# Exploring perceptions and behavior of Chinese tourists at the tulip fields in the Netherlands

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## Preface

The thesis was written as a graduate assignment, required for completion of my Master's study of Cultural Geography (Tourism Track) at the University of Groningen. The research was conducted from February to June, 2020.

Due to high workload, as well as considerable culture shock in fall 2019, I had difficulty deciding upon a topic for my Master's thesis. It was also difficult to choose between topics that seemed likely to benefit my future career in China, and ones in which I was interested at the moment. Thanks, to my coordinator, Dr. Arie Stoffelen, I was able to choose a topic and a methodology. It would enable me to immerse myself deeper into the field of cross-cultural interaction.

When conducting my research, I faced many challenges, but was able to overcome them with help from my supervisor, other instructors, co-student friends, and interviewees. I am grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Nitasha Sharma, for contributing a great deal of knowledgeable advice, particularly as concerns the important topic of moral disengagement. She even checked to make sure I was still in good mental health, in the COVID-19 lockdown period. Also, I could not have finished my thesis without the data from my interviewees and respondents. I am grateful to them for finding time for the interviews, and sharing their views with me, so as to give me a better understanding of the tulip industry and the significance of the tulip. I also wish to thank Zhang Peng, my former supervisor on my Bachelor's thesis, for helping me adjust and improve the Chinese version of my questionnaire.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the friends who were with me over this period, and with whom we discussed the progress of our Master's theses in weekly meetings, as well as providing motivational support.

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## Abstract

Overtourism in the Netherlands has been a persistent problem, especially in Amsterdam and nearby areas with hordes of tourists being particularly disruptive at the tulip fields. Several international media outlets have reported transgressive behaviour by international tourists at the tulip fields which has also indirectly contributed to a stereotyped image of misbehaving Chinese tourists. A media report in 2019 by the Guardian highlighted how Dutch farmers were using signs and banners at the tulip fields to control tourist behaviour and spread awareness. The fact that these signs were written in English and Chinese raises essential questions about Chinese tourists' behaviour at the tulip fields and local perceptions. Therefore, the research objective of this study is to explore the motivations, perceptions, and behaviour of Chinese tourists at the tulip fields in the Netherlands, along with local perspectives on tourism and tourist behaviour. The study uses a multi-method research approach comprising qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and a visual discourse analysis of tourist photographs to provide an insight into the marketing of tulip fields, the psychology behind Chinese tourist transgressions, and organization of tulip-related activities for the tourists. Besides gaining an understanding of motivations for visiting a tulip field, results reveal that Chinese tourists' perceptions of a tulip field are shaped by the expectation of experiencing an authentic Dutch identity and transgressive behaviour among Chinese tourists could be explained by the mechanism of moral disengagement, which is influenced by both individual moral standards and collective behaviour. The significance of the research lies in contributing to tourist behaviour management at the destination as managers and practitioners could have a better understanding of tourists' behaviour and implement proper measures to avoid transgressive behaviour. This is the first empirical study that addresses Chinese tourist behaviour at the Dutch tulip fields and therefore, could play a role in reducing the reproduction and circulation of racial tourist stereotyping, reducing cultural friction between Chinese tourists and Dutch locals and rethinking sustainable and innovative marketing strategies for the tulip fields.

Keywords: Tulip fields, Chinese tourists, Tourist behaviour, Perceptions, Transgression, Dutch identity

## 1. Introduction

Culture is a significant dimension of tourism. The characteristics of cultural elements in tourism marketing influence tourist perceptions and their behaviour at the destination. In tourism, place is more than a location to operate activities; it also contains some unique elements that tourists could contrast with their daily life. Smith (2015, p. 221) has stated, "Place is an amalgam of destination qualities, including landscape and architecture, history and heritage and social structures and relationships." Indeed, tourists are from different cultural backgrounds, the perspectives, behaviour, and meanings given to the place are hardly the same. But a common understanding can be cultivated in the time between first learning about the destination before the trip, and the real experience at the destination. An increasing number of scholars draw attention to tourists' behaviour in relation to various aspects of tourism. European destinations like Venice, Amsterdam have faced the negative impacts of overtourism for years. Discussion of sustainable tourism and responsible tourist behaviour have also become common in social media and academic articles, since tourism could cause negative environmental, cultural, and social impacts on the lives of residents (Kang & Moscardo, 2006). Thus, several popular destinations are transforming from destination marketing to destination management, employing strategies such as managing tourists' behaviour, removing iconic signs, and distributing the number of tourists.

Cheese, clogs, windmills, and tulip flowers are the most recognizable icons of the Netherlands. Tourists can enjoy most treats and sights around the year, but can only enjoy the tulip flowers for a few weeks in the year. However, tourist behaviour and performance at the tulip field have become a matter of concern over the last few years, leading to potentially adverse environmental and social impacts. As The Guardian reported in 2019, a sign was put up in the tulip fields, reading, "Enjoy the flowers, respect our pride," in English and Chinese (Fig.1), to remind the tourists not to lie down in the flower field or stomp on it just for a perfect selfie. The signboard where such a prohibitory warning was written, in the Chinese/Mandarin language, raises essential questions about Chinese tourist behaviour at the tulip fields and the psychology of the Dutch farmers. The farmers face financial losses every year, because tourists trample

over the tulips for taking selfies, and the Dutch tourism board blames social media, especially Instagram for fueling the trespassing problem.



Figure 1: A signboard at the Keukenhoef tulip garden

(Source: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/apr/24/netherlands-tulip-fields-barriers-tourists-selfie-takers)

Using a multi-methods approach that considers the experience and narratives of the hosts/residents as well as the tourists, this study aims to investigate the Chinese tourists' perceptions, motivation, and general image of the Netherlands, from a cross-cultural perspective, and their behaviour at the tulip fields from a psychological perspective. Two points need to be emphasized. Firstly, although Chinese outbound tourism has received attention at destinations all over the world, some destinations need to attract Chinese tourists to boost their economic value (Wen et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the phrase "Chinese tourists" is frequently associated with terms like 'behaviour', 'rude', or 'invasion', in the news media (Asian Pacific American Legal Centre, 2005). Despite discussions regarding organizing tourist behaviour from a management perspective, few studies have sought to explain the tourists' behavior through psychological theories. The process of conducting moral action is complicated for the tourists, in cultural settings different from their own as it relies on both internal and external factors. There are no absolute moral standards in societies, ethical action is understood differently in various cultural frameworks, thus influencing how tourists behave at the destination (Fennel, 2006; Tolkach et al.,2017). Secondly, most research about tourists' perception of

landscape is done from a western perspective (Fyhri et al., 2009; Li et al., 2019) with little attention being paid to non-Western tourists' perceptions of the Dutch landscape. Although the way tourists gaze upon the landscape is framed by their social characteristics, tourists might nevertheless be influenced by Western cultural power and dominance (Urry & Larsen, 2011). So it is unclear how Chinese tourists gaze upon the tulip fields and what is it that drives their behaviour.

The theoretical framework (in Chapter 2) describes the sense of place and ethical and moral behaviour in tourism studies. First, the sense of place is a mixture of cognitive discourse, emotional bond, and functionality (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). It is a resource of marketing strategy, framed by style and images which form the tourist gaze. These cultural lenses condition the tourists to construct a good impression of the tulip fields before they even get there. The sense of place is a construction, based on the physical setting and social discourse with tourists perceiving the unique locality with a romantic attitude and then experiencing it physically in certain activities. Therefore, the tourists seek the distinctive element in activities which they can contrast with their daily life, looking for an imagined authenticity. Secondly, moral action conducted by tourists is highly contextual. It is influenced by cognitive, affective, and social values in a society, rather than dependent on universal, absolute moral standards (Bandura et al., 2000). Hence, exploring the Chinese tourists' motivations, expectations, and behavior, based on the above theoretical framework, can provide an insight into what prompts tourist transgressions at the tulip fields, as well as the level of awareness among Chinese tourists. The study is significant as it contributes to a better understanding of tourist behaviour management at the tulip fields. This is also the first empirical study that addresses Chinese tourist behaviour at the Dutch tulip fields and therefore, aims at reducing the reproduction and circulation of racial tourist stereotyping of Chinese visitors, reducing cultural friction between Chinese tourists and Dutch locals and rethinking sustainable and innovative marketing strategies for the tulip fields.

## 1.1 Research Questions

The objective of the research is to explore the motivations, perceptions, and behaviour of Chinese tourists at the tulip fields in the Netherlands, along with local perspectives about tulip-related tourism and tourist behaviour. So the research questions have been divided into two broad sections: (I) Tourist motivation and perception of the tulip fields; and (II) Local perceptions about the tourism industry and tourists' behaviour. The primary research question is:

*How do Chinese tourists experience and behave at the tulip fields in the Netherlands?*

The associated sub-questions are as follows:

1. What are the motivations and perceptions of Chinese tourists while visiting the tulip fields?

2. What is the role of tulip fields in the broader destination image of the Netherlands as constructed by Chinese tourists?

3. How do Chinese tourists perceive transgressive behavior at the tulip fields?

4. What are the local perspectives regarding tourism and behavior of Chinese tourists at the tulip fields?

5. What marketing and managerial strategies are employed for managing tourism and tourist behavior?

The next chapter 2 contains a literature review on the sense of place, and ethical and moral behavior. It helps us understand what the aims of the tourists are, how they are pursued at the destination, and how tourists regulate their moral behaviour.. The methodology (in Chapter 3) describes the methods that I have used to collect narratives from the residents, as well as information concerning the tourist perceptions of the Netherlands. The combined chapter 4 'Results and Analysis' is arranged in the order of my sub-questions. The conclusion (Chapter 5) presents the findings on my main research question and limits of my research.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. The tourism industry in the Netherlands

The Netherlands are a top-rated destination in the world with its recognizable icons such as cheese, clogs, windmills, tulips, and so on. The country has received international attention from a lot of popular travel journals and publications, such as Lonely Planet, which nominated the Netherlands as the Best in Travel, 2020. According to the data from NBTC (The Netherlands Board of Tourism & Conventions), the tourism industry has become an important sector for the Dutch economy. In 2018, roughly 78 billion euros were spent by tourists (excluding outbound tourists), and 32.5 billion euros were spent by inbound tourists, which is almost twice as much, compared to 2010. The number of inbound tourists has been growing in recent years: it increased from approximately 15.8 million in 2017 to 20 million in 2019(Statista, 2020).

Tourists can enjoy most of the cultural activities around the year, but can only enjoy the tulip flowers for a few weeks in spring. One popular activity for inbound tourists every year is to visit Keukenhof. In 2019, Keukenhof, the biggest tulip park in the Netherlands, received more than 1.5 million tourists in 60 days. Most of them were domestic tourists, 300.000, followed by Germany, 220.000, and USA, 153.000 (Figure 1). Since Keukenhof is the most popular attraction on Instagram, the crowd of tourists also spreads out to Bollenstreek and other nearby tulip fields around Keukenhof. Every year the manager of Keukenhof needs to discuss with the municipalities and provinces about a better solution to handle the peak hour traffic flow (Pieter, 2020; Ringersma, 2020).

Figure 2: Tourist numbers at Keukenhof in 2019 *(Source: TulipHolland.com)*; Figure 3: Dutch Tulip Fields Route *(Source:https://www.luxurytour.nl/jet-plane-tours-1/dutch-tulip-fields-tour-60-minute)*

The tulip, as the Dutch people's favorite icon, is not just associated with Keukenhof. The above map (Figure 3) is a tourist map which shows the so-called Tulip Route, with the main tourist attractions being centered around Amsterdam and in the southern part of the country. Tulip gardens are distributed from the northern part of the Netherlands, such as Groningen, to the southern part, like Den Haag, but the tulip gardens near Amsterdam are the main attraction, drawing massive numbers of tourists.

Every year, approximately more than 1.7 billion tulips are exported in the world for business purposes. On the third Saturday of January 2020, the National Tulip Flower Day was held in Dam Square, Amsterdam; farmers gave away 20,000 tulips in one day and attracted more than 10,000 tourists to pick the free flowers. Furthermore, the Tulip festival that lasts 3 weeks in Noordoorstpolder, Flevoland province, received 150.000 tourists in 2019. The over 100 km long "Flower bulb route", through 2500 acres of tulip fields, was nominated as one of the most beautiful flower routes by the National Geographic("Visit the Tulip Festival in Holland", 2020).

## 2.1.1 Chinese tourists in the Netherlands

Although Chinese tourists are not the majority of the visitors, compared to the European market, the Netherlands have been a popular destination for Chinese tourists in the past few years. In 2019, the Netherlands was visited by 368,000 Chinese residents, which increased by 10% compared with 2018 (Figure 4). However, Keukenhof received 60,000 Chinese tourists in 2019, a decrease of 30,000 tourists compared to 2018 (Figure 2). Chinese tourists mainly came to the Netherlands around spring, for enjoying beautiful tulip flower season (Xu, 2020).

Among all places where Chinese tourists visited, the NBTC stated, Amsterdam is by far the most visited city: especially the red-light district, followed by Giethoorn, a small village of 2,500 residents, which is visited by an estimated 350,000 Chinese tourists every year. Over 55% of Chinese tourists had the intention to revisit the Netherlands, and 41% of them were here for holiday purposes. The guided tour remains popular but the group size is getting smaller and smaller; those traveling with their family, and the young generation, prefer to choose the fully independent tour and semi-independent travel (only including flight tickets and hotels). Big travel agency companies put increasing effort into designing theme tours, such as educational tours for children, musical tours, and shopping tours, since more and more Chinese tourists expect to experience the local customs and culture ("Incoming tourism to the Netherlands - Marketscan China", 2020). Overall, Chinese tourists like to experience the typical icons that are well-known through marketing; it is also alleged that they have little other knowledge about the country, except for Amsterdam and the familiar icons.

|  | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | +/- '19/'18 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Europe* | *12,743* | *14,151* | *14,974* | *16,050* | *7%* |
| *America* | *1,646* | *2,013* | *2,072* | *2,181* | *5%* |
| USA | 1,182 | 1,414 | 1,480 | 1,564 | 6% |
| Canada | 155 | 180 | 173 | 178 | 3% |
| Brazil | 115 | 150 | 154 | 171 | 11% |
| *Asia* | *1,103* | *1,373* | *1,359* | *1,473* | *8%* |
| China (incl. Hong Kong) | 297 | 364 | 333 | 368 | 10% |
| India | 127 | 165 | 178 | 189 | 6% |

Figure 4   Number of guests in the Netherlands by region

Number of guests in all accommodations (x 1,000)

*(Source: Statistiek Logiesaccommodaties (SLA) CBS)*

## 2.1.2 Chinese tourist misbehaviour

With the rapid growth of Chinese outbound tourists market in the global world, more and more Chinese tourist misbehavior has been reported in the social media and newspapers, such as "Chinese tourists made trouble in Korean airport", "Internet users aghast at a video of tourists shoveling shrimp at the buffet in Thailand", "Man steals life jacket from a plane, claims he thought he could use it for his next flight" and other news items featuring negative terms, such as "rude" or "invasion" (Shanghailist, 2020).

The same situation also happened in the tulip fields in the Netherlands, the Guardian reported. In the Bollenstreek area, which is near Keukenhof, the Flower Science organization put up a sign which read "Enjoy the flowers, respect our pride", in English and Chinese, to remind the tourists not to lie down on the flower field or stomp on it just for a perfect selfie. The signboard where such a prohibitory warning was written in English/Mandarin language raises essential questions about Chinese tourist behavior at the tulip fields, as well as the perceptions of the Dutch farmers. The NBTC blamed, for bad examples, pictures on Instagram (Guardian, 2019). Even in the COVID-19 epidemic period, many visitors, disregarding the precautions against spreading the coronavirus, broke the barriers for enjoying tulips in Bollenstreek; the local mayor and farmers were cutting the flowers in advance and blocking the high-speed road for stopping people visiting (Dimitrova, 2020). Generally, the tourists' misbehavior influences the image of them, affects other tourists' experience and providers' service, even the reputation of the country of their origin.

On the one hand, the western image of the Chinese has been posted on social media as an exaggerated cultural stereotype, especially in the film production reflecting American cultural hegemony; there are potential orientalist and racialized stereotypes that influence how western social media view this particular sub-social group (Xu & You, 2012 ).

On the other hand, in the broad context of the cross-cultural study of tourism, some literature shows how the beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions underlying different national culture contribute to the outcome of the tourists' behavior at a destination, and how the national culture shapes a group of people, and also how socio-cultural norms and value influence to what extent the tourists' behavior is regarded as acceptable (Kang & Moscardo,2006; Özdemir & Yolal,2017; Weiermair,2000).

There are several elements that help explain how Chinese tourists gaze upon the destination. Firstly, cultural differences are usually used in advertising for holiday marketing. The Chinese tourists prefer to direct their gaze at what appears distinctive, from the perspective of their daily life; their playful activities taking place at such distinctive places enable them to diminish the negative feelings associated with their daily life (Li et al., 2019; Özdemir & Yolal,2017 ). Secondly, due to the changing digital technology, information about where to have a holiday, local food, sightseeing and what activities to engage in, has exploded on the social media, especially on smartphones. Such information helps promote tourism, but it might involve the advertising of morally questionable attractions or activities, with the potential to shape the gaze, the perspective of the Chinese tourists (Alonso-Almeida, 2019; Li et al., 2019). Thirdly, the Chinese state is using various resources of information to construct political memory and achieve cultural hegemony in the domestic market; these kinds of narratives might influence how Chinese tourists gaze upon an international destination. Overall, cultural stereotypes of the Chinese are manifested strongly in the western journals and social media. We may also say that not only the broader culture determines the tourists' behavior, but also contemporary socio-economic circumstances pertinent to how Chinese tourists gaze upon a place (Li et al., 2019).

Having described the secondary literature, data and reports I used as a background for reference, in the next chapter, I will describe the theoretical context that I have used for this study.

## 2.2 Theoretical framework

### 2.2.1 Sense of place

Sense of place (SOP)is a general term used to describe the relationship between people and spatial settings; the definition of sense of place is widely discussed in the academic circles. Tuan (1979) explains, 'place is a center of meaning or field of care' based on human emotions and relations. Accordingly, Paasi (1996, p. 209) defines sense of place as 'the personal relations with specific localities.' The definition of SOP indicates that it does not exist at a place by itself but instead resides in human interaction with the spatial setting. It is an umbrella term of three components: place attachment, place identity, and place dependence. These three components represent emotional, cognitive, and functional perspectives that are constructively bonded by human agency (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). Indeed, how people create the meaning of a place reflects on their social and cultural experiences formed in the social structure. Once the physical

setting has changed, it cannot support the original symbolic power (Urry, 1990; Stedman, 2003).

In the high mobility world, when people have no problem with basic needs, they pursue spiritual enjoyment and seek to experience different places from those in which they pass their daily lives. Tourists fly to other places not only for visiting monuments, museums and ticking off items in a list in the handbook; they also want to explore the character that makes the place distinctive and memorable. The marketing seizes the chance to make the destination recognizable by using the representative cultural character and sense of place(Smith,2015). From a constructive perspective, Hay (1998) states that all the information we collect at a place can only be made sense of in the basic context of the region. Sense of place is a highly contextual term. How tourists understand the local cultural character is related to the personal and social values of these tourists, the narratives or storytelling from the relevant institutions, and the interpretations that advertisements promote (Smith, 2015). Overall, physical setting and social interaction are the centers of making a place; a place has the potential to operate different industries in today's world, but also to expose limits of social activities and human behavior according to the character of landscape (Sampson & Goodrich, 2009). For example, 'when tourists see two people kissing in Paris, what they capture in the gaze is 'timeless romantic Paris.' When a small village in England is seen, what they gaze upon is the 'real Olde England' (Urry & Larsen, 2011)—in other words, tourists are looking at the distinctive character, they don't feel the 'Romantic kiss' in a small village in England or 'real Olde England' in Paris.

As I discussed above, the sense of place is constructed by social interactions and physical settings. However, there is no explicit evidence in the literature to prove the physical setting produces a sense of place directly. Stedman (2003) argues the meaning of a place and symbolic power are 'at least partially based on some material reality'; he rhetorically asks, "are we likely to attribute 'wilderness' meanings to a suburban shopping mall?" (2003, 673).  Ryden (1993, 38) described the physical nature of a place 'grounded in those aspects of the environment which we appreciate through the senses and through movement: color, texture, slope, quality of light, the feel of the wind, the

sounds, and scents carried by that wind.' Tourists sense the place by experiencing distinctive cultural characters related to how they perceive the landscape and engage in activities in the place. Consequently, their experience and understanding of landscape contribute to the social perception in a discourse.

Since more and more landscapes in rural areas are commercialized as entertainment in the tourism market, landscapes are changing from single-function to multi-function, which is driven by human activities and personal attitude as well as the social perception. There are different paradigms and traditions to study landscape perception; the psychological and cognitive paradigms are the most relevant to tourists' perception of the landscape. Within the paradigms, some studies have showed that the image of a landscape determines the quality of social activities; it can predict aesthetic preference (Fyhri et al., 2006). The image of the landscape is constructed through direct and indirect experience; on the one hand, tourists can arrange activities in the landscape based on its physical attributes, forming a functional tie to the landscape's material dimension. E.g., I go swimming in the sea, hike on the mountain (Buijs et al., 2006).

On the other hand, the popular or political or cultural discourse in the social media and newspapers, help people create a mental image of landscape, which influences their perception of view and the mode of travel experience. Whether the material landscape fits the mental image of tourists, which depends on tourists' understanding framed by time, sex, race, national culture, and so on, the result is also interrelated with the images in popular discourse (Urry & Larsen, 2011; Buijs et al., 2006). In this way, the image of nature can mediate between providers and consumers; how tourists perceive the landscape depends on how they get involved directly and indirectly. To some extent, the social interactions that have happened at the place, such as visitors' and residents' engagements, help enhance and maintain a sense of a place and preserve cultural attributes (Hay, 1998; Smith, 2015; Urry, 1990).

With regard to what type of landscape is attractive to tourists, there are some interesting findings. On the study of preference of traditional Swiss landscape (Gehring, 2006), the results showed tourists and residents like the fact that local farm is maintained by farmers, rather than being turned into commercialized entertainment. Another study

about tourists' perceptions and preferences towards a coastal region, based on the rating of images of landscapes by personal preference, has shown that people like natural scenery better than human-influenced landscape (Fyhri et al.,2009). Some landscapes have missing elements from the modern world, thus connecting people with a 'shrine to the past,' as Lowenthal (1982) puts it. In other words, tourists are looking for the authentic element of the landscape, which is not changed by modern life.

Furthermore, the extraordinary element of the landscape which doesn't exist in tourists daily life, leads them to adopt a romantic attitude towards, or mental image of, the landscape. 'The extraordinary,' as Rojek says, 'spontaneously invites speculation, reverie, mind-voyaging and a variety of other acts of imagination' (1997, 53; Urry & Larsen, 2011, 17). E.g., a massive amount of vegetation is a crucial element to form the natural beauty of the landscape, which explains the fact of a small-scale traditional village's being seen as a rural idyll. Romantic gaze leads to the popularity of rural pictures in advertising. The tourists' gaze also gets more complex and playful, features which are used in constructing a sense of place in marketing, which leads us to the next two subsections, where I will explore the authenticity of the landscape in tourism and the formation of a romantic gaze, which is instrumental in constructing a sense of place.

### 2.2.2 Tourist gaze—romantic gaze

The following definition of romantic gaze is given by Urry & Larsen (2011, 19): 'With what we call the romantic gaze, solitude, privacy and a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze are emphasized'. As I have discussed above, the landscape is not only for making a living but constructed by social activities and demands. People put a huge effort into changing landscapes to make them ideal for achieving a distance from the daily life. As Urry (1990) has stated landscape is a décor. The characteristic of travel is shifting from the Classical Grand Tour to a Romantic Grand Tour. Tourists used to visit museums, galleries and engage in art appreciation. More recently, they prefer to enjoy private experiences of scenic beauty that expresses personal, passionate, and hedonistic feelings (Urry & Larsen, 2011). The romantic gaze is developed based on mass tourism; it is usually related to a rural idyll in paintings.

Tourists are looking for 'that kind of beauty which would look well in a picture' (Ousby, 1990: 154, Urry & Larsen,2011). Thus landscape is becoming a reproduction of the picture that we appreciate, which stimulates tourists' desire for photography.

The romantic gaze is a popular feature of all sorts of holiday-making advertisements in Western countries. It positions the place distinctively in the competition, in which every place is constructed in terms of beautiful tour objects for visitors. It relies on the extraordinary visual expression and consumption of images in marketing, while making a travel plan. The romantic gaze represents private emotional feelings with the significant "other." It also gets influenced by collective consumption behavior. When a large number of tourists bring liveness or sensation to one place, the phenomena imply this is a place obligatory to visit, e.g., Barcelona, Tokyo, Hongkong, and other popular destinations(Urry&Larsen,2011). Hence, the romantic gaze is influenced by the collective gaze, which means this particular gaze invites people to appreciate nature's image in the same way, rather than in terms of personal and idiosyncratic feelings.

Overall, the romantic gaze is constructed by tourist preference and influenced by collective consumption; it cannot be regarded in abstraction from the visual expression and promotion in marketing discourse and the social media. The phenomenological experience is merging with romantic attitudes towards the encountered tour objects and resourceful information with affordances of the physical site that we sense and gaze upon (Edensor, 2018).

## 2.2.3 Authenticity

Authenticity is a term that historically has been discussed widely by scholars. It links with judgmental words such as "original" or "false" and "genuine" or "fake." Authenticity is vital for tourists' experience, since it captures the extraordinary elements that contrast with everyday life. Wang (1999) summarizes the three main paradigms to explain authenticity by historical order: objective authenticity, constructive authenticity, and existential authenticity.

First, objective authenticity connects with the tourist activities at the beginning stage of mass tourism; it 'involves a museum-linked usage of the authenticity of the originals that are also the toured objects to be perceived by tourists' (Wang, 1999, p351). There is a strict standard to measure the intrinsic value of tour objects, and tourists may fall prey to a hoax by its almost-true reproduction with the help of technology. Second, constructive authenticity means 'the result of social construction, not an objectively measurable quality of what is being visited' (Wang, 1999, p351). Boorstin (1964) comments that mass tourism is like a 'pseudo-event', and tourists cannot see through inauthenticity by themselves but listen to experts for their knowledge. This term is highly contextually determined, since it based on a specific perspective; it can be a tourist's expectation, dream, or stereotype image. Third, existential authenticity involves 'existential experience [which] involves personal or intersubjective feelings activated by the liminal process of tourist activities' (Wang,1999, p351). It is a special existential possibility, insofar as the tourists are able to feel that the toured object or the activity is more authentic than daily life.

It is important to distinguish the approach to thinking about authenticity from the type of authenticity as it relates to tourism objects or experiences (Lovell and Bull, 2017; Rickly-Boyd, 2013; Wang, 1999).

In this study, I focus on objective authenticity and constructive authenticity in relation to the tulip fields. Authenticity for tourists is about meeting their expectations and having extraordinary experiences, different from daily life. The images they see in advertisements are commercialized cultural aspects of the destination, which offer the standards of the experience and present it as obligatory to visit. In other words, they are looking for 'authentic experience' or 'authenticity of experience'. Postmodern tourists are mainly searching for the enjoyment of the landscape and playful experience. They might not like an exotic product if it doesn't match their mental image which has been constructed from outside information (Wang, 1999).

With regard to constructive authenticity, constructivist scholars such as Cohen (1988) and Bruner (1994) believe the validity of knowledge to measure authenticity is not discovered on the surface of the object. Still, knowledge is created in our minds. In this

view, the meaning of a tour object can be single or multiple, depending on how tourists understand the image constructed by the media and their interpretation, framed by demographic characteristics, such as gender, race, and so on (see Wang, 1999). However, the meaning of the tour object can only make sense in the geographical context of the destination and sense of place. In short, as long as tourists' emotional feelings of tour objects are authentic, their opinion on authenticity is constructed correctly, no matter if experts propose a different idea.

### 2.2.4 Moral behavior and ethics in tourism

In the past few years, tourism study has focused on economic growth, employment rate, regional income, and other quantitative figures, later on, moved to discuss the negative impact of tourism between people, environment, and society, such as over local protests due to over-tourism. Thus, some scholars have started to use ethical theory to understand why tourists behave in certain problematic ways, and solve the problem in the initial stage (Fennel, 2015, 2006; McKercher,1993), 'If ethics has been defined as what is good or bad, or right or wrong in/for people, tourism ethics can be defined as what is good or bad, right or wrong in/for tourism' (Fennell, 2006a, cited in Fennel,2015,p45). In recent years, some topics like responsible behavior and sustainable tourism are widely discussed by scholars and practitioners, inspired by ethical theories applied to tourism.

There are many theories in the ethics field, such as consequentialist theories that focus on the consequence of human action. Two forms of this theory are usually related to tourist behavior, utilitarianism, and hedonism. Utilitarianism means a maximum benefit for others, e.g., tourists regulate behaviour in a destination by respecting local culture. Egoistic hedonism means self-centered interest maximization, e.g., tourists do what best they can do for pleasure, and it might turn to transgressive behavior when the behavior is beyond the limit acceptable at the destination (Fennel, 2015).

However, due to the intercultural nature of tourism, it is hard to judge tourists' behavior in black and white terms, as right or wrong, because from a relativist perspective, every society and culture has a different understanding of moral standards (Fennell, 2006b). When all sorts of transgressive behaviors clash at one destination, it

might cause extreme problems for societies, e.g., social protest against tourism, football hooliganism, and deepening stereotypical images. In order to regulate transgressive behavior individually and collectively, it is necessary to sort out why people would act in certain ways, and what made them act so, as I propose to do in my study.

Often, people as moral agents will not actively conduct ethical behaviors, unless faced by certain extrinsic restrictions. They will monitor their behavior and the present conditions, then judge the behavior by moral standards of their cultural framework, taking into account the circumstances, and regulate their behavior according to the consequences that may befall them—engaging in what is called a self-regulating process (Bandura, 2002). Transgressive behavior is regulated by social sanction (external punishment by law and public voice) and self-sanction (self-condemning) within this mechanism; self-sanction plays the primary role in keeping the behavior within moral standards (Bandura et al., 2000). Sometimes transgressive behavior can be diminished when tourists predict that they would feel guilty before undertaking activities, because their behavior conflicts with the moral standards of their cultural framework (Moore et al., 2012).

What will happen when the self-regulating process doesn't work? Bandura (1990) states that moral disengagement explains how people's self-regulating process fails to work. When this mechanism disconnects the cognitive links between transgressive behaviour and self-sanction, people do what they should not do. It is essential to explain collective transgressive or criminal behaviour in different fields, when people know the consequences in advance. Bandura (2002) has presented eight labels that people use to reclassify and whitewash harmful behavior, e.g., moral justification, exonerating social comparison, and sanitizing language. It may minimize their role in causing harm by diffusion and displacement of responsibility. This mechanism explains why people could convince themselves to undertake transgressive behavior without any feelings of guilt.

Moral disengagement is influenced by environmental impacts and individual moral standards (Bandura et al., 2000). Bandura argues that the moral agency has the power to restrain 'bad' behavior, and pursue a 'good' practice due to social and self-sanction. But where there is a situational inducement, people can choose to misbehave, or

reflect and refrain from misbehavior. Only self-sanction can ensure behavior is motivated and regulated morally, and social sanction doesn't work here. On the other hand, many psycho-social mechanisms explain how self-sanctions failed to work on moral behavior (Moore et al., 2012; Bandura, 1990), 'Selective activation and disengagement of self-sanctions permits different types of conduct by people with the same moral standards (Bandura, 2000, p102)'. However, some tourists come from the same country or community and share the same cultural framework, but they might behave differently due to different personality traits.

In summary, moral behavior is the interrelation of cognitive, affective, and social influences in a society, rather than dependent on universal, absolute moral standards. Tourists come from different places worldwide, and it is hard to coordinate their moral standards to prevent transgressive behavior from happening. Still, we can create a positive cycle to motivate ethical conduct. Ethics and morality should be an essential theme in tourism study, since they represent the maturity of the discipline, and providing it with the tools to understand and minimize certain negative consequences of the activities of over-indulgent tourists (Fennel, 2006; Caton, 2012).

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Study Area

The Netherlands is well-known internationally as an open-minded society, as well as for its mastery of water technology, tulip agriculture, and creative architectural design. The Chinese perceive images of the Netherlands associated with tulip, cheese, and canals, as promoted in the marketing brochures and websites, and know Keukenhof and Giethoorn to be the classic hotspots on travel routes.

The map below,(Fig.5), is a tourist map that shows the so-called Tulip Route, with the main tourist attractions being centered around Amsterdam and in the southern part of the country. In fact, tulip gardens are distributed from the northern part of the Netherlands, such as Groningen, to the southern part, like Den Haag. Still, the tulip gardens near Amsterdam are the main attraction, drawing massive numbers of tourists. Keukenhof is the most famous tulip garden in the Netherlands; in 2019, it received 15.35 million visitors in 60 days (Ringersma, 2020).

# Dutch Tulip Fields Route
## Holländische Tulpenfelder Route / Tulpenvelden Route

1. **Zoetermeer**
2. **Vlietland**
3. **Leiden**
4. **Tulip Fields** / Tulpenfelder / Tulpenvelden
5. **Kurhaus**
6. **The Hague** / Den Haag
7. **Zandmotor**
8. **Nieuwe Waterweg**
9. **Port of Rotterdam** / Hafen Rotterdam / Haven Rotterdam
10. **Euromast**

Figure 5: Map showing tulip route in the Netherlands (Source: https://www.luxurytour.nl/jet-plane-tours-1/dutch-tulip-fields-tour-60-minute)

Nearby areas also draw benefit from the popularity of Keukenhof, such as the area called "Bollenstreek"(meaning "flower bulb region", in Dutch), which is popular on Instagram for rural landscape views with colorful fields. It is accessible for various tourists, since it is between the cities of Amsterdam, Leiden and Den Hague. Additionally, when I interviewed a few tourists about their experience in the Netherlands, they recommended areas beyond Keukenhof, which are easily accessible by bikes or cars and less commercialized, such as Noordoorstpolder in Flevoland province. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic impact, I could not conduct participatory observations and conduct face-to-face interviews, so I selected my interviewees from Flevoland and Bollenstreek by contacting them online and over the phone and the survey respondents through acquaintances and social media tags and check-ins of tourists who have visited those areas. These beautiful locations are suitable for taking the perfect picture and frequently recommended on the internet. The news regarding tourist misbehavious was reported from these places by several media outlets, such as the Guardian, NL Times, and the Dutch Review.

## 3.2 Methods

The objective of the research is to understand how Chinese tourists experience, and behave at, the tulip fields of the Netherlands, with the 4 sub-questions related to *Chinese's tourists' motivations and perceptions pertaining to the tulip fields; the role of the tulip in the broader destination image of the Netherlands; perceptions of transgressive behavior; and the local perspective towards Chinese tourists behaviour and managerial strategies.*

A multi-methods approach was adopted for the study, which includes collection of qualitative data, analysis of secondary sources of data, literature review, narratives collected through semi-structured interviews, online surveys, and visual discourse analysis. A multi-methods approach is conducive to tackling a project that is concerned with a broad topic, and to solving an overall problem that is made up of several component problems. This is so because multi-methods are such as to involve several methods of collecting and analyzing data, whether qualitative, quantitative, or a combination of both (McKendrick, 1999). Analyzing secondary sources of data and literature review helped me access and understand some background information, e.g., concerning the uniqueness of the tulip fields of the Netherlands, the attraction they pose for such large numbers of tourists, and the history behind the cultivation of tulips in this geographical area. I looked through some statistical data on international and domestic tourist numbers in the Netherlands, primarily related to tulip field sightseeing at locations like Keukenhof.  I also read some reports of Chinese tourists' misbehaviour in general, and literature to understand how Chinese tourists' gaze, shaped by socio-cultural norms and values, influences their behaviour at different destinations.

The Covid-19 pandemic and associated social distancing measures have brought about several challenges in the data collection, field visits, participant observation, and the use of language interpreters. Due to a lack of access to the tulip fields and the inability to recruit Chinese tourists as interviewees, because of travel restrictions and social distancing regulations enforced by the Dutch government, the expected sample size had to be narrowed down. Thus, a snowball sampling technique was adopted for the study. Chinese tourists who had visited the tulip fields within the last two years and plan to visit tulip field were selectively chosen from personal contacts and social media. Further respondents were recruited through the snowball technique, where the primary respondents passed on the contact details of their friends and acquaintances who had visited the tulip fields earlier.

### 3.2.1. Online questionnaire survey

The questionnaires consist of six open-ended questions that required the Chinese tourists to describe how they perceive the image of the Netherlands, the resource of the travel information, their expectations, activity plans, motivation towards visiting the tulip fields, and past visiting experiences, if there are any. There are eight multiple choice questions about their awareness and the possibility of engaging in transgressive behavior, and five questions on demographical information and the times of visiting the Netherlands. The questionnaire was provided in both Chinese and English. Every respondent read the attached informed consent form to be aware of the purpose and the aim of the research. They filled the questionnaires via the created link on WeChat (a Chinese social app), and the data were processed anonymously on Microsoft Word and Excel. In the end, 50 valid responses from tourists were collected by June.

### 3.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

Due to the travel restrictions and social distancing measures, I conducted three semi-structured interviews online. One of these was a group interview with the regional manager and the chairman of KAVB (Royal General Association for Flower Bulb Culture) in the Flevoland provincial branch. KAVB has been an independent agricultural organization in the Netherlands since 1860; they hold the Tulip Festival in Noordoorstpolder every year, which is very popular on social media. Another interview, via Skype, was conducted with the coordinator of Flower Science organization (NGO). The coordinator at Flower Science is the initiator of the campaign in Bollenstreek, where the Guardian News item on Chinese tourists originally came from. The third interview was conducted with an officer from the tulip marketing campaign at the NBTC (The Netherlands Board of Tourism & Conventions) over email; NBTC is a marketing organization that promotes tulip field sightseeing information globally.

One of the goals of the semi-structured interviews was to assess marketing strategies and management related to the tulip fields at a regional level, and local perceptions about the tourism industry and tourists' bahaviour. The interview questions were arranged according to theoretical themes based on the literature on sense of place, ethics, tourist gaze, and other sub-questions. I also integrated a few questions related to the Covid-19 pandemic from the group interview, to understand the impacts of the pandemic on the horticulture sector in the Netherlands. Before the interview, the interviewee received the informed consent form and the information letter on privacy and integrity. I explained the purpose of this study to all these interviewees and their responses were collected and processed only after obtaining their consent.

The two interviews lasted for around 30 minutes each, and were recorded and transcribed in Microsoft Word. Then the interview data was thematically processed on ATLAS, ti 8. In the initial stage, the main topics were identified in all transcripts and organized thematically. In the second stage, the topics connected to literature were interpreted based on the literature review, then summarized as narratives of their attitude towards the tulip fields and tourists' behaviour. Narratives from the interview have been used in the analysis section as well.

### 3.2.3 Visual discourse analysis

The image of cultural production is produced by coordination between external images and internal thought and cognitive processes. Visual methodologies can increase the understanding of symbolic and ideological meaning of the representations (Craine & Gardner, 2016). Hooper-Greenhill (2000) stated, "Visual methodologies can work towards a social theory of visually, focusing on questions of what made visible, who sees that, and how seeing, knowing and power are interrelated" (cited in Craine & Gardner, 2016, 275). How the tourists see the visual image influences how they understand the meaning and form their perception of it. Thus, visual discourse analysis is a helpful method to decode the meaning of cultural representations, the circumstances they manifest, and understand how others interpreted the meaning.

Since the first and second sub-question are related to the Chinese tourists' construction of the image of tulip, which means it includes visual data, it is necessary to explore how the tourists interpret the meaning of the tulip and contribute to the cognitive process in reality. I employed visual discourse analysis to understand the affectivity between Chinese tourists and the tulip field in a physical setting conveyed through digital images. In commentary, social media apps such as Dian Ping (Chinese Yelp), TripAdvisor, and Instagram, I analyzed geo-tagged photos that Chinese tourists posted on tulip field sightseeing trips, and noted how frequently certain types of images appeared. The unique photos showed the trend of embodied and proactive tourism activity in the tulip field's use. In the end, the visual discourse based on tourist pictures is one part of the cultural narratives that the tourism marketing officials and have promoted globally. Due to privacy concerns and ethical reasons, the photos of tourists used for the visual discourse analysis are not being shared in this thesis and only the interpretation of the photos will be included as analysis.

Aiming to increase our understanding of Chinese tourists' experience and behaviour in the tulip fields, the analysis section will be structured based on the order of sub-questions. The motivations and perceptions concerning the tulip fields will be analyzed first, followed by

analysis of the tulip's constructed role in a broader marketing image. Thirdly, Chinese tourists' perceptions of transgressive behaviour will be addressed. Fourthly, the local perspective towards tourists' behaviour and Covid-19 pandemic impact on Chinese tourists' travel behaviours and preferences will be discussed. Lastly, the implications of Chinese tourist experiences and behaviour, for tourism management strategy, will be discussed.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### 4.1 Motivations and perceptions of Chinese tourists while visiting the tulip fields

In this section, I will answer the first sub-question, related to Chinese tourists' motivations and perceptions of visiting the tulip field. In my questionnaire, I had asked the respondents to describe their motivation, expectation, and experience, if they had visited the tulip fields. Figure 1 and Figure 2 are the statistical results obtained from MS Excel (Table 1, Table 2). I have listed the keywords that came up 5 times or more. Based on results obtained from the survey combined with the visual discourse analysis of pictures on social media, the tourist responses can be categorized under four themes: the romantic gaze, pursuit of authenticity, psychological well-being and self-actualization, and playfulness.

| Question: What is your motivation to visit tulip fields? | |
|---|---|
| Keywords | Times |
| Tulips are beautiful | 13 |
| Tulips are famous, special, well-known | 10 |
| Exotic experience | 9 |
| Relaxation | 8 |
| I like tulips | 6 |

Table1: Results for Chinese tourists' motivations for visiting the tulip fields.

| Question: What were your expectations of (or plans for activities at) the field? | |
|---|---|
| Keywords | Times |
| Take pictures | 35 times |
| Romantic activities (propose engagement in the field, walk with the lover, encounter love, etc.) | 11 times |
| Learn about tulip cultivation practices and related Dutch culture | 5 times |

Table 2: Results for Chinese tourists' expectations of (or plans for activities at) the fields.

### 4.1.1 The romantic tourist gaze

According to Urry (1980), visual consumption and the gaze are the most important tourist activities especially when it comes to nature or sightseeing. The tourist gaze is an aggregate of the socially organized, reflexive and embodied practices of visually consuming what is extraordinary, highly prevalent and vastly powerful in contemporary society (Urry, 1990, 2002; Hollinshead, 1999; Urry and Larsen, 2011). According to Urry and Larsen (2011, p 4), "places are chosen to be gazed upon because there is anticipation, especially through daydreaming and fantasy, of intense pleasures, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered. Such anticipation is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist technologies, such as films, TV, literature, magazines, CDs, DVDs and videos, constructing and reinforcing the gaze." As Li et al. (2019) states, many Chinese tourists favour mental travelling and engaging with the views which they have encountered in a transcendental and interactive manner.

This interaction and transcendence can be observed from the responses of the Chinese tourists where, "Take pictures," "Romantic activities," "Tulips are beautiful," appeared as high-frequency keywords, also indicating an aesthetic perspective and romantic attitude towards the tulip fields. Chinese tourists are influenced by the promotional pictures in various information resources, reinforcing the rural image of the tulip field. Their desire "Take pictures" can be understood as their looking for the kind of beauty as promoted by the marketing campaigns and advertisements in their home

country. The pictures are the personal reproduction of the landscape, which is experienced from a romantic attitude. Further, this aesthetic and romantic desire to gaze at and capture the beauty of the tulip fields is partly rooted in desire of Chinese tourists to gaze upon natural beauty and open green spaces, stimulated by the combination of environmental problems, excessive commercialization of natural and cultural heritage and contemporary life in China characterized by high pressure, materialism and fierce competition (Li et al., 2019).

"Romantic activities" also prove that the tulip field is not only a sightseeing spot; it is a symbol that stands for passionate feelings in personal relationships, which means that the tourists only want to share it with someone intimate. Indeed, "part of what is involved in tourism is the purchase of a particular themed experience, and this depends upon a specifiable composition of the others with whom that experience is being shared" (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 70).

The keyword "tulips are beautiful" confirms that Chinese tourists see the tulip field as an impressive view and are amazed by its colorful combinations. Usually, the romantic gaze is linked with the rural image; the tourists' preference depends on how they appreciate the visual images. The tourist gaze is framed by characteristics such as gender, race, and cultural framework; the same applies to the way the host destination designs the product. There is an interaction between the demand and the provider. It seems like there is no conflict about the appreciation of tulips in this sense. Probably in the Chinese tourists' minds, they have long associated the Netherlands with flowers, and have been further convinced of this idea by participating in the "collective gaze" on social media. So even for tourists who have not visited the tulip fields, this is what they imagine the Netherlands to be like.

The romantic gaze is derived from the Romanticism Movement (Urry & Larsen, 2011). It has shifted from being the intellectuals' poetic and solitary gaze to individuals' sensual and emotional gaze. This movement implied that people living in an industrial town could benefit from viewing impressive natural settings (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Chinese tourists accordingly take the tulip field as a private space where they can escape from daily life pressures, and release the emotions that they might not normally show.

Pleasure can be derived from appreciating the beauty of the tulip field, and relaxation, from expressing personal feelings. The intense romantic attitude is embodied and reflective of the tulip field, and marketing can render it an influence on how other tourists will feel in similar circumstances. Overall, the tulip field is a trigger that an external agency can manipulate to dispose the tourists towards romantic views, affecting their consumption of the tulip field.

### 4.1.2 Pursuit of authenticity

Besides complimenting the beauty of the tulip fields, Chinese tourists commented that "tulips are special, unique, and famous," and make for an "exotic experience." These comments point towards Chinese tourists taking the tulip field as a unique and real representation of Dutch culture. The tulip is a distinctive element that makes their experience authentic. Their tourist experience is a process of the pursuit of authenticity, which is a crucial component in a sense of life that contrasts with daily life.

As for new rising middle-class social groups in Asian countries, especially in China, they all desire to explore the Western image that is tagged as the global culture. Although there are large numbers of "Western" shopping malls, brands, and theme parks in China, so that people can also enjoy an exotic atmosphere without long-distance travel. Hay (1998) states that all interpretations of the cultural presentation can only make sense within a geographical context. The geographical setting is missing in the Western authenticity construction in China, and it seems that the remaining aspects of the construct are thereby negatively affected, motivating the Chinese tourists to pursue an "exotic experience" abroad, and leading them to comment that "tulips are unique, famous and special." Their response can be understood as experiencing a sense of place and authenticity in the tulip fields, arousing their sense of wonder.

The tulips, in the marketing strategy, are constructed as an authentic cultural element by narratives, storytelling, and visual representation. Constructive authenticity is a highly contextual term, a kind of authenticity that can be constructed by someone's dream or stereotypical image (Wang, 1999). Chinese tourists have a mental image of the tulip field before the trip, so visiting the tulip field is looking for the fulfillment of the expectation they had, or checking whether it fits their mental image. In other words, they

are not considering the standards of authenticity in reality, but are, instead, capturing what they see, then transforming the meaning to fit their mental image. This idea is somewhat similar to the concept of imagined authenticity (Li et al., 2019), where tourists tend to stage/imagine their own authentic experience, even though it might be different from what the tourism industry in the host country wants them to experience. In this context, it can be indirectly inferred that the Chinese tourists prefer to borrow those elements of the Dutch landscape which are visually appealing, poetic, creative or authentic, while imagining and persuading them that they have had a glance of local culture and of the authenticity of the toured tourist place. ,

I believe that post-modern tourists, who favor playful and enjoyable experiences, are not especially considering the authenticity of toured objects, since they lack original points of reference (Wang, 1999). Urry &Larsen (2011) argue there is little once-upon-a-time authentic gaze in popular culture, people can find a feeling of genuineness with the help of technology. It is hard to distinguish authenticity among fabulous stage settings. But tourists still need to sensuously experience the tour objects. Chinese tourists interpret the meaning of experience as authentic by recourse to seeing an item in a physical setting, even by using their sense of smell. But they do not consider exploring the possibility of falsehood in the local context. Therefore, they judge the tulip field as an authentic component of the local setting, and so can always find objective authenticity by construction of what they experience.

### 4.1.3 Psychological well-being and actualization
Several Chinese tourists filled in "relaxation" as the motivation of visiting the tulip field, or described their experience in terms of "I feel relaxed" or being "creative". Tourists' seeking feelings of relaxation can be understood by recourse to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Figure 6) which states that: when people have fulfilled the basic living needs, they look for spiritual enjoyment to fulfill higher needs. Maslows' Hierarchy of Needs model divides fundamental human needs into five stages: physiological, safety and security, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization.

Well-being has long been a trend in designing tourism products such as those of medical and nature-based tourism. Some studies have shown that memorable tourism

experiences produce positive emotions for tourists, such as relaxation, and happiness in the short term. Still, they also contribute to psychological well-being in the long term view. Participating in meaningful tourism activities is more helpful for maintaining mental health than consuming material products; leisure on trips can increase satisfaction in job and life overall (Vada et al., 2019; Uysal et al., 2016). Chinese tourists visualize the tulip fields with a romantic gaze, and gain pleasure and relaxation from this activity. These emotional impacts could remain a positive aspect of their daily life in the longer term.

Further, being "creative" means that tourists subconsciously link the feelings at the tulip field with self-actualization. Maslow (1970) defines self-actualization as "the full use and exploitation of one's talent, capacities, potentialities, etc." (cited in Heylighen, 1992, p. 105). Self-actualization is a higher need in the model; it can be filled when all the more basic needs are filled. It shows every individual has some potential they could discover or develop; furthermore, these potentialities can be made actual, and the actualization can be conceived of as a continuous process of discovery (Heylighen, 1992). As Figure 6 shows, self-actualization includes creativity, morality, acceptance, and other aspects.

Chinese tourists' usage of the term "creative" can be related to Maslow's model. The tulip fields serve this purpose by addressing this component and triggering feelings of creativity and inspiration among tourists. The tulip field is organized in terms of big colorful sections. Possibly, Chinese tourists are inspired by the color combinations, and the creativity in self-actualization consists of general playful attitudes towards self-expression in tulip fields. This, in turn, might improve the ability to solve problems and maintain one's mental health. Tourists' well-being that has benefited from the destination also influences their decision-making and emotional bonding with the place (Vade et al., 2019).
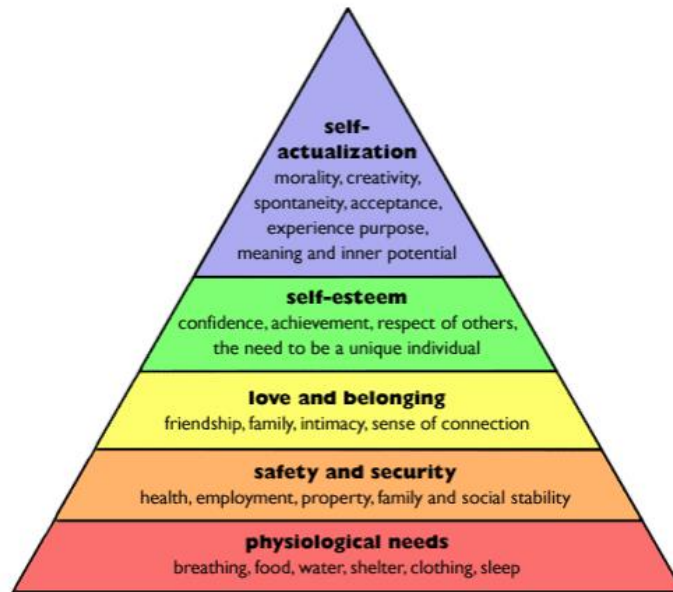
Figure 6: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Model. Source: A. H. Maslow (1943), Originally Published in Psychological Review, 50, 370-396.

### 4.1.4 Playfulness

Playfulness is an attitude that accompanies the individual from childhood to adulthood; it can make adults distance themselves from daily life, and it helps solve problems and approach situations psychologically (Kuo et al., 2016). One study has also showed that playfulness directly influences the level of satisfaction with the destination. "Playfulness can be defined as an internal predisposition characterized by creativity, curiosity, pleasure, sense of humor, and spontaneity" (Guitard et al, 2005, p. 9). In tourism study, playfulness can also be understood as the experience of emotions such as curiosity, feeling of being inspired by sites (Kuo et al., 2016). The visual discourse analysis of photographs posted by Chinese tourists on social media reveal playfulness, joviality, a sense of creativity, liveliness in the body language and postures.

Pictures are a representation of the visual system. Tourists are capturing the reality they see. They can also narrow the spatial setting on a surface from different perspectives. The way tourists choose to take pictures is influenced by their cultural aesthetics (Christmann, 2008). In other words, one image can show multiple cultural patterns. Accordingly, how the Chinese tourists take pictures of the tulip fields can show

how they appreciate the sites. The pictures of the tulip field are flawless with various PS technics and color filters, being mainly about colorful fields (e.g., clear scenery pictures), female selfies with gestures (e.g., V-shape hand, heart-shaped hands with lovers), capture a particular movement (e.g., jumping) and exotic settings (e.g., a saleswoman wearing clogs in a cheese store). Such content is interesting for viewers on the social media, and the pictures are usually shown in an order, based on the number of positive reactions and browsing numbers; these display settings stimulate tourists to put some effort into taking good pictures and edit their comments, so that more people might view them.

Pleasure and creativity are essential factors of the playful attitude, but pleasure is the preconditioned factor in touristic activities; while curiosity and spontaneity are also present (Guitard et al., 2005). The pleasure and other emotional feelings are drawn from tourists' playfulness, which they are motivated to display in experiencing the tulip field. The pictures they take will refresh their happy memories and contribute to the psychological well-being in their subsequent daily life. In adulthood, people might have to abandon many of their playful activities, so it is necessary to maintain their mental health by resorting to some playful activities on special occasions. Tourism is a good practice to achieve this purpose.

In sum, Chinese tourists gaze upon tulip fields with a romantic attitude, regarding them as an authentic Dutch cultural element, as promoted by the marketing. The motivation is to have an exotic experience that makes sense for them and fits their mental image of the tulip fields. The positive emotional feeling gained from experiencing the tulip field, are captured in pictures. The positive impact can help enhance their creativity in solving problems, and photographs can refresh their memorable experiences, thereby contributing to maintaining psychological well-being.  Activities undertaken by tourists can impact tourists and residents in different ways (such as environmental, cultural, social) over time. Tourists gain pleasure through their interactions with local elements in a physical setting. In turn, their positive impact, such as responsible tourist behaviour, may enhance the well-being of residents and their quality of life, since residents do not have to suffer nuisance caused by tourists, and the example of such good tourist behavior, as well

as the locals' reactions, may influence other tourists to emulate the behavior. In this way, it could potentially give rise to a kind of positive cycle.

## 4.2 Role of tulips in destination image formation

In this section, I have attempted to answer the following sub-question: *What is the role of the tulip fields in the broader destination image of the Netherlands, as constructed by Chinese tourists?*

Visual representations convey and shape the ideology and symbolic power involved in the construction of national identity; otherwise these represented objects will remain invisible. To analyze the Chinese tourists' understanding of the tulip in the destination image of the Netherlands, I asked respondents to describe three salient impressions of the Netherlands in my questionnaire. The table below describes the frequency of the number of times the keywords appeared in the tourist responses for these impressions of the Netherlands.

| Question: What first come to your mind when you think about Netherlands? | |
| --- | --- |
| Keywords | Times |
| Windmill | 37 |
| Tulip | 31 |
| Cheese, cow, milk products | 8 |
| Natural beauty | 8 |
| Artists (Rembrandt and Vicent Van Gogh ) | 8 |
| Soccer (Orange )team | 7 |

Table 3. Results showing the tourist impressions of the Netherlands.

The results from the questionnaire revealed that the Chinese tourists' first general impression of the Netherlands is windmills, tulips, and cheese, basically the same as the marketing image promoted by the relevant officials. Also, it shows that the tulip field as a landscape represents a uniquely Dutch culture that plays an important role in the destination image formation.

The European Landscape Convention gives the following definition of landscape: "it is an area, as perceived by people, the character of which is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors" (Council of Europe, 2000, cited in Stobbelaar & Pedroli, 2011, p. 321). The tulip field is a typical Dutch landscape according to the definition, the result of interaction of human factors and a spatial setting.

The rural idyllic image shows the characteristics of Dutch landscape; people integrate technology peacefully into the rural setting to ensure environments integrity. As Roberts (2004, p. 264) has pointed out, "the Dutch and their technologies appeared as guardians in their garden, keeping both unbridled nature and human rapacity at bay". The distinctive characteristics are not only making them competitive in the international marketing, but also constructing a sense of place and a national identity for the purpose of social cohesion. The tulip field, as one of the national icons, and forming an aspect of the Dutch culture, has the ability to convey and transmit meaning, as a particular message about the country. This narrative fits the promotional strategy on the national level, as well as the local perspectives:

*"We'll need to invest in a strong and sustainable promotion of our national pride, the flower fields, together with the sector and the flower industry."* (An official involved in the tulip campaign in NBTC)

*"Farmers are glad the people are coming. Because in our area, we believe that flowers are associated with health and happiness. That's also is the feeling we will export to the world, that's our message I guess.*" (Coordinator of Flower Science)

According to the interviewees, the marketing strategy is to improve the residents' and others' understanding of national identity and pride; this is also a part of tulip farmers' wish, spread the positive meaning of tulip to the world. Thus, this meaning of tulip becomes national identity. National identity is a cultural construction (Waitt, 1977). The tulip as a cultural icon underpins national identity, it is a bridge which links the past and the present, the traditions and the people; it serves the purpose of enabling them to be a distinctive group, and to make them visible to themselves and others. Due to this fact, the tulip field has a symbolic power that creates a sense of belonging and national identity, which naturally becomes part of the sense of place.  Every generation can put their mark on the landscape, and so people have emotional feelings towards the landscape, usually national sentiments involve an affection for the past, the landscape elicits this feeling more than any other social phenomena (Nogué & Vicente, 2004). Although the tulip is originally from Turkey, it has a close connection with the Netherlands since the end of 16th century, and it reflects the historic trade-related prosperity. Now the tulip is integrated into the Dutch people's life as a social activity and an object of national pride. As one of the interviewees said,

*"I think we could get a lot of tourists after the Corona, once everything is open again, people coming and going, they cannot forget the tulips of the Netherlands. I know that. I hope next year all festivals will be open again."*

*"I am proud to be a bulb grower, I want to share with all people who have an interest in this product, all the activities we do, and we want to make people happy and impart a good feeling to everyone."* (The Chairman of KAVB in Flevoland)

*"We hope tourists come back in the future. I hope it's possible to organize our events because we like to do it."* (Regional Manager of KAVB in Flevoland)

Indeed, a landscape reflects the meaning we have conferred upon it. In the tourism industry, the landscape usually reflects two kinds of desires the tourists have, namely for "adventure and paradise", it becomes part of a popular cultural and social practice driven by visual representations such as movies, pictures or the inspiration of literature (Witt, 1977). Then it can deepen the expression of a nation with distinctive geographical features, referring to a certain specific area, where the tourists can only explore their desire by direct experience. This explains why the Chinese tourists have taken the tulip field as a factor in the destination image that it is obligatory for them to personally see. As Horne argues, nationality is ". . .one of the principal colorings of the tourist vision" (Horne, 1984, p. 166, cited in Palmer,1999).

Overall, the meaning of the tulip as one of the cultural icons goes beyond its commercial value in marketing; it is a part of the Dutch people's life and helps define their identity. The Chinese tourists also experience it as bound up with a sense of place, rather than as a simple object. Similarly, one study has showed that residents and tourists prefer it when the landscape is maintained by local farmers, rather than turned into a recreational area maintained by a company (Gehring, 2006). The tulip field as a typical Dutch landscape is the best resource to construct national identity, superior to the historical relics in museums. Because it contains and transforms multiple meanings for different people, tourists can experience it physically, like a living history (Palmer,1999). Since this sense of a national identity builds within the imagination, it would deepen the romantic gaze or image of the Netherlands.

## 4.3 Transgressive behaviour of Chinese tourists: tourist perceptions and experiences

In this section, I analyse the perception of transgressive behaviour among Chinese tourists and local people at the tulip fields. Transgressive behaviour could be interpreted differently depending on the context and different socio-cultural, political and environmental settings. In the case of tulip fields, we define it as non-adherence to rules, regulations and any form of written or non-written prohibitory sign or warning set up by the government, local authorities, farmers and land owners, that seek to restrict the following: (a) entry of outsiders into the fields, (b) plucking flowers, and (c) trampling over flowers.

Further, transgressive behaviour among tourists is best understood through a lens of ethics and moral decision making. Ethics is one of the fundamental research fields of philosophy since ancient Greek period, there are different perspectives on ethics theories such as teleology, deontology and ethnic of justice in normative ethics. Tourism researchers are interested in relativist perspective on ethics work, due to the inter-cultural nature of tourists' behaviour. Ethics action in tourism field is a highly contextual determined term, every cultural framework in society has different understanding of ethics, and there is no absolute right or wrong statement. By contrast, moral absolutism means whether it is right or wrong is depending on universal principles, moral decision making is a type of decision making based on this perspective (Tolkach et. al., 2017).

Normative ethics is a branch of ethics that studies moral decision making. Cultural relativism (which suggests that ethics has a cultural origin and the understanding of what is right and wrong varies across different cultures) can also be used from a normative ethical perspective as a guiding principle for the moral decision making (Gensler, 2011). There are two main concepts in normative ethnics, utilitarianism and egoism. Utilitarianism in decision making is concern with whether the consequence of action is moral, egoism is concern with whether individual can get benefit from the action. Tourism is usually seen as the action driven by egoism since it is about self-benefiting and leisure physically and mentally. There are few utilitarianism studies in tourism field,

but lately the studies call for tourists behaving ethically at destinations, such as respecting local heritage, being environment friendly, etc.

In the context of tulip fields, an understanding of moral decision-making is essential to analyze why Chinese tourists may exhibit transgressive behaviour. To understand moral decision-making of tourists at the tulip fields in the Netherlands, we draw upon the psychological mechanism of moral disengagement that plays an important role in unethical decision making and which operates at both individual and collective levels (Bandura, 1999). According to Sharma (2020), moral disengagement refers to the cognitive deactivation of moral self-regulatory processes in decision making and it mediates the relationship between the moral principles that individuals hold and their behavioural transgressions. She further states that these moral disengagement mechanisms are useful in explaining how tourists reconstruct their actions to appear less immoral resulting in shifting of ethical boundaries.

The tables presented below are the results of Q8-Q14 from the questionnaire. Table 1-3 contains questions that are based on tourist behaviour on egoism, asking them to what extent they are likely to enter the tulip field or damage the flower for their pleasure. While majority of the Chinese tourists replied "No". Only 2% of tourists replied "Yes" and 6% of the tourists demonstrated a possible response that they might pluck tulips when no one else is around
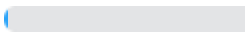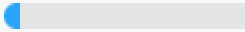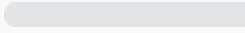
| 选项 Options | 比例 Proportion of tourists (in percentage) |
|---|---|
| A. 会 Yes | 2% |
| B.可能会 Probably | 6% |
| C. 不确定 Neutral | 6% |
| D. 可能不会 Probably not | 0% |
| E.不会　No | 86% |

Table 4: Results showing to what extent tourists will pluck flowers when no one else is around.

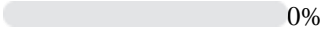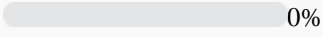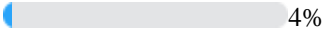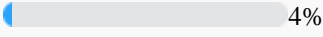| 选项 Options | 比例 Proportion of tourists（in percentage) |
|---|---|
| A. 会 Yes | 0% |
| B. 可能会 Probably | 0% |
| C. 不确定 Neutral | 4% |
| D. 可能不会 Probably Not | 4% |
| E. 不会 No | 92% |

Table 5:  Results showing to what extent tourists would step into the field when there is an entry-forbidden sign.
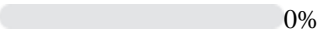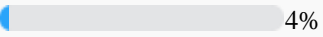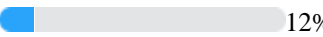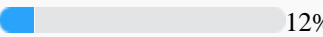
| 选项 Options | 比例 Proportion of tourists（in percentage) |
|---|---|
| A. 会 Yes | 0% |
| B.可能会 Probably | 4% |
| C. 不确定 Neutral | 12% |
| D.可能不会 Probably Not | 12% |
| E.不会 No | 72% |

Table 6   Results showing to what extent tourists would follow others in stepping into the field, although not doing it first

Tables 7- 10contain questions about how tourists perceive themselves and others entering the tulip fields. In Table 6, tourists were asked the following question: "Would you follow others in stepping into the field, although not doing it first?" The responses reveal that 4% of tourists replied "probably yes" which shows that they are likely to display transgressive behaviour when they see others, i.e. their fellow tourists doing so. This is in line with what Sharma (2020) mentioned about the moral mechanism 'diffusion of responsibility' which states that "transgressive acts are attributed to group decisions instead of personal agency. This way personal agency is deliberately obscured and exercise of moral control is weakened exonerating the tourist from any form of personal responsibility or self-blame". According to Bandura (2002), individuals adopt standards of right and wrong that serve as guides and deterrents for conduct in developing moral agency. This explains why the Chinese tourists tend to break rules especially if they are in large tour groups or they see other tourists doing so. Further, tourists have moral

standards from their cultural framework, and they will judge their action according to those standards and circumstance, and then regulate their action by following consequence. Moral disengagement is a mediator between moral principles and transgression behaviour; tourists can have an excuse to convince themselves and others that they are not guilty for their unethical action in this process. When tourists are at a destination, the relationship they developed with other people are based on common humanity and moral perception

Sharma (2020) also compares this with the process of deindividuation in social psychology which refers to the diminishing of one's sense of individuality or loss of self-identity, when present in a group and the effect of a crowd or group on the behaviour of an individual. The idea is that when everyone is responsible, no one really feels responsible and "any harm done by a group can always be attributed largely to the behaviour of others" (Bandura et al., 1996, p. 365, cited in Sharma, 2020). Therefore, this explains that when an unethical action is operated by a collective decision, the Chinese tourists feel less guilty when they follow others into the tulip field.

| 选项 Options | 比例 Proportion of tourists (in percentage) |
|---|---|
| A. 会 Yes | 10% |
| B. 可能会 Probably | 18% |
| C. 不确定 Neutral | 28% |
| D.可能不会 Probably Not | 6% |
| E.不会 NO | 38% |

Table 7    Results showing to what extent tourists think it is okay to step into a tulip field.

| 选项 Options | 比例 Proportion of tourists (in percentage) |
|---|---|
| A. 会 Yes | 10% |
| B. 可能会 Probably | 16% |
| C. 不确定 Neutral | 32% |
| D.可能不会 Probably Not | 2% |

| 选项 Options | 比例 Proportion |
|---|---|
| E.不会 No | 40% |

Table 8  Results showing to what extent tourists would accept other people stepping into a tulip field for taking pictures to post online.

| 选项 Options | 比例 Proportion |
|---|---|
| A. 可以 Yes | 26% |
| B. 或许可以 Probably | 32% |
| C.  不确定 Neutral | 12% |
| D. 或许不可以 Probably Not | 4% |
| E.  不可以 No | 26% |

Table 9    Results showing to what extent tourists would accept people who step into the field for taking pictures assuming they are the owners of the tulip field.

| 选项 **Options** | 比例 **Proportion of tourists  (in percentage)** |
|---|---|
| A. 会 Yes | 32% |
| B. 可能会 Probably | 20% |
| C. 不确定 Neutral | 32% |
| D. 可能不会 Probably Not | 2% |
| E. 不会 No | 14% |

Table 10 Results showing to what extent tourists would remind others not to step into the field when there is an entry-forbidden sign.

Table 10 displays results of the extent to which tourists would remind others not to step into the field when there is an entry-forbidden sign. The data shows 32% of tourists replying "Yes", 20% and 14% of tourists replying "Probably" and "No". This means that most of the tourists are likely to stop others from stepping into the field. Chinese tourists have a stereotyped notion that the Netherlands is a relatively free country due to legalization of certain activities (such as smoking cannabis, prostitution, etc) which are otherwise banned or illegal in their own or other countries, so they often face a struggle between self-sanction and social-sanction in this

obscuring situation, which explains why some tourists answered "No". However, the fact that 32% tourists were firmly positive and 14% tourists also replied "probably yes" fits with Bandura's (1991) argument that the exercise of moral agency has dual aspects—inhibitive and proactive. While the inhibitive form is manifested in the power to refrain from indulging in transgressive behaviour, the proactive form of morality is expressed in the power to behave otherwise. This was also pointed out by Sharma (2020) and might explain why certain Chinese tourists exercise their moral agency and decide to remind fellow tourists if the latter step into a tulip field where there is an entry-forbidden sign.

Finally, there is a prevalent stereotyping of Chinese tourists exhibiting transgressive behaviour at the tulip fields in the Netherlands partly generated by media reports. While there may have been reported cases, the current study demonstrates that unless certain moral disengagement mechanisms are at play, a majority of the tourists stick to the adherence of rules and regulations and do not necessarily exhibit transgressive behaviour, especially at the tulip fields. Further, "moral actions are the product of the reciprocal interplay of cognitive, affective and social influences" (Bandura, 2002, cited in Sharma, 2020, p277). Therefore, it can be said that social realities can influence moral action in some sense. In China, most farmers when they don't want outsiders entering in their field, they would use various conservative tools and resources to protect their land. It is a very common practice and hence, the Chinese tourists somehow get used to passive perception. This results in a propensity to behave likewise at the fields, depending on the presence of conservative physical barriers. But in the Netherlands, the interviews I conducted revealed that it is usually not a common practice to set up any protective fences for fields reflecting a comparatively less conservative and "free" mindset. Of course, there are tulip field farmers that have resorted to fencing in recent times but this has mostly been an outcome of excessive tourists entering and damaging the fields and such spatial protective strategies are still, less in number compared to farming lands in China.

## 4.4 Chinese tourist behaviour: local perspectives and managerial strategies.

In this section, I have attempted to answer the following sub-question:

*What are the local perspectives regarding tourism and behavior of Chinese tourists at the tulip fields? What marketing and managerial strategyies are employed for managing tourism and tourist behavior?*

In the earlier sections, I illustrated how the Chinese tourists' experiences involved a sense of place. They regard the tulip fields as an authentic cultural element tied to the Dutch identity. The national marketing, on their part, use the tulip as one of the national icons to promote national identity. Tourists invading a tulip field stem from an act of moral disengagement, and a collective invading behaviour is unlikely to happen when most tourists stick to the rules. From the national marketing level to the local farmers, there are managerial strategies for managing tourists' behaviour, and the levels of efficiency of these approaches are different. Given below are six strategies in relation to the tulip fields that surfaced from the results of this study:

## 4.4.1 Spatial strategies such as fencing or creating physical boundaries

In my interview with the Coordinator of Flower Science Organization, I asked her about how farmers usually keep the tourists off. Her response was as follows:

*"Before we started this campaign, the growers were doing by themselves. In crowded weekends, they were continuously busy with chasing people off their land, and they were with their family, children, constantly touring the countryside to get people out of their land. So, they never rest, they had to work during workdays and chase people on weekends. They were very agitated about it and very tired of it."*

The Coordinator mentioned that it was quite challenging to make farmers install a fence in the initial stage, because with a fence in place, it is not convenient for a tractor to enter the field for harvesting purposes. The organization has some barriers and signs, so they usually borrow fences from them to ensure that the tourists are aware of the field being a private property prohibiting trespassing during the tulip season. The Flower Science website mentions that they suggested that the tourists not visit the private fields, since they had no more fences to lend. But from April 2019, farmers had started to install fences at their fields to keep the tourists out of the fields (Diskin, 2019).

The adoption of physical barriers such as fences by the farmers was meant to reduce the negative impact of tourism. In tourism destination management, the Doxey Irritation Index model is designed to represent the residents' anger level to cultural, social, environmental, and economic impact. This model divides the anger (or the lack of it) of residents into four levels: euphoria, apathy, irritation, antagonism (Doxey, 1975). Extreme level of antagonism means that the residents believe that tourism is responsible for all their troubles, and that the tourists seriously disturb their lives. Putting up a fence is an indication of the level of antagonism among Dutch tulip farmers towards tourists, such an antagonism problem. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, since field observations could not be conducted, it is unclear where the farmers' attitudes towards tourists currently stand, on this irritation index.

## 4.4.2 Arranging signboards at the fields

A signboard's purpose is to convey and communicate messages to tourists, to ensure that the tourists behave properly. A signboard has multiple functions: it offers service information, directions about the route, and warnings as to what the tourists are forbidden to do.  "Enjoy the flowers, Respect our pride", the slogan board designed by the Flower Science Organization, tells the tourists that they should be taking selfies without trampling on the tulips. An entry-forbidden sign might be more effective still, since it delivers a clearer message.

Arranging signboards in the fields could remind the tourists not to step in the fields, especially if there are several signs along the entire tulip route; it could help spread awareness that the fields are private. During the interview, the interviewees mentioned that tourists could not distinguish the private and touristic areas, since there is no clear signboard information to that effect—no wonder then that the tourists believe that the fields are open for entry. Language and effective communication through signboards is therefore, an essential component in regulating tourist behaviour. Moreover, signboards could regulate tourist behaviour under circumstances of moral disengagement, and psychologically inhibit impulses to misbehave.

### 4.4.3 Volunteer Service

When the signboards are set in the fields, it is necessary to have volunteers explain the information correctly to tourists.

*"And when we had a small group of about thirty people last year, they went to the fields in a part of the day, and when people came, I mean the tourists, they spoke to them and explained some things. Most of the tourists understood and behaved correctly, and there were also people who didn't."* (Coordinator of Flower Science)

*"Because from the tourists, we have no income, tourists look at flowers for free. This is the reason we must be very thankful for all volunteers, they make this big event possible every year. So I am always very thankful for people who make the event possible."* (Chairman of KAVB in Flevoland)

Volunteer service has always been the foundation of operating public activities in the Netherlands. Volunteers are in a position to direct and manage the tourists' behaviour when they intend to enter the field. Furthermore, they are among the groups of people who contribute to the tourists' sense of place by interacting with the environment in daily life. Tourists could have authentic experiences through communication with volunteers,

*"[W]e want to have real people with a real story about the farming telling people why they should respect the fields. So it is not some officers who are telling you or some guides, it's a person who has a brother or a neighbor or uncle who really is a farmer so he can speak from their heart."* (Coordinator of Flower Science)

The Coordinator also mentioned certain volunteer "ambassadors", who play an educational role by sharing knowledge and answering questions for tourists. More and more students have joined their team. The strategy of volunteering can be seen as a potential sustainable means of co-creation engagement as well. "Voluntourism", which is the merging of volunteering and tourism with a growing trend of tourists travelling to do some good in other communities, can be encouraged in tulip growing areas so as to bridge the gap between tourists and local farmers and contribute to knowledge dissemination about tulip farming practices and tourism. Such meaningful engagement between tourists, volunteer tourists and locals could be useful for protecting the private tulip fields and fostering a sense of place.

### 4.4.4 Tourist dispersal and controlling the number of tourists through advertising

The Netherlands are a popular destination, so especially the cities in the Holland provinces, such as Amsterdam and Den Hague, have for a long time suffered from over-tourism. However, other provinces, which also have tulip fields, get less attention from the tourists due to lack of promotion or marketing—such has been the case with the tulip fields in the northern part of the Netherlands. In the long-term view, it could cause a so-called honey-pot problem: not all the provinces and residents can benefit from the tourism industry. At the national level, controlling the number of tourists by changing the marketing strategy is one of the solutions to reduce the damage to tulip fields and minimize the negative impact of over-tourism.

At the end of 2019, the Dutch government invested 200,000 euros for designing a new logo of the Netherlands. They planned to brand themselves as "NL Netherlands" rather than "Holland", on the global market since 2020 (Figure 7).



Figure 7: The image of the Netherlands, the top is the old image; the bottom is the new logo. (*Source: https://dutchreview.com/news/dutch/dutch-roasting-their-new-international-tourism-logo/)*

"Holland" is just the name of one province of the Netherlands, which includes well-known and -marketed cities; it also refers to the entire country in certain official documents. To promote a more inclusive national identity, the authorities have decided to use "the Netherlands" on a logo to promote the whole country as a destination. The old

logo, a tulip combined with "Holland," contains a visual image which implies tourism related to tulip fields and souvenirs. The new visual NL Netherlands logo is designed abstractly like a tulip, but it is straightforwardly applicable for all kinds of purposes, such as in education, trade, and foreign embassy (Adams, 2019). This is the start of controlling the number of tourists; the Dutch tourism board has stated that they would stop promoting the Netherlands as a destination due to concerns of over-tourism (Griffiths, 2019). The new strategy is to promote sustainable tourism and spread tourists to other places beyond Amsterdam; NBTC has also designed different tourist themes for other provinces. This strategy makes sense as there are tulip fields in the northern part of the Netherlands too.

Although the new logo is used in all official documents to refer to the Netherlands, some residents have commented on Twitter that the tulip is originally from Turkey, not the Netherlands, and therefore cannot represent the image of the country. However, no matter whether new logo or old, it's obvious that the tulip plays a vital role in representing the national identity and conveying it to people. Since the tulip conveys more than the meaning of touristic objects, it can in some ways influence how tourists form their mental image of the Netherlands, thus contributing to achieving the purpose of controlling the numbers of tourists. The strategy of changing the logo is a symbolic movement of attaining maturity; it means that the focus of tourism in the Netherlands is shifting from destination marketing to destination management.

## 4.4.5 Set up campaigns

The campaign "Enjoy the flowers, Respect our pride" was established in February 2019. It aims to stop the tourists who were trampling tulips for taking selfies. In the beginning, this campaign only covered the Bollenstreek area; later on, it spread online with the promotion of NBTC. More and more tulip fields in other regions have joined this campaign.  NBTC also admits the benefit of the campaign. The official I interviewed put it as follows,

*"[The local] government and local marketing organizations have developed a campaign called "enjoy our flowers, respect our pride" with several marketing instruments like banners, website and flyers to explain visitors how to approach the flowers in the fields. And besides this we should educate national but especially international visitors how to*

*approach our fields and to take care of the flowers. So more information about where to go ... and what are the guidelines for a bulb field."* (The official from tulip campaign in NBTC)

The campaign in Bollenstreek has had some effect in educating tourists. The Coordinator of Flower Science mentioned that people were more careful with the tulips compared with last year, and stayed on the edge of the fields. Besides this campaign, NBTC also has promoted "tulip-friendly selfie" and "watch your feet" hashtags for pictures and videos online.  The aim is to remind tourists to stay outside of the field to take pictures; they even listed the address of the experimental field, which allows tourists to enter. These campaigns and tags do, in a sense, indicate the locals' negative emotional feelings towards the invaders; this kind of emotion results from the asymmetric relationship between the residents and tourists. The residents are suffering from the negative economic impact (due to trampling of flowers) that the tourists bring and aim to minimize this negative impact; moreover, their educational strategy aims to ensure that tourist conduct themselves in a morally acceptable manner. However, these campaigns started last year, and now, due to the COVID-19 pandemic impact, fewer international tourists are visiting the Netherlands. It is therefore unclear to what extent the messages of these campaigns can actually regulate the tourists' behaviour.

## 4.4.6 Digital technologies and Smart apps

Although the volunteer service helps manage the tourists' behavior, one of the campaign's problems could be over-reliance on the volunteer service. When tourists download a tulip route app online, they receive warning signs and instructions in advance. Therefore, there is a less likelihood of them entering the field. With updated technology, designing a tulip route map could improve the tourists' experience.

As is well known, the best way to enjoy the tulip fields is to bike or drive around them. The Bollenstreek website has, accordingly, designed a smart app that offers guiding information for the bike, scooter, walking, and driving tours, and the information is presented in picture, audio, and video format. Consequently, the tourists can check the map for directions even beyond Keukenhof and listen to the information about the tulip fields ("Holland Audio Guides - Flower Tour," 2020). The same applies to Flevoland, where they have also invested in a tulip route app for the Flevoland province, with the

route being open only during the tulip season. Most of the fields in Flevoland are for business purposes, so it is important that when tourists click on the map, the field with a tulip tag means the local farmers' doors are open for the tourists and with a clear opening schedule (Tulip Route Dronten - Tulips in Holland. 2020.). Overall, these smart apps cannot regulate tourists' misbehaviour like the volunteer service, but they can distribute the numbers of tourists during the peak season in particular hot-spot areas.

## 4.5 Covid-19 impact of tourism industry and Chinese tourists

The Covid-19 pandemic has globally influenced all sorts of industries, such as tourism, medicine, and technology. In a specific region or industry, consequently, the influence will change individuals' daily life, the performance of business activities, and lead to the adoption of appropriate measures to ensure public safety. The tourism industry is more sensitive than other industries, since the operation of tourism relates to various sectors in the society, with regard to whom the value of tourism cannot be ignored. This is primarily because tourism is a global phenomenon that relies on - mobility and human interactions, which had to be restricted in light of the current crisis. For tourists and entrepreneurs alike, the sudden emergence of the pandemic has influenced the tourists' motivation and income. The UN World Tourism Organization has estimated a loss of US$300 –450 billion in international tourism receipts which translates to a loss of 5 to 7 years' worth of tourism growth. With the loss of millions of jobs especially in small-and-medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and businesses, the crash of Airbnb and short-term rental industry, a large number of people in quarantine, airplanes on the ground, cruise ships stuck at sea for several weeks, social distancing regulations and multiple travel bans in place throughout the globe, the current pandemic has revealed not only the significance but also the fragility and vulnerabilities of the global tourism industry. It has demonstrated how little we really know about dealing with uncertainty, crises and related aftershocks. A city like Amsterdam, which was once an oversaturated destination suffering from 'overtourism' until a few months ago had to face 'undertourism' or, rather, the absence of tourism. On the other hand, the pandemic impact offers an opportunity to rethink and transform the tourism industry.

Most of the entrepreneurs are facing a financial crisis, since the floral trade has decreased or come to a halt.  From my interview with KAVB in Flevoland, I got the information that local farmers had harvested their tulips early, for public health reasons, especially because there are visitors during the Easter holiday. The tulip bulbs' price will be lower next year, since they will not be able to export bulbs globally. The Netherlands flower market was badly hit by the Covid-19 crisis also because of grounded deliveries and shipments and a smaller number of people buying flowers due to imposed lockdowns, cancelled celebrations, less tourist numbers, closing of flower shops and travel restrictions which unfortunately, coincided with the Dutch flower industry's strongest tulip season (March to early May). The Keukenhof, the largest flower park in the Netherlands, which typically welcomes 1.5 million visitors a year during its eight-week opening that coincides with the blooming of the tulips, was shut down from March 21, until May 10, which resulted in an approximate loss of $25 million in revenues. As a result, between 70 and 80% of the Netherlands' total annual production of flowers were destroyed and several Dutch growers gave their unsold flowers away to hospitals or even to passers-by on the streets. While growers and distributors that primarily serve the local market were still able to sell flowers and plants domestically, those flower businesses that rely on international trade were the worst hits.

## 4.6 Limitations of the study

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic impact, there are certain limitations upon the research; notably, it was not possible to conduct participatory observation, and it is therefore unclear how tourists would perform in response to the measures taken at the fields. A participatory observation could have shed light on tourist performance and bodily activities at the fields. The respondents were selected by snowball technique, so the geographical characteristics are similar in the sample, and it remains a possibility that different demographic groups might have a different moral standard for transgressive behaviour. For example, it would be interesting to analyze how people of different age-groups and gender among Chinese tourists behave. Secondly, the study could have benefitted from a larger sample size comprising local farmers and their perspectives on

tourist behaviour. While the current semi-structured interviews did not clearly mention any instances of tourist misbehaviour, it is possible that local farmer narratives could have been different. Thirdly, my own identity and positionality as a researcher of Chinese origin could have been an influencing factor in the interview responses and could have led to more guarded answers for the fear of not appearing to sound racist against Chinese tourists. Furthermore, the research was started around the beginning of 2020, when the COVID-19 outbreak erupted in China, and there were negative and alarmed attitudes towards the Chinese epidemic situation in the international media. Chinese people, likewise, have received various information on the media, concerning the ways other countries have coped with the pandemic. It is therefore currently unclear how the Chinese tourists travel desire and motivation will be influenced by the pandemic, and how the pandemic may affect their perceptions of various kinds of exotic experiences, at the cognitive and emotional levels. Lastly, it is yet to be seen how the tulip industry recovers in the months to come while going through an overtourism to an under-tourism situation.

## 5. Conclusion

The objective of this study was to explore Chinese tourists' perceptions and behaviours at the tulip fields, and to contribute our understanding of non-Western perspectives of the Dutch landscape. The understanding of transgressive behaviour is relevant for the implementation of destination management strategies. To answer the main research question, I will summarize two points. Firstly, the Chinese tourists' perceptions of the tulip fields are shaped by the expectations of experiencing an authentic Dutch identity, constructed by the tourists through advertisement and social media. Chinese tourists take selfies and photographs at the tulip field, and express their pleasure in playfulness that enables them to distance themselves from their daily life, and engage with the authentic experience they have constructed. These results are consonant with those of Li et al. (2019), titled "Towards an understanding of Chinese tourist photography: evidence from the UK", where it is argued that many Chinese tourists are in favor of a kind of engaged travel, which is influenced by Confucian culture, and leads them to engage with the objects they encounter on their trips, and seek and construct authenticity

through taking pictures interactively, i.e., by expressing emotions and immersing themselves in the sights.

Secondly, the perception of transgressive behaviour by Chinese tourists is influenced by images and videos promoted on social media. It can be understood as a mechanism of moral disengagement that is likely to happen when individual tourists are affected by the context of collective behavior, which influences the individual moral standards—standards that one normally consults before taking action, and which reference the anticipated consequences of one's actions. Similarly, a study titled "Ethics of Chinese and Western tourists in Hong Kong" shows that the ethical perception of an action is affected by the tourists' cultural framework, and also suggests that tourists adapt their ethics to their experiences at the destination (Tolkach et al., 2017). Although moral standards are different for the tourists than for the locals, it is nevertheless possible to promote ethical behavior among the tourists, and manage transgressive behavior at the tulip fields.

Additionally, the Covid-19 pandemic has forced us to re-think the damages done by mass tourism and other forms of tourism-related development. It has given us an opportunity to pause and reflect on past experiences, brainstorm solutions for the future and re-boot the tourism industry in line with the principles of sustainability. While efforts such as removing the orange tulip logo, rebranding tourism marketing and Amsterdam's 'Enjoy and Respect' campaign imposing fines, might help reduce the massive number of tourists visiting the tulip fields (once the pandemic is over), there is a need for introducing long-term, sustainable measures that strike a balance between tourists enjoying the tulip fields as well as refraining from damaging them for obtaining the perfect selfie. It is essential to reduce the tourist-host gap through value co-creation activities designed to support social projects and build a bridge with residents and local farmers, many of whom see tourists as a nuisance. Besides volunteering and promoting activities that actively raise tourist awareness and environmental consciousness towards tulip farming and fields, other value co-creation-based activities need to be organized that go beyond the tourist gaze, provide an insight into the Dutch local life, promote an authentic and emotional investment

among the tourists and establish more meaningful relationships between tourists and hosts.

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# 7. Appendix

## 7.1 Tulip Questionnaire (English)

Thank you for participating in my research! I am a Master student at the University of Groningen (The Netherlands), conducting research about tourist motivations, behaviour and experiences at the tulip fields. As part of this research, I wish to ask you a few questions about your experience as a tourist in the tulip fields here.

Below you will find an informed consent section, which will provide more details regarding the use of the information in this questionnaire and the safeguarding of your anonymity. Please read this carefully and tick the relevant boxes.

**INFORMED CONSENT**

**This informed consent section consists of three (3) parts. Please read the information below carefully and tick the box at the end of each part, to ensure your consent for participation in our research.**

PART ONE (1):

I hereby consent to be a participant in the current research performed by

**Grace Zhao <z.zhao.9@student.rug.nl>**

☐ **I have read Part One (1) and agree with the abovementioned.** *(Please tick this box.)*

PART TWO (2):

I have agreed to take part in the study entitled

**A cross-cultural analysis of tourist behaviour and local perceptions in the tulip fields of Netherlands**

and I understand that my participation is entirely <u>voluntary</u>. I understand that my responses will be kept strictly <u>confidential and anonymous</u>. I have the option to withdraw from this study at any time, without penalty, and I also have the right to request that my responses not be used. The researcher is responsible for safe storage of the data. For questions about privacy protection: Mr. A.R. Deenen (privacy@rug.nl, Data Protection Officer of the University of Groningen).

☐ **I have read Part Two (2) and agree with the abovementioned.** *(Please tick this box.)*

PART THREE (3):

The following points have been explained to me:

1. The goal of this study is

> **to gain information about tourist motivation,behaviour and experiences at the tulip fields**

Participation in this study should help advance our understanding of

> **your motivation, behaviour and experiences when visiting the tulip fields**

2. I shall be asked to

> **answer and complete the following questionnaire.**

3. The current study will last approximately **five-ten (5-10)** minutes. At the end of the study, the researcher will explain to me in more detail what the research was about (if wanted).

4. My responses will be treated confidentially and my anonymity will be ensured. Hence, my responses cannot be identifiable and linked back to me as an individual.

5. The researcher will answer any questions I might have regarding this research, now or later in the course of the study.

☐ **I have read Part Three (3) and agree with the abovementioned.** *(Please tick this box)*

## QUESTIONNAIRE

**In this first part, your image of the Netherlands and motivation for visiting the tulip fields will be discussed. The image of the Netherlands means "the presentation of the country, the Netherlands, in marketing promotion (e.g., attracting tourists by reference to windmills, cheese, clogs, etc.)". The motivation for visiting the tulip fields connects with the information that motivates you to visit the tulip fields, and the sources of such information. You will be asked to tick the appropriate box or fill**

**in your answer for each question. Please read the questions carefully before answering.**

1**:** What first comes to your mind when you think about the Netherlands?
*Please list three impressions.*

_____

2．From where do you get these impressions. Please rate each information category as to how important it is in forming your impressions about the Netherlands (especially the tulip fields)

| | Not al all importa nt | Not importa nt | Neutra l | Fairly importa nt | Very importa nt |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Professional advice (tour operators, travel agents and airlines) | | | | | |
| Word-of-mouth (friends, relatives and social clubs) | | | | | |
| Advertisement (print or broadcast media) | | | | | |
| Book/Movies/News | | | | | |
| Social Media (Facebook/Twitter/Instagram/Linke din) | | | | | |
| Travel websites (Expedia, Booking.com, Agoda, TripAdvisor. Lonely Planet) | | | | | |
| Travel blogs | | | | | |

3．Why do you visit the tulip fields？
*Please give your reasons.*

4. What are you planning to do) at the tulip fields? What are your expectations from the place?

*Please give an answer.*

5. If you have visited the tulip fields already, describe your experience.

6. Have you met the owener of the tulip field? If yes, how was your interaction with him？

7. Would you share pictures of yourself at the tulip fields on an online social platform?

    A．Yes    B. Probbaly    C. Neutural    D. Probably Not  E. No

8. Would you pick tulip flowers in the field when no-one else is around?

    A．Yes    B. Probbaly    C. Neutural    D. Probably Not  E. No

9. Would you step into the field when there is an entry-forbidden sign?

    A．Yes    B. Probbaly    C. Neutural    D. Probably Not  E. No

10. Would you follow others in stepping into the field, although not doing it first?

    A．Yes    B. Probbaly    C. Neutural    D. Probably Not  E. No

11. Do you think it is okay for tourists to step into a tulip field?

    A．Yes    B. Probbaly    C. Neutural    D. Probably Not  E. No

12. What is your opinion about tourists who step into a tulip field to take pictures to post online?

    A．Yes    B. Probbaly    C. Neutural    D. Probably Not  E. No

13. If you were the owner of a tulip field, would you accept tourists to step into your field?

    A．Yes    B. Probbaly    C. Neutural    D. Probably Not  E. No

14. Would you remind others not to step into the tulip field when there is an entry-forbidden sign?

    A．Yes    B. Probbaly    C. Neutural    D. Probably Not  E. No

**The final part consists of questions concerning personal information about you. Please tick the appropriate box or fill in your answer.**

15: What is your age? *Please enter your age in years:*         _____ years

16: What is your gender? *Please tick the appropriate box:*     ☐ Male     ☐ Female    ☐ Other

17. Which region and country are you from?

18: What is your highest-attained educational background? *Please choose only one answer by placing a tick in the appropriate box below.*

☐ Primary school

☐ Secondary school

☐ Bachelor's degree at a university

☐ Master's degree /Ph.D degree

☐ No education          ☐ Other:_____

**19:** How many times (approximately) have you visited a tulip field? *Please give your answer in number:*      _____ times

**Thank you for participating in this research!**

## 7.2 Tulip Questionnaire (Chinese)

尊敬的游客您好：

感谢您参与我的调查问卷！ 我是格罗宁根大学（荷兰）的硕士研究生，正在从事一项游客对于郁金香花田的旅游动机、旅游行为和体验方面的研究。作为这项研究的一部分，我想问您几个关于荷兰郁金香花田旅游经历的问题。

为了保障您的权益，涉及此问卷中信息使用和匿名维护等更多事项，请您首先阅读下面的知情同意书，并在相关方框中打勾。

知情同意书

知情同意书由三部分组成。请仔细阅读以下信息，并在末尾打勾，以确保您同意参与我的研究。

第一部分：

本人同意参加赵晓丹的调研活动

调研者信息：赵晓丹（Grace Zhao）< z.zhao.9@student.rug.nl >

第二部分：

本人同意参加对荷兰郁金香的游客行为和当地感知的跨文化分析的研究

我完全自愿参与。我了解我的回复将严格保密且匿名。我可以随时选择退出本研究，而不会受到任何处罚，并且我也有权要求不使用我的回答。研究人员负责安全存储数据。有关隐私保护的问题，请联系格罗宁根大学数据管理员 A.R. Deenen (privacy@rug.nl, Data Protection Officer of the University of Groningen).

第三部分：

研究人员向我解释了以下几点：

　　1.这项研究的目的是关于荷兰郁金香花田的游客旅游动机、旅游行为和体验。

　　2.我将被要求回答并填写以下问卷。

　　3.此次调查大约持续五到十（5-10）分钟。在研究结束时，如果我需要，研究人员可以跟我讲解详细的研究内容。

4.我的回复会做匿名和保密处理。因此，我的回答不会被识别身份，不会造成个人信息泄露。

5.研究人员将回答我现在或以后在研究过程中可能对本研究提出的任何问题。

☐ 我已阅读知情同意书，我知晓并同意以上的内容。

问卷调查

在第一部分中，将讨论您对荷兰形象的看法以及参观郁金香园的动机。荷兰的旅游形象是指"荷兰在市场推广中的表现（例如—通过风车、奶酪、木鞋等吸引游客）" 游览郁金香的旅游动机是指：何种信息激发您访问郁金香花田以及此类信息的相关来源。请您在相应的方框中打勾或为每个问题填写答案。 在回答之前，请仔细阅读问题。

1. 当您想到荷兰王国，脑海中的印象是什么？

请列举 3 个印象

_____ _____

2 。您从哪个信息渠道得到的关于郁金香花田的信息？请评价每个信息渠道对您形成郁金香花田形象的重要性。

| | 非常不重要 | 不重要 | 不确定 | 重要 | 非常重要 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 旅游公司的建议 (旅行社、航空公司宣传广告等) | | | | | |
| 亲朋好友熟人的建议 | | | | | |
| 广告宣传册，社交软件广告 | | | | | |
| 书籍、电影、新闻 | | | | | |
| 社交软件、微信、微博、 | | | | | |

| Instergram、脸书等 | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 旅游网站 (携程、去哪网、途牛、Expedia、Booking.com、Agoda、TripAdvisor、Lonely Planet 等) | | | | |
| 旅游博主的博客 | | | | |

3 。您为什么游览郁金香花田？

请说明原因。

4 。您打算在游览郁金香花田时做什么？您对郁金香花田有什么期待？

请详细说明。

5 。如果您已经访问过郁金香花田，请描述您的旅游体验。

6. 当您在游览郁金香花田的时候，您见过郁金香花田的农庄主吗？如果有，您和农庄主的互动体验如何？

下列问题是有关郁金香花田游客行为相似性的问题。请在适当的方框中打勾（单选），以表明您旅游行为的可能性。

7. 您会在社交平台上分享自己在郁金香花田的自拍照吗？

  A. 会　B.可能会　C. 不确定　D.可能不会　E.不会

8. 当花田里四周无人时，您会采摘郁金香花吗？

  A. 会　B.可能会　C. 不确定　D.可能不会　E.不会

9.如果有一个禁止入内的标志，您还会进入郁金香花田吗？

  A. 会　B.可能会　C. 不确定　D.可能不会　E.不会

10.如果有人进入花田采花，您会跟随进入花田吗？

A. 会　　B.可能会　　C. 不确定　　D.可能不会 E.不会

11. 您认为游客可以进入郁金香花田吗？

A. 会　　B.可能会　　C. 不确定　　D.可能不会 E.不会

12. 您会对进入郁金香花田拍照的游客行为赞同吗？

A. 会　　B.可能会　　C. 不确定　　D.可能不会 E.不会

13.如果您拥有郁金香花田，您会允许游客进入郁金香花田拍照吗？

A. 会　　B.可能会　　C. 不确定　　D.可能不会 E.不会

1 4. 当您看到其他人进入郁金香花田，您会善意提醒他吗？

A. 会　　B.可能会　　C. 不确定　　D.可能不会 E.不会

第三部分是关于您的个人信息，请在相应的方框中打勾或填写您的答案。

15：您的年龄是 _____岁

16：您的性别是：　□ 男　　□ 女　□ 其他

17.您来自中国境内哪个省份或地区？

18：您的最高教育背景是

□ 小学

□ 初中或高中

□ 专科或本科

□ 研究生以上

□ 非以上教育背景　　　□ 其他：_____

19：在荷兰王国境内，您游览过郁金香花田多少次？请给出您的答案：_____ 次

感谢您参与这项研究！

## 7.3 Interview questions for KAVB in Flevoland

1. For how many years have you been cultivating tulips?

2. I notice that Noordoostpolder  in Flevoland is one of the largest tulip bulb cultivation regions in NL, and there is a tulip flower festival every year from end of April to Mid-May . Have you observed any change over the years, in terms of tourist numbers at the tulip fields?

3. On the website, it was mentioned that the tourists are permitted to picnic and take selfies among the tulips— they can more or less do anything they like. Why do you encourage tourists in this way? How do you manage the tourists' behavior at the tulip fields and on the designated tourist routes? Aren't you worried that they might damage the flowers?

4. According your experience in this region, as owner of a field, what are the biggest problems in managing tourists' behavior at the tulip fields? What do you worry about the most?

5. What do you think could be the best solution to control tourist entry and to protect your fields? How do you do it in Noordoostpolder？

6. Have you ever interacted with tourists visiting your fields? If yes, what have the interactions been like? What has the conversation been about?

7. What is your attitude towards receiving tourists in the future? Have you expressed your views on this on the social media, e.g., by giving friendly tips?

8. I have conducted a survey about the Chinese tourists' expectations of the tulip fields. Some of them mentioned that they want to learn about the history of tulip cultivation, and how it is done. What do you want tourists to learn from their visit to the tulip fields? What economic and symbolic role do tulips play in this region? Are they part of this region's identity?

## 7.4 Interview questions for coordinator in FlowerScience

1. The first time I noticed the sign "Enjoy the flower, respect our pride", was in the Guardian News. Could you briefly explain how this initiative got the attention of The Guardian?

2. When did this campaign start? Why did you want to start this campaign? And who is involved in this initiative? Does this campaign cover all fields in NL? Or just some fields with tourists?

3. What is your strategy for managing tourist numbers and their behavior? How have the volunteers managed the tourists' behavior in practice?

4. Regarding the misbehaving tourists in the Guardian News, were they mainly international or domestic tourists? I saw Chinese language on the sign in the Guardian photo? Have there been instances where Chinese tourists have misbehaved at the tulip fields? I am curious to know this because the sign could have been written in other foreign languages as well. For example, there are a lot of German tourists and tourists from South-Asian countries India who visit the fields. Why was the sign particularly written in Chinese?

5. Before the current epidemic what were the results of this campaign? Have the use of volunteers greatly improved the situation at the tulip fields? What is the general role of the volunteers?

6. I also read the online news that during the Easter holiday there were also many visitors at the tulip fields, especially in Bollenstreek, and the growers were cutting the flowers earlier than in the past years. On the Flower Science website, it was mentioned that "the resources that are available for the growers to keep people out of the fields have all been spent". What was the growers' attitude when they saw visitors in the Easter holiday? Which resources do you mean here?

7. How did the visitors enter the fields? Did they see any No Entry signs? Did they just break the rules?

8. As the Flower Science website mentioned, tourists entered the field because they didn't know that the field was private and for business purposes. When I checked the tourism information online, there was not a great deal of emphasis on the distinction between business fields and tourist fields. How could you make more tourists aware of that? Which efforts should be made (if any)?

9. Are there any fines/penalties associated for transgressing private tulip fields?

10. Have you noticed any physical/infrastructure related strategies that farmers adopt to keep the tourists away from the tulip fields (such as construction of physical barriers around the field or water bodies surrounding the field, locked gates preventing entry, etc)?

11. In your opinion, what could be the best solution on managing tourist behavior? I understand there are a lot volunteers put their time and effort on this, this inniative mainly relies on volunteer service, but maybe some backup plans?

## 7.5 Interview questions for NBTC

1. Tulip fields across the country and gardens such as Keukenhof play an important role in Netherlands tourism. Since the Covid_19 pandemic has hit the tourism industry in the country very hard (with news reports and videos showing how badly the tulip farmers/ horticulturists have been affected financially, how they were forced to close their fields to the public and dispose the flowers), how do you (as a marketing strategist), think the pandemic will affect the marketing strategies of tulip fields and gardens for attracting tourists in the future? How will the marketing strategies be different from before?

2. Several tulip farmers and horticulturalists have expressed their resentment against irresponsible tourist behaviour (e.g. trampling over tulips in their fields for taking photographs, entering fields without permission, etc.). How do marketing strategies and promotion related to tulip fields and gardens by the Holland Marketing Organization incorporate responsible tourism measures (such as regulating tourist behavior and numbers)?

3. Are there any specific rules (e.g. fines)/regulations/policies in the Netherlands to manage tourist behavior (e.g., tourists' stepping in the field) in flower gardens/fields?

4. At an individual level, what is your opinion about managing tourist misbehavior at the tulip gardens and fields?

5. Have you offered the farmers any advice about tourist control and management?

6. What do you think about the measures to manage tourist behavior in a post-Covid context? I read a piece of online news, that in the city of Bollenstreek, some farmers are harvesting or cutting down the flowers earlier than last year, but there were still many visitors to the tulip fields in the Easter holiday.

7. You mentioned the high number of tourists during the Covid-19 season. Do you have any data/numbers/information sources, which I could use in my thesis, stating the high number of tourist visits during the COVID-19 season?  Is this number higher than the business-as-usual scenario, or lower?  Are these domestic tourists or international?

8. What is your opinion on potential promotional strategies that could have been useful in preventing the losses incurred by the tulip industry because of this pandemic?

## 7.6 Informed Consent Form

Consent form for the research project

'Exploring perceptions and behavior of Chinese tourists at the tulip fields in the Netherlands '

I have read the information letter about the research project. I am able to ask questions and my questions are answered to my satisfaction. I had enough time to decide to participate in the research.

My participation is completely voluntary. I can withdraw from the research at any time, without having to give a reason.

I give my permission for using the interview data for the following purposes:

Report, presentation and educational purposes

I agree to participate in this interview.

Name and signature of research participant    Date


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I declare that I have informed the research participant about the research. I will notify the participant about matters that could influence his/her participation in the research.



Name and signature of researcher                    Date

## 7.7 List of tables and figures