Mok and DeFranco (1999) note that China has one fifth of the world’s population and the greatest number of potential customers in any country of the world. As Case Study 3.1W highlights, the Chinese outbound tourism market is growing significantly now that travel restrictions have been relaxed and the disposable income levels of a growing middle class are increasing. Mok and DeFranco (1999) outlined a series of dominant Chinese cultural values which need to be considered in designing the marketing offer and in the marketing mix chosen as:

- Chinese tourists are more likely to engage in shopping activities during their trips
- Chinese consumers are more likely to be influenced by opinion leaders than are Westerners
- Chinese consumers are more responsive to relationship marketing techniques
- Chinese consumers are more likely to be brand conscious than Westerners
- decisions on the consumption of tourism services for individuals in China are likely to be the result of group decisions
- Chinese consumers are less responsive to advertising which is openly critical of competitors
- Chinese consumers are more sensitive to products or services which concern numbers (e.g. certain numbers such as 8 are associated with luck or getting rich, while other numbers such as 4 have negative associations).

As China’s economy grows, the demand for consumer products and services will also grow. However, if tourism businesses wish to enter this market, understanding Chinese cultural values and how the Chinese shape their preferences and expectations is a first step in deciding on the type of marketing mix to develop.

References