A CONFUCIAN ANALYSIS OF CHINESE TOURISTS’ MOTIVATIONS

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ABSTRACT. Studies to date of Chinese tourists as new consumers in the travel marketplace have been largely framed in the context of Western theories. This study initiates a qualitative inquiry to develop a conceptual framework for understanding Chinese tourists’ motivations. The study is informed by Confucian doctrines and extant motivation theories, and substantiated by empirical findings from 79 in-depth interviews. Seen from the perspective of Confucianism, the framework illustrates that the motivations of Chinese tourists arise as a result of the gaps between the Way (the ideal end-state) and ways (the actual state). Tourism is a functional means to bridging multiple gaps perceived in inner as well as outer cultivation. Four conceptual themes are examined as propositions from the framework.

KEYWORDS. Motivations, Confucianism, Chinese, grounded theory, East Asia

INTRODUCTION

Extensive theories of tourists’ motivations have been established and their applications abound in literature (e.g., Dann, 1977; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Pearce & Lee, 2005; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Despite the different paradigms, past studies have attempted to address the same question, namely “Why do people do what they do?” (Strauss, 1992, p. 1). Probably one of the earliest definitions of motivations was proposed by Aristotle, the ancient Greek philosopher, who viewed human action as the result of an appetitive part of the soul and that such appetite initiates approach or avoidance behavior aiming at a certain outcome or end (Korsgaard, 1986). In contemporary research, motivations have been defined as “a response to felt needs and acquired values” within defining parameters such as time, space, society, and economy (Gnoth, 1997, p. 283). It has also been conceptualized as “the product of interaction between events and things in the social world and interpretations of those events and things in people’s psyches” (Strauss, 1992, p. 1). To the extent that motivations derive from such “felt need”, “acquired values”, and “interaction” between an individual and the larger surroundings, it can be argued that three...
conditions precede the formation of motivations: sociocultural context, internalization, and need deficit.

Firstly, the understanding of motivations must be situated within the sociocultural context the individuals inhabit (Maehr, 1977). Motivations are not solely an intrapsychological functioning within the individual; the conceptualization must refer to “the social and cultural contexts within which individual actions take place” (Rueda & Moll, 1994, p. 120). Secondly, the social and cultural norms are internalized, during which process certain values are prioritized or assigned a relative importance. Through internalization one determines what goods or activities are to be pursued or avoided (Dann, 1977; Ryan & Deci, 2000), and achieves the goal of social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1977). Thirdly, individuals are driven by a felt need to engage in consumption behavior and expect to satisfy certain goals (Crompton, 1979; Gnoth, 1997). If a need is not felt, one may not be driven to take action. As Pearce (2011) argued, one may regard certain values highly but be completely satisfied with one’s current situation and circumstances. The value has therefore no motivational implication for the individual’s decision choices. The need-based postulation of motivations corresponds to Murray’s need–press concept (1938) that action is usually directional, aiming to abate the urgency of certain needs. It also coincides with Lewin’s tension-based motivation theory (1951) where the waxing and waning properties of a goal-oriented tension system is the driving force of human motivations (Kuhl, 2000).

An alternative view of the need-based paradigm is the real–ideal self theory by Grunow-Lutter (1983) that one elevates the real self towards the ideal self through transformation in experiences. Thus, the underlying mechanism for motivations can be interpreted as an internally generated, restorative function that initiates when the individual is in a state of disequilibrium and aims to reduce the perceived discrepancy, such as distance between real self and ideal self, through certain actions or experiences. On the one hand, there is the ideal end-state which one desires to have but does not possess. On the other, there are real situations that the individual wishes to transform in terms of need fulfillment (Granert & Muller, 1996; Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987). The perceived need deficit may prompt the person to consider a purchase, as a matching process towards the desired state (Hawkins, Best, & Coney, 1998; Moutinho, 2000). Translated into the context of tourism, this can be reflected in an urge to escape after working overtime year-round, or a drive to take the long-separated family on tours.

**MOTIVATIONS OF CHINESE TOURISTS**

The growth impetus and scale of Chinese outbound and domestic tourism markets have captured the attention of the tourism industry. The number of outbound tourists rose to 70.3 million in 2011, up 323% over 10 years (China Outbound Tourism Research Institute, 2012). During the spring festival golden week in 2012, a reported 176 million Chinese toured the famous sites in the country, a 14.9% increase on the previous year (China National Tourism Administration, 2012). Although tourism has been criticized as a phenomenon that is highly planned and regulated by the government (Tse, 2011), China’s integration into the world economy has inevitably expedited the growth of a fresh troupe of consumers whose consumptive styles are being fashioned in the new social and cultural contexts. These Chinese consumers are characterized by more disposable income, increased leisure time, and an increasing desire for a modern subsistence way of life. Tourism during free time becomes a favorite pastime by choice, and leisure spending has become a growing share in household expenditure (Li, 2012; Liu, 2012; Lu, 2008).

Modernization theory (Inglehart, 1997; Inglehart & Baker, 2000) holds that as a country modernizes, people’s focus shifts from immediate survival (materialist) needs to self-expression (postmaterialist) needs such as satisfaction with one’s life and quality of life. China’s development seems to attest to this proposition. Thanks to its recent rapid economic growth, Chinese consumers are increasingly resorting
to leisure as a means of improving their quality of life, and tourism is quickly becoming a means of self-expression. The new lifestyle does not necessarily indicate a denigration of traditional culture; rather, it may facilitate the fulfillment of values that would otherwise not be addressed to the same extent. For example, the prevalence of shopping for friends, relatives, and colleagues has been validated consistently in previous tourism literature (Lehto, Cai, O’Leary, & Huang, 2004; Xu & McGehee, 2012). The popular press in China has also reported the importance of understanding and serving the emerging Chinese family tourism market where expanding children’s horizon appears to be a primary interest (Zhang & Zong, 2012).

As destinations, hotel chains, and retailers around the globe wish to tap into the market, several fundamental questions need to be addressed first: what are the motivations of Chinese tourists? Why do the Chinese travel? Although many studies have attempted to identify motivational factors that drive Chinese tourists, most have adopted Western paradigms such as the push–pull typology. However, there has been a growing consciousness of the limitations of Western paradigms for the Chinese market due to lack of reference to Chinese culture (Hsu, Cai, & Li, 2010; Tse, 2011). Culture has been seen as one of the underlying determinants of Chinese consumer behavior (Li, Zhang, & Cai, 2013). The cultural values an individual upholds may influence why and how he/she travels as a tourist. As a new perspective of studying Chinese tourists’ motivations, the present study aims to uncover the motivations of Chinese tourists by consulting Confucianism, which is considered as the dominant personal and social value system in Chinese society.

The present study starts its investigation of Chinese tourists’ motivations based on the fundamental premise of Confucianism: the Way. It is what Confucius considered to be the ideal way of life or “the ultimate meaning of human existence” (Tu & Tucker, 2003). The Way encompasses all virtues of humankind including sincerity, respectfulness, justice, kindness, and the like (Creel, 1960). This research postulates that the Way parallels the idea of ideal life, in contrast to the actual “ways” in which one lives. To achieve the Way, one must incessantly transcend the “ways” via inner and outer cultivation. A qualitative approach was adopted in the current study to uncover and conceptualize motivations of Chinese tourists. Through an intense scrutiny of textual data collected from 79 in-depth interviews, a framework was constructed to synthesize the findings, and four conceptual themes were proposed. The study results were expected to provide a culturally rich understanding of Chinese tourists’ motivations.

Confucianism: The Way, Transcendence, and Inner/Outer Cultivation

As a comprehensive system of moral, social, and political philosophy, Confucianism has served as the cornerstone of traditional Chinese culture, and exerted great influence over a culturally defined “Confucian Asia” consisting of Mainland China, Taiwan, Singapore, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam (Ashkanasy, 2002). Confucianism is pragmatically humanistic; it demonstrates profound care for the existential experience. Unlike Taoism and Buddhism, Confucianism rejects otherworldly salvation and promotes a more active attitude toward life. The fundamental question that Confucianism attempts to answer is how to grow into an authentic human being; and the answer lies in a system of social institutions and transcendent ideals (Tu, 1972). One must possess a host of virtues, including five major categories: Ren (humaness), Yi (faithfulness), Li (propriety), Zhi (wisdom), and Xin (trustworthiness). Other recurring themes in Confucian classics included loyalty, filial piety, harmony, forgiveness, and honesty. The many important virtues have laid the foundation for the Confucian Way (Yao, 2000). As one of the most frequently cited concepts in Chinese philosophy, the Way represents the ideals in Confucianism (Ching, 1974). It is about “how a Confucian follower should behave, how he should lead his life and what he must do for an ideal society” (Yao, 2000, p. 25). The content of the Way is multidimensional, including the values and virtues deliberated in Confucian...
doctrines. The Way represents the above and beyond, as different from the actual state of life which may not be considered as ideal. If the Way suggests the realization of Confucian ideals, in the actual “ways” of life such ideals may not be addressed to the same extent. To follow the Way, one should transcend the “ways” in which one lives.

As a fundamental concept in philosophy and religion, “transcendence” originally connoted “climbing or going beyond” in Latin. In contrast to “immanence”, which is a state of “being”, “transcendence” stresses the human capacity of “becoming” and serves as “a source of intrinsic motivation that drives, directs, and selects behavior” (Piedmont, 1999, p. 988). The Confucian sense of transcendence is considered to be a “becoming” process, which takes the form of an upward, gradual integration towards the Way (Zhao, 2009). It is a “ceaseless process through which humanity in its all-embracing fullness is concretely realized” (Tu, 1985, p.52), and is similar to the sociological notion of self-actualization or self-realization as defined by Grunow-Lutter (1983). Confucian transcendence is a pathway in which one strives to narrow the perceived gap between the actual and the ideal through selected activities. To travel the pathway, two major domains of values need to be observed: inner cultivation and outer cultivation. The two domains are concerned with self, and the relationship between self and others respectively. Inner cultivation refers to self-development, an important goal of the cultivation of intellectuals in traditional Chinese society (Yang, 1986). Outer cultivation relates to one’s relationship with others, which includes family, social circle, society, and nature (Tu, 1972).

The qualities of a true human being include a well-balanced self, a well-ordered family, and harmonious communion with fellow human beings, society, and the universe (Zhang, 2008). Interpersonally, there are five relationships considered to be most fundamental: sovereign–subject, husband–wife, parent–child, elder brother–younger brother, and friend–friend. Some relations are predetermined while others are established voluntarily but all address reciprocity or mutual obligations. The Confucian vision of society emphasizes social and political engagement and a sense of citizenship; it rejects the option of complete detachment from society. The main function of the state is to guarantee order, peace, and people’s welfare. Lastly, a harmonious relationship between humans and the natural world is advocated. Confucius said, “The wise love water; the benevolent love mountains. The wise move; the benevolent are static. The wise are happy; the benevolent enjoy longevity” (Analects 6:21, Waley, 1938, p. 120). By drawing parallels between natural elements (mountain and water) and wisdom, Confucius characterized nature as a source of inspiration and believed that the interaction with nature would be beneficial to the development of the Way.

**Confucianism and Chinese Tourists’ Behavior**

Whether Confucianism still exerts an influence on Chinese behavior has drawn scholarly interests (Lin, 2011). A review of literature in both academic and popular sources reveals that Chinese tourist behavior was found to be culture-specific, and that Confucian values were believed to play an important role in shaping tourists’ preferences and expectations (e.g., Mok & DeFranco, 2000; Tse & Hobson, 2008). Based on discussions of the key Confucian values, Mok and DeFranco (2000) proposed a conceptual framework containing six cultural attributes of Chinese consumers. They are respect for authority, interdependence, face, group orientation, harmony, and external attribution. Among others, the idea of harmony was singled out as the fundamental Confucian assumption as the authors postulated that the Chinese are group-oriented and thereby pursue proper interrelationships. Understanding the Chinese pursuit of harmonious relationships, as argued by the authors, will be the first step for any business that desires a meaningful share of the Chinese market. As one of the limited empirical studies that examined Confucianism in a tourism context, Kwek and Lee (2010) looked into the impact of Confucianism on Chinese corporate leisure travelers to
Australia. Through observations and interviews of participants of 10 guided corporate package tours, which involved a total of 64 Chinese nationals, the authors identified “harmony” as the central theme representing tourist behavior. Also demonstrated in the group dynamic are respect for authority, relationship building, and conformity to the leader’s interests, which are claimed to be intertwining in such a way that all connect to the central concept of harmony. The nature of these themes was further examined and summarized in the form of cultural values. The authors concluded that the notion of harmony, along with those of hierarchy, authority, respect, and loyalty observed in the group behavior, is embedded in the Confucianism value of Li (propriety). A moral principle which emphasizes interpersonal relationship, Li despises conflict and encourages adherence to group harmony. The study uncovered that, while participating in tourism activities away from work and home, the travelers still conform to what Li proposes as the right organizational behavior. In the tourism setting, which is unusual and non-residential, Chinese tourists seem to still uphold their home-related societal norms and value systems. The authors further suggested that touristic activities can be conducive to the Chinese practice of harmony with valued social groups. Although this and other previous studies have identified the influence of Chinese culture and cultural values on Chinese tourists’ behavior, no study to date has attempted to understand Chinese tourists’ motivations from a Confucian perspective.

**Tourists’ Motivations**

Residing within the broader interest area of human motivations, tourists’ motivations have been a focal point of interest in tourism studies thanks to their important role in the rationalization of destination choice, behavioral preference, and on-site experience (Crompton, 1979; Fodness, 1994; Pearce, 2011). Many schemes in contemporary tourists’ motivations are grounded in early efforts in psychology; Murray’s (1938) need system and Lewin’s (1951) tension-based theory are examples of such. The theories commonly hold that motivations are the sum of biological and sociocultural needs that lead to human action. As an underlying driving mechanism, the needs set the stage for actions that aim to subdue the power of such needs. Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs synthesized the previous need-based motivation theories and proposed a five-tier pyramid with the most basic physiological needs at the bottom and the need for self-actualization at the top. Needs of the lower levels of needs (physiological, safety/security, and love/belonging) must be satisfied prior to the realization of higher-level needs (self-esteem and self-actualization). Maslow’s (1943) hierarchical approach has served as a basis for numerous studies in the tourism field, exemplified by the notable development of the travel career ladder (TCL) and travel career patterns (TCP) by Pearce (2011).

Moving through the timeline of research in tourists’ motivations, there has been a host of theories proposed and empirically validated by tourism scholars, such as the push–pull typology by Dann (1977, 1981) and Crompton (1979), the social psychological model by Iso-Ahola (1982), and TCPs by Pearce (1988, 2005). Both Dann and Crompton suggested the push–pull distinction in motivations. Push factors are internal to individuals, instil a desire to travel, and aim at satisfying various psychological needs. Pull factors, on the other hand, are external to the individual and stress the destination attributes that are likely to attract people. Dann (1977, 1981) noted two tourist motives: anomie (the desire to transcend isolation) and ego-enhancement (the need for recognition). Both of these motives were considered to be push factors. Furthering these conceptualizations, Crompton (1979) proposed a nine-motive model, of which seven were push motives and two were pull motives. The research of Iso-Ahola (1982) and Mannell and Iso-Ahola (1987) presented two major motivational forces for tourism and leisure behavior: approach (seeking) and avoidance (escape). Social orientation (personal or interpersonal) was also proposed as a dimension. It was conceptualized that people participate in tourism activities due to two motivations: to escape from personal and/or interpersonal environments,
and to seek personal and/or interpersonal rewards. Based on the construct of optimal arousal, the two dichotomous dimensions mirrored Dann’s anomie and ego-enhancement motives.

TCP represents a different approach in motivational theories. The initial conceptual scheme, known as TCL (Pearce, 1988), was built upon Maslow’s hierarchy of needs and suggested a five-staged ladder of motivational needs. In ascending mode, the ladder includes relaxation and bodily needs, stimulation needs, relationship needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization or personal growth needs. The major thesis of the theory is that tourists’ motivations change with tourism experience. As tourists become more experienced, they tend to move up the ladder and are motivated more by the higher level needs. Extending his prior research, Pearce (2005) and Pearce and Lee (2005) developed a three-part model where tourists’ motivations were structured into core, middle, and outer layers with varied importance. A core layer of motives exist for all tourists and stays relatively unaffected by tourism experience. These motives are to escape and relax, to experience novelty, and to build relationships. For tourists with extensive experiences, the middle layer of motives, consisting of kinship, nature, self-actualization, and self-enhancement, is more important than the outer layer, which includes nostalgia, autonomy, stimulation, romance, and social status. For tourists with limited experience, all motives tend to be important (Pearce, 2011).

Each of these above reviewed motivation theories has influenced empirical research on tourists’ motivations. In the Chinese context, both domestic and outbound tourists’ motivations have been assessed. Most studies have adopted the push–pull typology as the guiding framework and identified motivational factors such as “prestige”, “novelty”, and “kinship enhancement” (e.g., Hsu & Lam, 2003; Wu, Xu, & Erdogan, 2009; Zhang & Lam, 1999). With a few exceptions, the quantitative approach was used in all Chinese tourists’ motivation studies (Hua & Yoo, 2011). While prior research enhanced the understanding of Chinese tourists, they failed to inquire into how and why such motivational factors are relevant and important in the Chinese context. For example, nearly all cultures acknowledge the importance of family relationships (Carr, 2011), but the inter-family interactions, parenting philosophies and style may vary greatly across cultures. Because of such differences, the same motivational factor may not suggest the same expectations for Chinese tourists. As Pearce (2011) argued, one major methodological difficulty in measuring motivations has been cultural variation. While the basic biological needs such as food and drink are understood across cultures, the social and cultural realities are not as readily defined or directly observed. The cultural variability in tourists’ motivations has also been noted by Kim (1999), who postulated that knowledge of cultural differences may contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of cross-cultural tourism management. Therefore, an in-depth understanding of Chinese tourists’ motivations becomes an important and necessary issue for tourism researchers to address.

In fact, the chronological review of motivational theories has revealed that recent theory development has considered motivations in a larger context such as the life cycle of tourists as typified by TCP. The larger context parallels the notion of “life space” by Lewin (1935), who maintained that people’s conceptions of their past, present, and future states bear motivational relevance. If the future is represented by goals, then the motivations to achieve the goals can be interpreted as a bridge between the future (the desired) and the present (Karniol & Ross, 1996). To the extent that motivations are embedded in the life context and that the appraisal of motivations needs to be situated within a framework that considers the preferred end-state of the individuals (Lewin, 1951; Pearce, 2011), this study aimed to assess Chinese tourist motivation within the “Way”, the representation of the preferred end-state. Without attempting to force Chinese tourists’ motivations into existing dimensionalities, the present study relies on Confucianism as the cultural backdrop and aims to unearth important motivational forces that drive Chinese tourists. It should be noted that Confucianism is not a tourism theory or a
framework directly related to tourist motivation; it is the cultural context within which the research is framed.

**METHOD**

To the extent that the appraisal of motivations should allow multiple pathways to overcome “the limitation of questionnaire and survey material” (Pearce, 2011, p. 48), the present study designed a qualitative procedure that aims for the depth and insights of interview data to conceptualize motivations for Chinese tourism decisions. Purposive sampling was conducted to approach Chinese tourists who “have had experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched” (Kruger, 1988, p. 150). In-depth interviews were conducted with 79 Chinese tourists between May and July 2012 in five public venues, including three tourist destinations (56): one public beach, one national forest park, and one Buddha statue park. All three are four-A scenic areas based on national classification and located in eastern China; and two international terminals: one at Beijing Capital International Airport (15) and the other at Incheon International Airport (8). The selection decision of sampling sites was based on daily tourist receipts, variety in tourist composition, and logistical accessibility including the locality and mobility of the interviewers. With the permission of the management level, potential subjects were approached randomly in the rest/waiting areas and asked if they were on a leisure trip. Then they were introduced to the purpose of the study, informed of the interview format, and invited to participate. The interviews were held on-site by the lead researcher and three trained college students. The sample size was finalized following the rule of data saturation as suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2008); that is, the process of sampling continued until the point at which the responses of interviewees became redundant and no new pattern was emerging.

The study applies the principle of inductive reasoning while also employing the life domains defined by the Confucian Way, to guide data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The interview script addressed the following open-ended questions:

1. Meaning of travel in relation to one’s ideal life, including “Would you like to talk about the way you would like to (i) see yourself and (ii) see yourself in the context of family/social life/society/nature?” and “Does travel and/or your current trip play a role in it?”
2. Meaning of travel in relation to one’s actual life, including “Would you like to talk about the way you actually see yourself and yourself in your family/social life/in the society/with nature?” and “Does travel and/or your current trip play a role in it?”
3. General travel characteristics and behaviors.
4. Specific perceptions and expectations of the current trip.

Unidentifiable demographic information was collected at the end. Semi-structured in nature, the questions were designed to encourage elaborations and justifications about topics. Before the interviews were initiated, the survey was back-translated for content validity. To detect potential problems, the lead researcher pilot-tested the questions with 30 Chinese university students and elicited critiques/feedback on three tourism forums on douban.com, which is a major social network site in China well known for group discussions. Necessary modifications were made based on the pilot-test results.

All interviews were conducted in Chinese, lasting for approximately 35–40 minutes, and were recorded with the permission of the interviewees. As member checking was only possible during the interviews, interviewers probed, paraphrased, and summarized the information to help ensure accuracy and eliminate multiple possibilities for interpretation. Digital recordings were transcribed verbatim for data analysis, which followed a three-staged grounded theory procedure (Creswell, 2007). The purpose of grounded theory is to uncover and explicate a theory which resides within the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Although the defining feature of grounded theory is inductive, the inductive–deductive interplay is often present as researchers inevitably begin with a
research scope and relevant prior knowledge instead of “ground zero” (McGhee, Marland, & Atkinson, 2007). A strict inductive–deductive dualism is not appropriate “if knowledge held by those involved in the phenomena of inquiry is recognized as practical theorizing” (Finch, 2002, p. 215). In fact, Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 111) stated that “while coding we are constantly moving between inductive and deductive thinking... There is a constant interplay between proposing and checking. This back and forth movement is what makes our theory grounded”. In the present study, the data analysis was informed by the major life domains of the Way, which are self, family, social life, society, and nature. The coding process starts with open coding, which identified basic-level, salient themes that emerged from the data. During axial coding, open codes were grouped into a logic diagram with categories and subcategories. Selective coding was utilized when more abstract thematic patterns were identified and the hierarchy finalized. Data coding was conducted by the first author and independent coders. Then the second and third author acted as auditors to verify both the process and the results of data coding (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Special attention was paid to the comparison of Chinese–English translation. Tables 1–3 illustrate examples of the coding process.

**FINDINGS**

Interviewees consisted of 44 (56%) females and 35 (44%) males. The ages of the interviewees ranged from 18- to 65-year-olds, with 12 of them between the ages of 18–24 years, 17 between 25–34, 19 between 35–44, 10 between 45–54, 13 between 55–65, and eight older than 65. Living in different areas in China, they were all on leisure trips, either alone or with others. Regarding travel-related characteristics, informants reported an average of three leisure trips per year. Their average trip length was four days. Despite the demographic differences in gender, age, hometown, and travel party size as shown in Table 4, results of the analysis revealed two major themes commonly addressed during the interviews: motivations for inner cultivation, and motivations for outer cultivation. Both categories encapsulate lower level categories that are discussed below. Tourism was perceived as a means to bridging gaps in self, family, social life, society, and nature. The differences between the ideal Way and the actual “ways” are shown in Table 5. As the accumulated outcome of the findings, a motivation framework for Chinese tourists is proposed in Figure 1, followed by a discussion of four major conceptual themes that are specific to the Chinese context.

**TABLE 1. Example of an Open Code**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Open code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational opportunities for children</td>
<td>There is no better way for children to learn geography than to see it. It is always good for the next generation to know national history and culture. Living in a small city, my child wants to open his/her eyes and see a bigger world.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 2. Example of Axial Coding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Higher-level category-1st order</th>
<th>Lower-level category-2nd order</th>
<th>Open codes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tourism as a means to bridge perceived gap in family</td>
<td>Tourist motive–parenting</td>
<td>Busy with work took me away from leisure time with my child. Desire educational opportunities for children. My children are put under pressure at school and I want to help them escape it. Need to improve my child’s social skills/blend in with others. School emphasis too much on knowledge but not character building. It’s been a long time since my family did something fun together.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tourism as a Means to Bridging the Perceived Gap in the Self

The first salient category relates to tourism as a means to bridging the perceived discrepancy in self. Many tourists used descriptors such as “intellectual fulfillment”, “self-development”, and “equilibrium” to portray their idealized version of life. They did not perceive their current life as ideal. The everyday environment where most interviewees felt tired and stressed was not conducive to the ideal state. As tourists, they seemed to expect to divert from the undesirable state which they described as dull, tiring, boring, or grey. Tourism was seen as a context for two levels of betterment of self. Firstly, it contributes to the spiritual level in the form of learning and gaining inspirations, as illustrated by an interviewee quoting a Chinese proverb: “Traveling ten thousand miles is better than reading ten thousand books.” To some tourists, interaction with travel companions was also considered as a means for knowledge and experience acquisition. This can be exemplified in the response of a college student: “Confucius used to say that walking along with three people, one can find one’s teacher among them. Therefore, I wanted to broaden my horizon by getting out and interacting with others.” The sentiment of learning and intellectual development was more salient among tourists from second- and third-tier cities, as shared by a tourist: “Living in a small city I feel like a frog in a well. That’s why I often want to see the lives of the city dwellers and inspire myself for higher goals.” For these second- and third-tier city tourists, the discrepancy between living environments was noted strongly as a matter of fact in China. A tourist acknowledged: “For those rich folk in first-tier cities, they can travel abroad. We

### TABLE 3. Example of Selective Coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major category</th>
<th>Higher-level categories</th>
<th>Lower-level categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation for Inner Cultivation</td>
<td>Tourism as a means to bridge perceived gap in self.</td>
<td>Satisfy intellectual curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stress relief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Restoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gain knowledge/experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation for Outer Cultivation</td>
<td>Tourism as a means to bridge perceived gap in family.</td>
<td>Parenting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Filial piety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Familial harmony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tourism as a means to bridge perceived gap in social life.</td>
<td>Strengthen relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Common ground of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sharpening social skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tourism as a means to bridge perceived gap in society.</td>
<td>Experience different systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Special social activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shopping benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tourism as a means to bridge perceived gap in nature.</td>
<td>Get inspiration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Aesthetic enjoyment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Healthy local produce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Get away from city environments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 4. Sample Demographics (Frequencies and Proportions), N = 79

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Statistics (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–44</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45–54</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55–65</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older than 65</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hometown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial city</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefectural city</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Township</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Party size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
are inconvenienced by the lack of money and information. But at least we have the resources to travel around China."

Secondly, tourism betters the physical self in the sense of recuperation and restoration. Breaking the daily routine was perceived to be important and tourism was indicated as a preferred way to offset a sedentary lifestyle, release stress from daily chores, and make one return to work with more vigor. The Confucian notion of Zhong-yong (the doctrine of the Mean), which opts for balance and moderation, and against excess and extremes, was referred to as a golden rule in personal life. One interviewee considered tourism to be a meaningful diversion to pursue, by indicating that “Life should not be all about work and obligations. If you overkill, you may miss the target. Being a tourist once in a while is good for one’s overall state. It balances the flow of energy and recovers mind and body to its potential”. Most tourists seemed to expect refreshing and recuperative effects from their current trip, although they acknowledged that such effect would likely to be short-lived.

Tourism as a Means to Bridging the Perceived Gap in the Family

Cultivation of the relationship between self and family was a major concern. The tourists indicated the importance of family ties and their

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5. Example of Differences Between the Way and “Ways”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Way – the ideal state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inner Cultivation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I fulfill my intellectual curiosity and broaden my horizon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel healthy, energized, and optimistic at all times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I take occasional breaks from my routine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I discover new places and try new things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is a reasonable work-life balance and I have personal time and space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outer Cultivation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I spend quality time accompanying loved ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family is well bonded and we regularly communicate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am fulfilling my role as son/daughter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am hands-on with my children’s education and development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social life</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My ego is enhanced having friends admire my knowledge and/or experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get to strengthen relationship with my friends and important others. I am good at socializing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get to meet people and make friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Society and Social system</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have knowledge about this and other societies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am concerned about the betterment of social systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I live in a country where I have the freedom to choose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human and Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On a regular basis I experience outdoors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get inspiration through nature appreciation, which is believed to be beneficial to character building.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
respective obligations but most admitted that spending quality time together has been long overdue. Tourism was then sought as an opportunity to bridge the gap between the ideal and the actual situation. Firstly, enhancement of familial harmony, cohesiveness, and communication was a salient theme expected to be achieved through collective experience. “When a family is harmonious, everything succeeds.”, a tourist contended. “It’s been a long time since my family did something fun together so we would like to spend time experiencing something new and sharing with each other.” Secondly, parental responsibility was emphasized, particularly in relation to children’s educational and developmental needs. Most parents agreed that their children were put under excessive pressure at school. “My fourth-grader attends school from 7.00 am to 4.30 pm weekdays, plus four-hour tutorial sessions at the weekend”, a mother acknowledged. “Therefore, it is important to help her to escape from the stressful environment, participate in outdoor activities, and to learn about society and culture.” Similar sentiments were shared by a father who admitted: “Busy work took me away from monitoring my child’s school performance and she was not doing so well. This summer I decided to show her around famous attractions that make up Chinese history.” Also, some parents considered tourism as an incentive and reward for children’s good performance at school.

In addition to meeting children’s educational needs, the Confucian value of filial piety or devotion of the child to his parents was mentioned by many as the prime motivation when touring with the elderly. Most tourists discussed the importance of reciprocity in intergenerational relationships (“Just as our parents looked after us despite very little means, we are supposed to look after them and make them happy.”), and that the open-door policy and economic growth made the pursuit of filial piety possible in more ways. It becomes a goal that may be satisfied not only at home but also with tourism. The sense of obligation seemed to be commonly shared across different ages,
occupations, and household roles, and can be manifested in a tourist accompanying his or her mother and sister: “Mother’s Day is coming up. I was debating between giving my mom a nice gift, as I did in previous years, or taking her to places she has been longing to visit. As the oldest son, I made the right choice by organizing the family trip. Nowadays, money is not an issue but being around their children is more precious to the elderly.”

Tourism as a Means to Bridging the Perceived Gap in the Social Life

Strengthening relationships with co-workers, friends, or other acquaintances is a goal that may be fulfilled with the help of tourism. Many considered tourism as a chance for better and more intense interactions among friends and acquaintances. A college student shared that “there used to be a tense relationship in my dormitory that we really wanted to resolve. We decided to travel together. During the trip, we shared the same adventure, were able to put egos aside, and be open as much as possible.” One corporate employee traveling with several friends disclosed that they “often visited local attractions during the weekends and traveled to long-haul destinations during the holidays. It is a good chance to consolidate the relationship.” Several related notions were mentioned, including guanzi (social circles), guanxi (relationships, network of mutual obligations), mianzi (face), renqing (favor), and bao (reciprocation). Among the tourists who have emphasized tourism’s role in the social life, tourism seems to necessarily involve a relationship or a process by which a relationship is expected to come into being. One woman hinted that she and her husband were invited to the trip by relatives who wanted to reciprocate a favor. A male tourist was more open about his motives which involved spending time with important others in his social circle. He advocated the importance of relationship building by stating that “relationship in China is nurtured through reciprocating efforts. To spend time with my in-group helps strengthen guanxi and resolve misunderstandings.”

In addition to building and nurturing relationships with others, tourism was also expected to improve the self-image in the eyes of companions. Again, the far-from-the norm, relaxing environment was perceived to be more favorable than the day-to-day setting to share common ground and make a good impression. “It would be easier [during the trip],” a tourist shared, “to find the time and space to communicate with your companions and showcase the good side of you that may be unknown to them.” In addition, sharpening social skills was in the minds of some tourists when asked to comment on their current sociability, as addressed by one group tourist: “I am a little awkward at socializing and I consider that a weak point in my competence. Hopefully, my social skills can be further enhanced traveling with my friends.” In this sense, tourism is functional; it allows the perceived gap in one’s social life to be narrowed.

Tourism as a Means to Bridging the Perceived Gap in Society

The betterment of society was also indicated as a motivational theme. The active engagement in society as a citizen, as emphasized by Confucius, seemed to be implied. Many tourists, when discussed their desired state of life, stated that they were not content with, but unable to, change the social facts in China. Despite the criticism or unwillingness to disclose too much about their political values, most tourists seemed to exhibit an interest in exploring and seeing many aspects of society. Many indicated an interest in touring abroad, “to see different social systems, politics, economy, culture, and lifestyles, not necessarily better or worse than my own”, as mentioned by a tourist. However, such curiosity did not seem to encompass desires for interaction with the local residents, either in a domestic or outbound tourism context. Chinese tourists seem to draw a distinctive boundary between themselves and the locals or anyone not in their in-group. They are more interested to be observers that take in and digest information. Towards the
locals, they seem to exercise a certain level of caution and distrust. Visiting landmark attractions is commonly considered important as verification and confirmation of existing knowledge, but more saliently, there were potential interests in issues related to the subsistence ways of life of local people, for instance, how members of society treat each other. One tourist commented: “As a modern citizen, we should go out and see things with our own eyes. What the problems we have are in fact problems for society at large. Because of our long history, the situation is not easily changed. We hope for betterment but it will take time. I go abroad to see what kind of lifestyle others have. I have visited quite a few foreign countries and have been pondering why they seemed happier with their lives. Maybe it’s time to reflect on our own lives.” Additionally, some tourists argued from a more tangible standpoint, focusing on how a different societal system would be a “better fit” for themselves. It was a commonly shared sentiment that shopping overseas would avoid high import duty and save against weaker currencies. A tourist in Hong Kong shared the following: “The shopping situation in mainland China is less than ideal in terms of price, variety, and trendiness. I wish we could have more choice and fewer constraints. I plan to buy a list of things which would cost much more here in mainland China.” Furthermore, there were tourists demonstrating curiosity for social activities not legalized or widely available in mainland China, such as casinos, religious sites, and pride parades. Such interests were found to be attributable to personal backgrounds.

Tourism as a Means to Bridging the Perceived Gap in Nature

The desire to experience the outdoors and get close to nature was noted strongly in the interviews. Nature is believed to be a source of blessing and a harmonious co-existence with nature is much sought after. Nature was believed to provide both physiological and psychological comfort. Firstly, it is about an unpolluted environment, outdoor activities, and healthy local produce lacking in city settings. Secondly, detachment from the city and immersion in a natural environment seems to be conducive to a feeling of simplicity. The sentiment of nostalgia towards nature was salient among the city dwellers, as one tourist contended: “China has its roots in agriculture. We are losing the roots as everybody is rushing into big cities. I have been living in the city for many years and now I am concerned about the smog, noise, and food safety issue. I always long for a return to a farm-based life, to nature, just like the literati in early times.”

The symbolism of nature in Confucianism and Chinese culture at large was discussed as an important factor behind the tourism decisions. To many informants, nature was interlinked with their ideal way of life. Many parents mentioned that they would expect children to get moral and spiritual inspiration or aesthetic enjoyment through landscape appreciation, which they believed to be beneficial to character building. Due to the test-oriented educational environment, holistic learning in the Chinese education system is lacking and parents seem to seek informal educational platforms such as vacations where children can see beyond books and learn about history, society, and nature. A mother shared that “every summer I take my son [high-school student] to tour the famous cites [in China] so he can learn something beyond the classroom. Just earlier today he told me, ’Mom, I think the river is like life. Life is just like the river running through. I feel my spirit reviving.’ I was very happy to hear that. There are always different kinds of breathtaking attractions. But nature made him think.”

A FRAMEWORK OF CHINESE TOURISTS’ MOTIVATIONS

Drawing on the findings, the study proposed a conceptual framework of Chinese tourists’ motivations as shown in Figure 1. Major conceptual themes associated with the Chinese context, representing higher-level observations based on the interviews, are discussed below.
Conceptual Theme I: The Motivations of Chinese Tourists Consist of Two Domains: Inner Cultivation and Outer Cultivation

A notable observation among the interviewees was that Confucianism had a salient influence on their motivations to travel, which seem to be goal-oriented and purposive. The two domains of Confucian transcendence, namely inner and outer cultivation, were well demonstrated in the interviews. From one perspective, the individuals expected to obtain betterment of the self during the trips. The betterment included both intellectual enhancement, and physical recuperation and restoration. Such goals were believed to be achievable in a vacation environment which helped tourists transcend mental and physical locality. From another perspective, all interviewees seemed to have a set of defined roles and corresponding obligations to which they were expected to conform. They saw tourism as a functional way to better position the self with others, which include family, social life, society, and nature. Informants also pointed out that the inner and outer domains may complement each other. For example, a refreshed body/mind was believed to facilitate other aspects in life, such as a harmonious relationship with others, while quality time spent together with family would contribute to the personal well-being.

Conceptual Theme II: Chinese Tourists’ Motivations are In-Group-, Rather Than Out-Group-, Oriented

While relationship building was found to be a salient motivation, Chinese tourists seemed to draw a clear distinction between in-group and out-group. Within their in-group, such as family and friends, they are committed to reciprocate and maintain collective harmony. As an interviewee indicated: “To tour together is not to escape, but to build a network and elevate the self-image.” Outside the in-group, the tourists seemed not to care as much and demonstrate caution and suspicion towards locals and other tourists. Such sentiment was evident when issues regarding out-group motivations, such as aspirations to interact with other tourists or local residents while at destinations, were probed. Chinese tourists seemed to draw a distinctive boundary between themselves and the locals or anyone not in their in-group. They were more interested in being sightseeing-oriented tourists that take in and digest information. The curiosity about the destination did not seem to accompany desires for interaction with the local residents. This is in contrast to the emphasis placed on socially bounded in-groups. For example, the obligation or reciprocity of accompanying family or friends on a tour was exercised from an in-group standpoint, focused on existing or potential relationships between interdependent individuals.

Conceptual Theme III: The Motivations of Chinese Tourists Arise From the Gap Between the Way and “ways”, and Aim to Bridge the Gap

The Confucian Way involve a method (how), a process (becoming), and an end (the Way). As demonstrated in the interviews, Chinese motivations arose from the discrepancy between the ideal Way that one desires to live, and the actual “ways” in life. From one perspective, the informant described the Way of life as constraint-free. From another perspective, given attainable resources, they had to live in a certain manner, subject to realities. The tension between “the ideal” and “the actual” seemed to prompt motivations to reduce the gap by engaging in certain activities (“how”). Interviewees identified areas for improvement in their current life, and tourism was considered as a means to bridging the perceived gap between the actual and the ideal. Most tourists did not see tourism as an escape, but rather an opportunity to rise above the actualities of daily life. They expected that tourism could provide the time and space to facilitate relationships or help them go back to work and life in a better state. As a tourist noted, “of course tourism is not the ultimate solution, but I like to be on the road every once in a while, just to be myself.” Tourism seemed to be a created means and a part of the continuous
“becoming” for one to get closer to his/her desired state of life.

**Conceptual Theme IV: The Motivations of Chinese Tourists are Influenced by the Current Socioeconomic Context in China**

The macro environment plays a supportive or inhibitive role in the construction of human motivation (Rueda & Moll, 1994). In addition to Confucianism, the interviews also testified to the influence of the current social and economic context in China. When the informants contextualized their motivations, they fondly spoke of the social phenomena including relaxed government policy, increased leisure time, and more disposable income coupled with a relatively decreased cost of tourism. Most interviewees indicated that they were able to travel to satisfy certain desires because of the improvement in their personal financial situation. Modernization was also noted as a contextual factor. China’s increased engagement with the outside world seemed to empower the Chinese tourists who found themselves able to honor the classic Confucian ideals with modern manifestations such as tourism. Many informants expressed interest in visiting overseas as a means to achieve personal or relational goals. Some frequent travelers indicated that they pursued diverse, lifestyle-related tourism experiences such as going on a cruise, a farm stay, and staying at spa resorts, in addition to the traditional sightseeing. In addition, the role of contemporary Chinese social reality in forming tourists’ motivations cannot be overlooked. For example, China’s one-child policy and the growing pressure of life on urban residents reinforce the importance of family, instigating the need for a relationship between the self and family.

**CONCLUSION**

A number of studies have been instigated by the market growth to study Chinese tourists’ motivations. However, most adopted existing dimensionalities and terms that may not be as relevant in the Chinese context. For example, kinship enhancement or family togetherness is considered a common motivation factor in previous literature. However, the style, degree, and direction of familial relationships may vary greatly across cultures. To complement the existing literature, a more culturally bounded framework is needed to shed light on Chinese tourists’ motivations in order to have a “thick description about what, when, where, how, and with what outcomes in the traveler’s own language and cultural interpretations” (Woodside & MacDonald, 1994, p. 32). In light of this, the present study initiated a qualitative inquiry into the motivations of Chinese tourists. It provides a new perspective in studying Chinese tourists’ motivations, with the Confucian life domains as the study backdrop. Through an intense scrutiny of 79 in-depth interviews, a Way and “ways” motivation framework with four conceptual themes was proposed for Chinese tourists. Chinese tourists’ motivations pertain to five major domains, including self, self–family, self–social life, self–society, and self–nature, and are conceptualized as a means to an end, a process of matching that spans from actuality towards the Way. Parallel to the notion of “trajectory image” of future proposed by Beach (1990), the Way signifies the goals that one pursues and the ideals one wants to achieve. It presupposes the perfectibility of human nature through self-cultivation, as maintained by the age-old Confucian belief that “it is man that can make the Way great, and not the Way that can make man great” (Analects 15:28, Waley, 1938, p. 199). Chinese tourists’ conscious building of the Way corroborates the need-based perspective which regards tourists’ motivations as the satisfaction of a set of psychological needs, expectations, or goals (Dann, 1977). The findings suggested that tourism was considered an instrumental, transcendental gesture that leads to higher-level goals. The psychological disequilibrium between the actual and the ideal state, as demonstrated in self, family, social life, society, and nature, could be corrected through tourism experiences.

Findings of the current study bear both theoretical and pragmatic implications by contributing to the existing knowledgebase of Chinese
tourists’ motivations. Compared to mature tourism markets where most motivation theories were developed, China is a relatively new market. While the rise of Chinese consumers in the tourism market has been globally acknowledged, an enhanced understanding of this market segment is much needed. This study represents a concrete step towards such an understanding. It should be acknowledged that the Chinese motivational factors revealed in the current study share common characteristics with previous empirical studies on tourists’ motivations in general (e.g., Crompton, 1979; Pearce & Lee, 2005). However, this study contributes to academia by presenting a new perspective from which to examine Chinese tourists’ motivations. Based on the Confucian interpretation of life ideals, the current study revealed a series of motivational forces which should contribute to an in-depth and nuanced understanding of Chinese tourists.

As a new lifestyle, tourism is purposively positioned as a functional means to bridging the gaps in self, family, social life, society, and nature in the informants’ life. Since motivations are prerequisite factors for understanding why tourists may aspire or engage in certain activities (Crompton, 1979; Fodness, 1994; Iso-Ahola, 1982), the current study is expected to provide strategic insights for destination planning, marketing, and on-site destination management targeting the Chinese market. The information about cultural values will arm destination managers with a better understanding of how a strategy fits with the cultural value system of Chinese tourists and therefore enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of managerial decisions. Specifically, the application of findings from the present study should be translated into marketing guidelines that can be applied at a more concrete level. For example, destination marketers could reinforce the possibility of fulfilling certain pursuits through visiting a destination or design relevant hospitality and tourism products to evoke certain travel motivation. Also, given that Confucian doctrines have profoundly influenced the cultures of other East Asian countries, such as Korea, the findings may be informative to the study of motivations in an East Asia context.

LIMITATIONS AND VENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Despite its merits, this study is not without limitations. The proposed conceptual framework in the present study was theorized through the grounded theory procedure, and with a purposive sample of 79 tourists interviewed at various public venues. Although our investigation yielded insightful findings, there are inherent limitations associated with a qualitative assessment such as ours. Therefore, interpretations of the findings are only limited to the context of the current study and may not be representative and generalizable to the entire Chinese tourist population. Nevertheless, this study paved the way for future researchers to examine Chinese motivations. The conceptual framework presented in this study represents an initial conceptualization of what motivates Chinese tourists. Further elaborations and refinements of the findings of current study will add depth and dimensions to the motivations and other quality of life issues of Chinese tourists. In particular, the Way and “ways” motivation framework of Chinese tourists was developed through a qualitative inquiry which despite the fact that it afforded much needed holistic insights into the phenomenon, remains to be empirically validated using quantitative measures. Rigorous examination of the relative magnitude of the Chinese motivation domains and conceptual themes should be a logical extension of the current study. Future studies are encouraged to empirically test the validity of the findings and link them to other outcome variables, such as actual travel behavior and destination experience satisfaction. It would also be a logical extension to compare and contrast the motivations among different demographics, such as tourists from different geographical regions and different age groups. In addition, the complexity of the culture and value systems in China should not be oversimplified. Although Confucianism is considered the dominant personal and social value system in China, future research directed to understanding better the socially constructing influence of Confucianism and other value systems on
Chinese tourists is highly recommended. For example, the impact of modernization was noted as a contextual factor. Many interviewees expressed their desire for quality of life through tourism activities, although such pursuits were framed as a means to improve one's life. One avenue for future research would therefore be to dissect how modernization interacts with, or even challenges, the Confucian value system in the context of Chinese tourists’ motivations.

REFERENCES


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