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## **PolyU study sheds light on the needs of Chinese mainland visitors**

Mainland visitors are mostly interested in buying fashion and beauty products, followed by audio-video and consumer electronic items and jewelry and watches, according to the findings of a recent study jointly conducted by The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU)'s School of Hotel and Tourism Management (HTM) and the Quality Tourism Services Association (QTSA).

In conducting this study, HTM Associate Professor Dr Kevin Wong and his team members have completed 12 in-depth interviews with Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) and surveyed on 717 mainland visitors. The entire project was funded by the SME Development Fund of the SAR Government's Trade and Industry Department and QTSA.

Mr Vincent Fang, Chairman of Quality Tourism Services Association, recognised that, according to the study, 'Price' and 'Quality' were the two most important factors when mainland visitors were shopping in Hong Kong. SMEs were advised to consider the strategy of competing on 'Quality' rather than 'Price' in order to maintain a sustainable advantage. As Quality Tourism Services (QTS) Scheme was recognised by many mainland visitors as a sign for proven quality, the certification is a very viable platform to project quality image.

Elaborating on the research findings, Dr Wong said "Retailers are urged to ask their sales persons to be more courteous, respectful, patient and attentive in dealing with mainland tourists, who found their services to be satisfactory but not excellent. There is also a need for salespersons to improve their proficiency level of Putonghua."

He added that proper display of price tags and discounts available, good after-sales services and refund arrangements are very important to mainland visitors in making a purchase decision. The existing trust and value which these visitors place on Hong Kong's high standards in jewelry and watches and consumer electronic products could be further built upon as a motivating factor to attract repeat purchases.

The study found that the majority of mainland visitors are married couples with kids, and their family earning household incomes between RMB50,000 to 120,000 per year. More than one-third of them are aged between 25 and 35 years. They are fairly well educated with college or university education.

Most of them are on a holiday visit to Hong Kong and travel with friends or colleagues. The majority have chosen to stay in the hotels for two to four days.

About one-third of the respondents came from Guangzhou. The remaining ones came from Shanghai, Beijing, Shenzhen and Zhejiang.

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