitude, which makes the scholar Fukuyama to describe China as a low trust society.¹¹³ Some essential concepts, which is good to know, in working with China is:

- *miàn zi* 面子 (face), it has something to do with the individual’s reputation in the society, it has a quantitative dimension, it is possible to lose it or gain it.

- *chī kǔ nài láo* 吃苦耐劳 (hardworking and patience), Chinese have a particular way to manage the negotiation and this idiom explain it in the best way, they often repeat the same question, trying to test the partner’s patience. - *rén jì hé xié* 人际和谐 (interpersonal harmony) it refers to the non-official circumstances, like banquet , which are really important to the final contract.

Knowing these concepts can help in constructing the partnership in the right way, but only after having found the right target to which the brand needs to refer. In addition, to unlock the ROI (Return On Investment), marketers need to know well their target audience, as well as effective measurement solution to track the engagement. To find it and also to understand which can be the better media in which to invest, it is necessary to be able to answer to the information of the scheme, which follows.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Ambra COLLINO, Il libro bianco sul turismo cinese in Italia, Chapter 4.1: Fare marketing in Cina, Chinese Friendly Edizioni, 2014, p. 289.

¹¹² Paolo BORZATTA, La Cina non è ancora per tutti: dialoghi sul mercato cinese, Chapter 3: Un nuovo modello di organizzazione aziendale in Cina?, Edizioni Olivares, Milano, 2015, p. 121.

¹¹³ Ambra COLLINO, Il libro bianco sul turismo cinese in Italia, Chapter 4.1: Fare marketing in Cina, Chinese Friendly Edizioni, 2014, p. 292.

¹¹⁴ What’s next for China connected consumer: a roadmap for driving digital demand, Nielsen Holding plc, 2018.

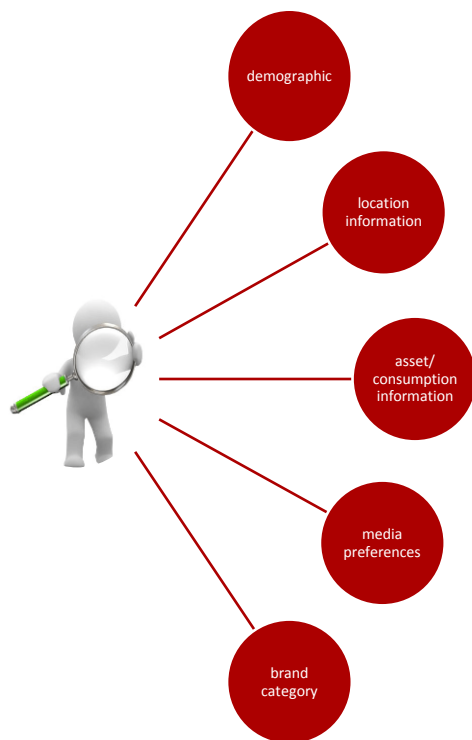


Figure 20: targeting the consumer (source: Nielsen Digital report 2018)

For example, in the case of destination wedding market, the target to reach could be, for the demographic information:

- Woman
- Aged between twenty and forty
- High education
- Not married
- Without children

Location information:

- Located both work and residence in first or second tier cities

Brand/ category preference:

- Luxury brand
- Italian or European brand
- Luxury and lifestyle
- Luxury wedding

Asset/ consumption information:

- Middle-high or high level asset
- High-end consumption

Media preference:

- Mobile phone and TV
- Video and pictures (short content)
- KOL preferences in the luxury/lifestyle sphere, better if female and with almost the same age

Once found this target profile, it is possible to plan a marketing strategy, including the media with which is possible to reach the target concerned. In tracking this profile it has been used both the CINIC report 2018 on the Internet development and Nielsen's research on the new digital trends, extrapolating the Internet behavior of the target found during the research, in

which it is already possible to understand the demographic, location and asset/consumption information of the destination wedding target.

Using the same reports, it is possible to find out, bearing in mind the target, which are the key elements and channels to use with the Chinese tourists and consequently, with the couples.

Among others, the most important element to which being careful about are the Chinese version or the Chinese website, almost a basic knowledge of the Chinese massive culture and Chinese language knowledge.¹¹⁵

Before to plan the marketing strategy is necessary to know the law that rules the online advertising, in fact, in 2016 the State Administration of Industry and Commerce (SAIC)¹¹⁶ published the first national set of rules in the field of Internet and social media advertising. This law rules all the online advertising, both for products and services and in all formats, as obvious the foreign brand have to uphold this law only when the advertising objective is the Mainland China (then, an advertising on a global website, which has no specific target, does not have to respect those rules).¹¹⁷

In the same law, it is specified that payment for search results are ruled by the law concerned, now, every brand, which pays for advertising in the search results, such as on Baidu, have to be clearly differentiated from the natural results¹¹⁸. In addition to this, it has introduced the prohibition of advertising in the email communication to the users, without their consent.

Usually, an Italian brand has a global website, but as said, it would be important to translate it also in Chinese and this means that the brand will be under this Act, because the obvious objective of the website is the Mainland China. In the case of destination wedding, the law is not restrictive but it is important to know the functioning of it, in order to positioning the website and ads in the right way.

As already mentioned, generally, the domain used by the Italian brand is .com (if it has to communicate outside Italy), in China is diffuse but not the best, in fact, Baidu, the largest

¹¹⁵ Wenting GE, Jacopo GARBARINO, *Il libro bianco sul turismo cinese in Italia*, Chapter 4.2: Promozione, marketing e web marketing in Cina, Chinese Friendly Edizioni, 2014, p. 300.

¹¹⁶ Regulatory body in charge for the advertising law of China.

¹¹⁷ Filippo FASULO, Alberto ROSSI, *IX Rapporto annuale CeSIF- Edizione 2018, Cina: scenari e prospettive per le imprese*, Fondazione Italia Cina, San Giuliano Milanese (MI), 2018.

¹¹⁸ Paid ads cannot exceed 30% of the total search result.

Chinese search engine with about the 60% market share¹¹⁹, ranks the .cn domain higher than the other .com or .net. The best choice in this regard would be to have an Italian or European website, better if the domain is .com and another website, only for Chinese couple with the .cn domain, translated both in simplified Chinese and traditional Chinese.

From the SEO (Search Engine Optimization) point of view, there are ten important aspects to be careful about in optimizing a website for Baidu and one of these, is the domain names, which is also related to the loading time optimization, that is shorter with a .cn domain. The only problem is that, to host a website in China an ICP license is required and it is issued by the Ministry only to the China-registered businesses,¹²⁰ the solution could be a representative office (obviously, it requires a higher investment) that could be useful for social media positioning as well.

To have a comprehensive view of Internet in China, some generic data have been reported: according to CINIC report the number of Inter users in the last year reached 772 million, with a total internet penetration of 55,8%, at the same time, the number of mobile Internet users reached 753 million, which is the 97,5% of the netizen population.¹²¹

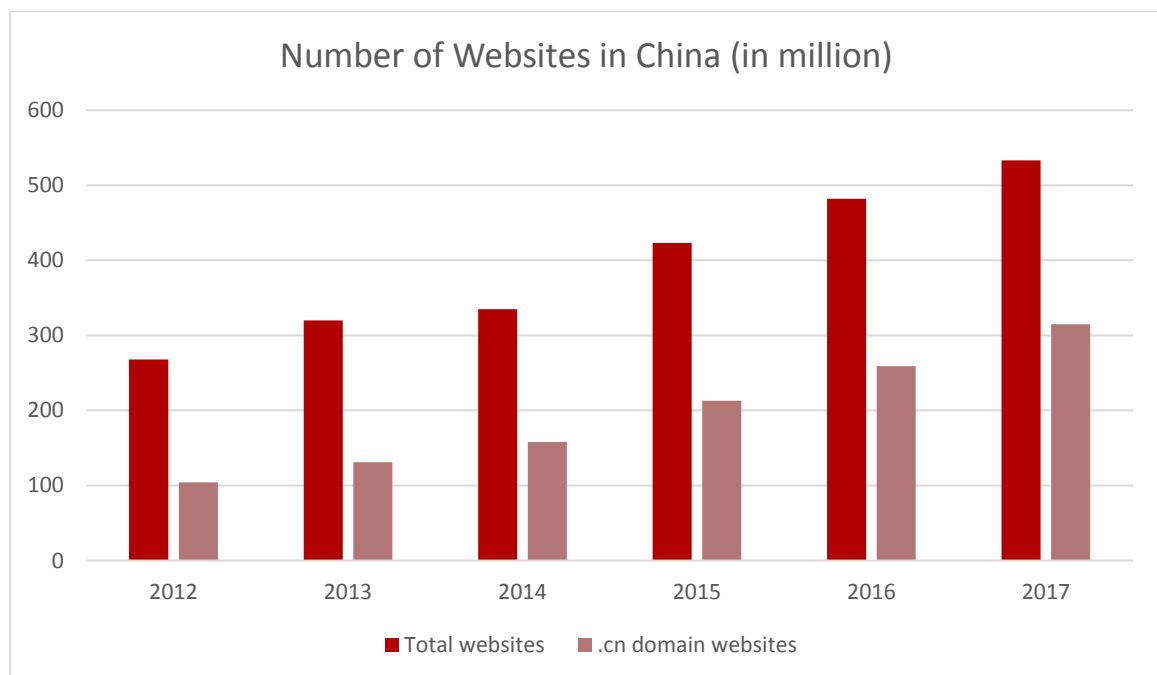


Figure 21: number of websites in China (source: CINIC report 2018)

¹¹⁹ Val KAPLAN, *Doing business in China online*, Amazon Distribution, Leipzig (Germany), 2016, p.6.

¹²⁰ Val KAPLAN, *Doing business in China online*, Amazon Distribution, Leipzig (Germany), 2016.

¹²¹ Statistical Report on Internet Development in China, China Internet Network Information Center, 2018.

Simplification and integration of the online and offline offering advertising is usually critical but the most effective, in this way is necessary an accurate analysis of the target across platform. More specifically, if the brand decides to advertise its services, what is important to know is the real answer to every media, in order to know where to positioning the advertising. According to the last Nielsen research, the trust in the social media both on mobile and on PC increases every year, while remaining at the end of the list of the most trusted, it is by far the most viewed.

The brand’s mantra for advertising has to be “the right people, in the right place, with the right message”¹²².

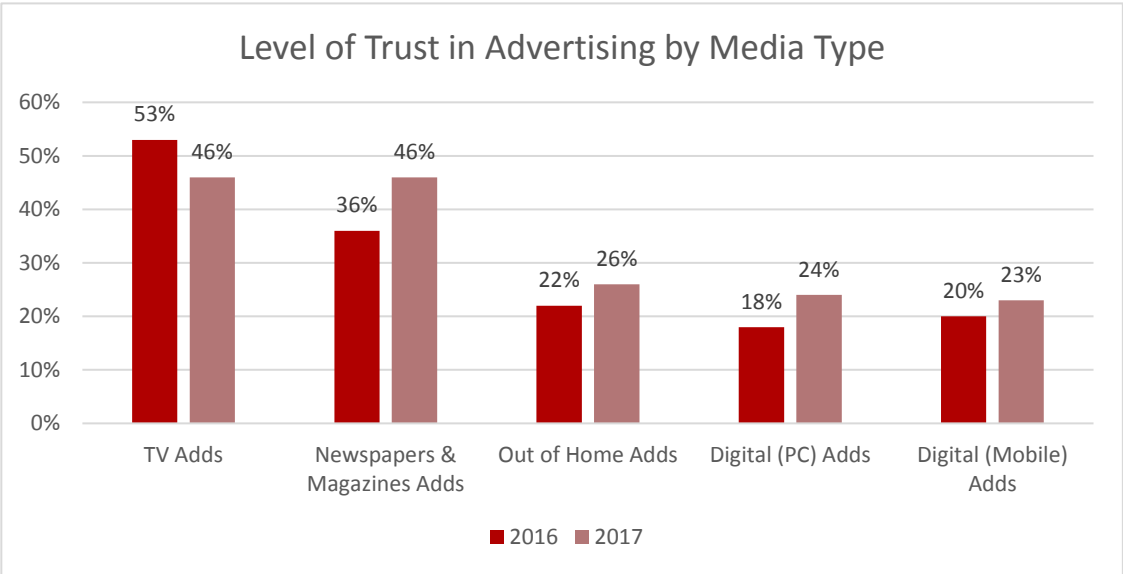


Figure 22: level of trust in advertising by media type (source: Nielsen Report 2018)

The same Nielsen research finds that among consumers who want to find out more information after viewing a digital advertising, the major number will follow-up searching online or asking a friend.

¹²² What’s next for China connected consumer: a roadmap for driving digital demand, Nielsen Holding plc, 2018.

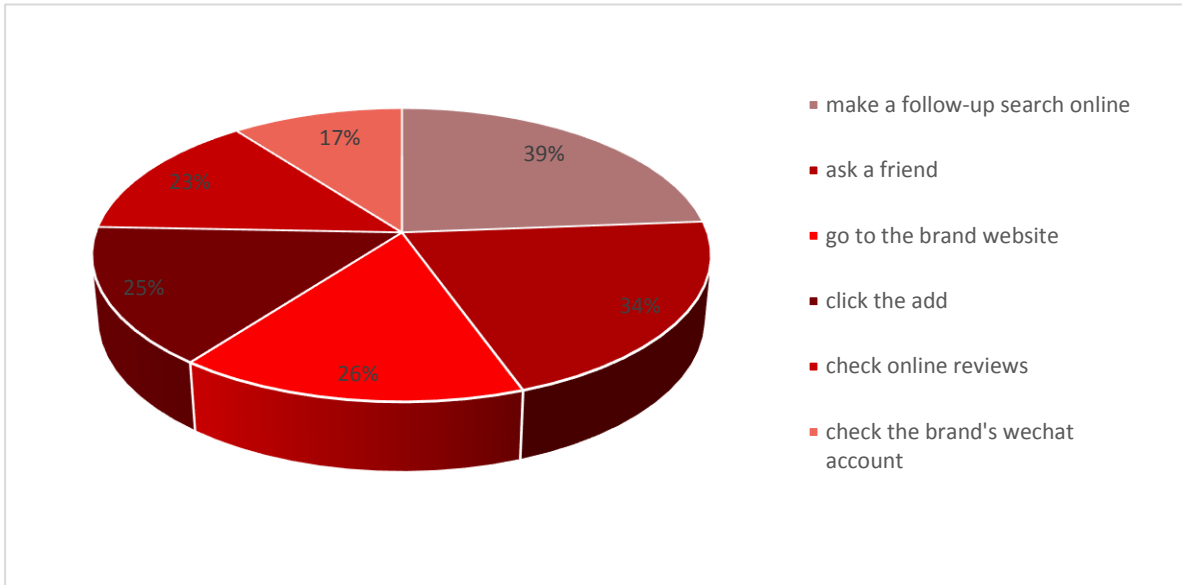


Figure 23: behavior after seeing the advertising (Nielsen Report 2018)

4.3.1 Chinese Social Media

Attention should be given in particular to digital ads, both on PC and mobile phone, when analyzing the Chinese social media landscape, the most important for marketing are Weibo and Wechat.

Sina Weibo was the most active network up until the rise of Wechat, it positions itself as a discovery-based network, and then it is the most indicated to make marketing in China. Even if in the last few years, it lost a large number of users to other networks (primarily to Wechat), Sina Weibo remains one of the most important online marketing platform. Anyway the number of daily and monthly users continue to increase every year, for example in September 2018, the MAU (Monthly Active Users) reached 446 million, of which the 93% are mobile MAU.¹²³

¹²³ Weibo reports third quarter 2018: Unaudited Financial Results, in [ir.weibo.com](http://ir.weibo.com/news-releases/news-release-details/weibo-reports-third-quarter-2018-unaudited-financial-results), 2018, <http://ir.weibo.com/news-releases/news-release-details/weibo-reports-third-quarter-2018-unaudited-financial-results>, 30/01/2019.

Weibo users tend to be more “educated”¹²⁴ and almost equally divided between male (50,1%) and female (49,9%)¹²⁵, of which almost the 80% is young (aged between 17 and 33 years old)¹²⁶ and only the 13% is over 34 years old.¹²⁷

The most popular content on Weibo is video, to post it on a regular basis is the better way to engage the followers, in 2017 the active users posted 50% more videos on daily basis than in 2016¹²⁸. Looking to these data, Weibo seems to be the most effective social media in which to invest for a destination wedding marketing strategy, it is flexible, as you can setup the brand’s page with a personal design, it reaches the right target, and overall it is really easy-use and intuitive.

Is interesting to know that, just some month ago, in December 2018, the ENIT (Ente Nazionale Italiano del Turismo) its Weibo page was rewarded as the most favored outbound destinations among the Weibo users.¹²⁹

The other important social media in China is Wechat; it was launched in 2011 and is entirely mobile based, according to the latest CAICT (China Academy of Information and Communications Technology), the monthly number of active users, in 2018, climbed over 1 billion. In 2019, claims 1 billion active users a day, positioning itself has the fifth most-used app in the world.¹³⁰

Most important, in 2018 the market penetration of Wechat arrived to 79% with 17 million of active official accounts, which means that 17 million brands in China have a Wechat account, it has an enormous marketing potential for those who have an official account. Now a day, there are two types of WeChat official account, which are subscription and service. The latter is the basic choice, more intuitive and easier to manage and setup, on the other hand, this kind of account does not have any advanced functionality.

¹²⁴ According to Val Kaplan research, over three quarters of users hold higher education degree.

¹²⁵ Weibo (Sina Weibo) – China microblogging news and insights, in China Internet Watch, 2018, <https://www.chinainternetwatch.com/tag/weibo/>, 30/01/2019.

¹²⁶ Weibo reports third quarter 2017: demographics profile, in ir.weibo.com, 2017, <http://ir.weibo.com/news-releases/news-release-details/weibo-reports-third-quarter-2017-financial-results>, 30/01/2019.

¹²⁷ Val KAPLAN, Doing business in China online, Amazon Distribution, Leipzig (Germany), 2016.

¹²⁸ Weibo Statistics: Q4 2017 financial report, in Chozan, 2018, <https://chozan.co/2018/02/21/weibo-statistics-q4-2017/>, 29/01/2019.

¹²⁹ Agenzia Nazionale Turismo Italia, posted on its Facebook profile the photos of the prize-giving ceremony.

¹³⁰ Mansoor IQBAL, WeChat Revenues and Usage Statistics, in Business of Apps, 2019, <http://www.businessofapps.com/data/wechat-statistics/>, 15/02/2019.

Actually, for the type of advertising marketing needed by a destination-wedding brand, the subscription is far enough, as it only needs to push original and attractive contents to users. In its Verified version, it is also possible to have some customized functionality as for example the link button to the website (in this case, pay attention to the optimization for mobile of the website).

In order to gain followers on WeChat it is possible to let them scan the QR code of the brand's WeChat account, then the first strategy is to put it in the website and social media, as well as add it to the newsletter, stamp it in the business card or in the headquarters and branches offices. After getting followers, it is necessary to engage them, in this sense the content has to be attractive, direct, but overall it has to be suitable to WeChat, where the format of the page is different to a desktop one, never forget it.

In the second quarter of 2018, WeChat Report by Dragontrail.com, there is an interesting section that shows the travel brands and tourism institutions ranking on WeChat, the brands are divided in various sectors, like museum, airlines etc.. In the ranking of National Tourism Offices (NTOs), Italy is ranked 20th, other European in the list are France (6th), Norway (8th), Austria (9th), Sweden (11th), Germany (13th), Denmark (15th), Spain (16th) and UK (17th).¹³¹

At the end of the year Italy lost the 20th and last position, leaving it to Swiss; in the same annual report, it is possible to found some interesting similarities among the top-position, first all the best have bet on new content, mainly regarding food, landscapes and flowers.¹³²

Having to choose between these two social media, after the analysis, Weibo is the better choice, for all the reason already mentioned above, WeChat is more diffuse, but also less direct, it is more difficult to gain followers if the brand does not have any representative office in China. In the possibilities to have both, it seems to be the best option, manage a Weibo page and a WeChat account could be challenging, but WeChat could be useful in some situations, for example, another good way to make marketing in China is to participate to the sector's major fair, in this situations have a QR code is almost essential and gives the possibilities to the client or the supplier to add the brand in no more than five seconds.

¹³¹ Q2 2018 WeChat Ranking Report, in Dragontrail.com, 2018, <https://dragontrail.com/resources/blog/q2-2018-wechat-rankings> . 16/01/2019.

¹³² 2018 Q4 and Full-Year WeChat Rankings, in Dragontrail.com, 2019, <https://dragontrail.com/resources/blog/2018-wechat-rankings> , 13/02/2019.

4.3.2 Others marketing strategies

The offline marketing strategies in this particular market are based on participation to the destination wedding fairs in China and Europe, both to know clients and suppliers. Here divided in World most important fairs and China most important fairs.

The world most important fairs for destination wedding market are:¹³³

- New York Wedding Event (organized by New York Magazine)
- The Wedding Fair (held in London is one of the most important in the wedding world)
- SposaItalia (held in Milan is only for trade)
- Others, such as The London Fair, The Wedding Update, Il Matrimonio dei Sensi etc.

China (Mainland China, plus Hong Kong and Taiwan) most important fair for destination wedding are:

- Sanya Destination Wedding EXPO¹³⁴
- China Wedding EXPO (held in Shanghai)
- Taipei Wedding EXPO
- Hong Kong Wedding Fair

As already mentioned before, Chinese clients, as well as the potential partners, are positioned in a low trusted market, which means that they are naturally suspicious, approach to them during a fair give them the chance of meeting you personally, assuring a more trusting cooperation.

Another way to handle this typical Chinese character is having the brand recognize by the QSC program, this program lists the highest quality tourist excellences; the services and products of the brand listed by the program can benefit of the QSC help, they will promote them to TO, travel agencies and Chinese tourist.

On the other hand, enter into this no profit program is not that simple, in fact, criteria for membership are based on the analysis of services, functionalities, expertise and other facilities given to the Chinese tourist. Furthermore, it is necessary to have some years of proven experience and quality.

¹³³ Wedding tourism e Cineturismo: quale valore e quali prospettive per l'industria dei viaggi nazionale?, in jfc.it, 2018, <http://www.jfc.it/ricerche-istituzionali/wedding-tourism-e-cineturismo-quale-valore-e-quali-prospettive-per-lindustria-dei-viaggi-nazionale/> 03/02/2019.

¹³⁴ Liang YU, 2018 Sanya Destination Wedding Expo held in South China, in Xinhuanet, 2018, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-12/28/c_137704168_2.htm , 03/01/2019.

At this moment, the subject recognized by the QSC program are about 400 between travel agencies, hotel, attractions, restaurant etc. in 43 countries all over the world. In Italy, for example, this recognition has been given to Milano Malpensa (MXP) airport and others touristic suppliers.

In 2017 Fondazione Italia Cina concluded a Memorandum of Understanding at the Beijing Italian Embassy, in which Fondazione Italia Cina and Ivy Alliance Tourism Consulting opened the mutual collaboration in promoting the Italian tourism to Chinese.¹³⁵

4.4 Interview with Veronica Tasciotti owner of the brands EC Target and Veronica Amati: point of view and work of one of the best Destination Wedding Planner for Chinese couples in Italy

In get this interview, it is applied the same standard interview model given in the second chapter, questions are setted in order to understand how the Italian Destination Wedding Planner work with Chinese couples. The interview have been taken through phone and email.

Veronica Tasciotti, with which the author have had the pleasure to attend a Wedding Travel Coordinator course, has been interviewed the 12th February 2019.

I have founded my first brand EC Target in 2007, firstly handled only institutional and business event, in addition to the consulting work on companies that have relations with China. The first year was a year of setting-up and of hard work. The three years before, I lived between Milan and Beijing, once back, I could count only on my strengths to build a network of strategic relations.

The first year in which I started to plan wedding and private event was 2012 and for three years, this service remained under EC Target, but after 2015 I realized that it was necessary to separate these two world and I founded the brand Veronica Amati. This second brand reflects all my language skills, my tourism-related training and merge them with my qualities as event planner.

When a foreign client ask for a wedding in Italy, my approach usually differs depending on their provenience country, in order to help me to understand which are their desire, how they imagine their wedding and consequently, what they expect from me, I conceived a form with questions and pictures. The main purpose of this document is to help my work, make me understanding what they are looking for in an Italian wedding and which aspects of their culture they want to maintain.

¹³⁵ Fondazione Italia Cina e QSC Program, in ItalyChinaTourism, 2017, http://www.italychinatourism.com/?page_id=790 , 16/01/2019.

It is not uncommon that the couple who come with a clear idea, then changes is mind under my guidance.

Actually, the differences between Italian and Chinese couples are a lot, but knowing the culture, this difference becomes very thin. Furthermore, it has to be said that the couples who choose the Destination Wedding are far more demanding but also educated and used to the figure of the Wedding Planner.

In this moment, counting all the types of services I offer to the Chinese, from pre-wedding to normal wedding, I manage about 20 Chinese couple a year.

Chinese are still loath to come in Italy, because of our law organization, to which they are used to thanks to France, Swiss and other European countries that are more trained and equipped for this kind of event. It is almost impossible to give an average price as it depends from a lot of factors, a Chinese wedding includes more or less forty or fifty guests and this has a serious effect on the budget.

In general, for a pre-wedding service, flights and accommodation excluded, starts from 5.000 Euros, and includes make-up, hairstyle, photoshoot and a professional service of wedding travel coordinator.

It is obvious that, given the additional costs, the Chinese wedding, which also is particularly visually designed and engaging, will be a high-budget event and for this reason also a luxury wedding.

I don't really like to talk about packages but I admit that is essential, working with Chinese couples, to have a complete catalogue with some illustrative packages, which can be modified later on the couple's request.

Talking about what is necessary for a Destination Wedding Planner, who want to work with Chinese, knowing the culture is certainly the most important. This type of client is exigent and are used to getting whatever they want. Often they are surprised about the unprofessionalism demonstrate by certain Italian suppliers, for example, a lot of make-up artist have no idea how to prepare an Asian somatic features, they don't have the right colors and knowledge.

This is typical of Italy, the other European countries are specialized and they specialized sooner than Italy, we are still some way behind.



VERONICA MATI

Conclusions

The aim of this thesis is to understand the possibilities for improving the Italian placement as Destination Wedding location and, at the same time, give rise to this important occasion for the Italian luxury tourism market.

As this work is based on the author's passions and main interests, which it is hoped that will become a work in the near future, it is also designed as a useful resource for anyone who wants to approach to this world, both as DWP or as supplier in the supply chain.

The Destination Wedding has its roots in the Chinese outbound tourism, which is a relatively new phenomenon, starting in 1978 with Deng Xiaoping and its passage to a market-economy, and pursued in the next years, arriving to the integration of the European countries in the ADS in 2004. The integration started the overseas travel and grew the Chinese interest in Europe and in discover its beauty.

The thesis starts with an historical overview of traditions and rituals in order to introduce the culture of China, which according to the words of the professional, Veronica Tasciotti, is the main competence needed to work in this kind of market. For a comprehensive view of the destination wedding phenomena, the thesis also speak about Chinese outbound tourism market, covering various topic, such as the tourist behavior and typical choice, the luxury travel market and obviously the new wave of Millennials, who choose the Destination Wedding, mainly in Europe.

Consequently, the research focus on the Italian tourism from China, analyzing their spending habits and demographics, specifically for luxury travel, in order to comprehend this type of tourist, which may become a destination wedding client, and learn how to satisfy their demands. At the end, before to some up, the research focus on a more practical analysis of the supply chain and its actors , mostly betting on the actual offer, as well as on the Destination Wedding Planner, already working in this field. But most important, this paragraph, give the solid foundation for a DW brand its marketing

strategy on the Chinese market, focusing on the major social media and other marketing channels.

Tying up loose, it is necessary for Italy, to improve its social media presence in China, both through institutional and private initiative; Italy has already understood the importance of this market but probably not completely or it is still unprepared to rise the occasion. To be honest, in the last few years, some Italian regions start a cooperation with various DWP and expertise of the tourism industry, such as Bianca Trusiani, Veronica Tasciotti etc. , in order to train all the actors of the DW supply chain.

Now it is essential to improve this effort and systemize the whole territory with the short supply chain; in this way, a good idea could be to use the wedding event to promote the territory and its craftsmanship, for example, using the products of the territory, in which the wedding is hold, as wedding favors. In support of this action are the Chinese Millennials, the biggest target of Chinese destination wedding in Europe, they are increasingly mindful to the ecologist issue, attached to nature and interested in unspoilt landscapes, which means that Italy can give them anything they desire, while improving Italian's economic results, particularly for the SME¹³⁶ employed in the destination wedding's supply chain.

The empirical analysis, which led to this conclusions, also demonstrate some Italian shortcomings; such as the language, not only in speaking Chinese but also English or other European languages, and training. Italians need to specialize in this specific type of client, but overall it is essential to find compromises between Italian-style and Chinese culture and desires, the cultural mediation could be the answer to all the Italy's problem in this market.

This must be a cooperative work, it is important to understand the Chinese market, the client interests and behavior, it will be impossible to operate in this sector without a complete comprehension of the Chinese wedding and destination wedding market. In

¹³⁶ Small and Medium-sized enterprises.

this sense, the statements of Yumi Nishiwaki and Toria Lee, in the second chapter, could be a useful starting point on which to base the market growth and improvement.

The author's hope is that this work can help, present and future Destination Wedding Planner for Chinese, to understand their power in the Italian touristic industry, they can improve both their works and the vision of their country in China and all over the world.

It has to be said that, fortunately, some professionals, frequently referred to in this thesis, have already realize this possibility and they are putting their experience at the service of their country and market.

Glossary of Destination Wedding Terms

In accordance with the core idea of the thesis, which is to support the future work of DWP for Chinese, in this Glossary can be found both simple and more specialized term. This is not intended to be only for sinologist, but also for those who know just a little Chinese and want to get closer to the Wedding-induced tourism from China.

Pinyin (拼音)	Chinese Character (汉字)	English (英语)
Bànláng	伴郎	Best man
Dàoshi	道士	Priest (Taoist)
Dìng hūn	订婚	Engagement (betrothed)
Dìng hūn jièzhi	订婚戒指	Engagement ring
Gōngnǚ	宫女	Maid of honor
Gōngxǐ	恭喜	Congratulate
Hūnshā	婚纱	Lady's wedding garment
Hūnyuē	婚约	Engagement
Jiàzhuāng	嫁妆	Trousseau
Jiéhūn dēngjì	结婚登记	Marriage registration
Jiéhūn jièzhi	结婚戒指	Wedding ring
Jiéhūnjìniànrì	结婚纪念日	Wedding anniversary
Jiéhūn jìn xíng qǔ	结婚进行曲	Wedding march
Jiéhūn lǐfú	结婚礼服	Wedding dress
Jiéhūnshēngzǐ	结婚生子	To start a family (get married and have kids)
Jiéhūn yànxí (hūn yàn)	结婚宴席(婚宴)	Wedding reception/wedding banquet
Jiéhūn yí shì	结婚仪式	Wedding ceremony
Jiéhūnzhào	结婚照	Wedding photographs
Jiéhūnzhèng	结婚证	Marriage certificate
Jìngjiǔ	敬酒	To propose a toast
Kèren	客人	Guest
Màihuānǚ	卖花女	Flower girl
Mìyuè	蜜月	Honeymoon
Mùshi	牧师	Pastor
Nánbīnxiàng	男傧相	Groomsman
Nǚbīnxiàng	女傧相	Bridesmaid
Shǎnhūn	闪婚	Flash marriage
Shēngchén bāzì	生辰八字	Dates and times of birth of the couple
Shénfu	神父	Priest (Christian)
Shìyuē (lìxià shìyuē)	誓约 (立下誓约)	Vow or solemn promise (say one's vows)
Shuāng xī	囍	Double happiness
Wú wěi wǎn lǐfú (xiǎo lǐfú)	无尾晚礼服 (小礼服)	Tuxedo
Xǐjiǔ	喜酒	Wedding wine

Xīnniáng	新娘	Bride
Xīnláng	新郎	Bridegroom
Xīnlángguān	新郎官	Bridegroom (colloquial)
Zàihūn	再婚	Remarry
Zhūhūnrén	主婚人	Officiator

Jiéhūn zhōunián biǎoshì – 结婚周年表示 – Wedding anniversary

Zhǐhūn (yī zhōunián)	纸婚 (一周年)	Paper wedding (first anniversary)
Xīhūn (shí zhōunián)	锡婚 (十周年)	Tin wedding (10th anniversary)
Shuǐjīng hūn (shíwǔ zhōunián)	水晶婚 (十五周年)	Crystal wedding (15th anniversary)
Cíhūn (èrshí zhōunián)	瓷婚 (二十周年)	China wedding (20th anniversary)
Yínhūn (èrshíwǔ zhōunián)	银婚 (二十五周年)	Silver wedding (25th anniversary)
Zhēnzhū hūn (sānshí zhōunián)	珍珠婚 (三十周年)	Pearl wedding (30 th anniversary)
Hóngbǎoshí hūn (sìshí zhōunián)	红宝石婚 (四十周年)	Ruby wedding (40th anniversary)
Lánbǎoshíhūn (sìshíwǔ zhōunián)	蓝宝石婚 (四十五周年)	Sapphire wedding (45th anniversary)
Jīnhūn (wǔshí zhōunián)	金婚 (五十周年)	Gold wedding (50th anniversary)
Cuìyùhūn (wǔshíwǔ zhōunián)	翠玉婚 (五十五周年)	Jade wedding (55th anniversary)
Zuànshíhūn (liùshí zhōunián huò qīshí zhōunián)	钻石婚 (六十周年或七十周年)	Diamond wedding (60th or 70th anniversary)

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