

International Journal of Hospitality Management

Independent Travelers' Niche Hotel Booking Motivations: The Emergence of a Hybrid Cultural Society

--Manuscript Draft--

Manuscript Number:	HOSMAN_2019_1049R2
Article Type:	Full Length Article
Section/Category:	Research Paper
Keywords:	Niche hotel market; Hybrid motivation; social media; culture; Netnography
Corresponding Author:	Shun Ying, Phd Zhejiang International Studies University Hangzhou, China
First Author:	Wanfei Wang, Phd
Order of Authors:	Wanfei Wang, Phd
	Shun Ying, Phd
	Cynthia Mejia, Phd
	Youcheng Wang, Phd
	Xiaoguang Qi, Phd
	Jin Hooi Chan, Phd
Abstract:	<p>This study attempts to examine travel motivations from a hybrid cultural perspective in the context of Chinese niche hotels. Using an in-depth netnographic methodology, the paper analyzed 659 online reviews on 12 niche hotels from 6 travel websites to identify the motivations of Chinese independent travelers' hotel selection. The research findings revealed that travelers' motivations include the following: attractive environment, quality, uniqueness, spiritual well-being, traditional architecture, family togetherness, foreign style offerings and service, luxury amenities, and entertainment. These motivations can be classified into modern Chinese cultural motivations, traditional Chinese cultural motivations and foreign cultural motivations. The study identifies the characteristics of the market segment of Chinese independent travelers and offers valuable insights into the role of this emergent travel group. Theoretical implications Management implications are discussed, and marketing suggestions are made to better understand what attracts this growing market segment in China.</p>
Suggested Reviewers:	
Opposed Reviewers:	
Response to Reviewers:	

- Investigating the emergent themes of independent travelers' motivations
- Cultural background of each emergent theme
- Hybrid nature of independent travelers' motivations
- Both Chinese and western cultures trigger the niche hotel selection in China

**Independent Travelers' Niche Hotel Booking Motivations:
The Emergence of a Hybrid Cultural Society**

Wanfei Wang, Ph.D.

Professor

Department of Tourism and Hotel Management

School of Management, Zhejiang University

No. 866, Yuhangtang Road, Xihu District, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Post code: 310058

Telephone: 13705716686

Email address: www@zju.edu.cn

Shun Ying*, Ph.D.

School of International Economy and Tourism Management

Zhejiang International Studies University

No. 299, Liuhe Road, Xihu District, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, China

Post code: 310023

Telephone: 15268128305

Email address: yingshun@zju.edu.cn

Cynthia Mejia, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor

University of Central Florida

Rosen College of Hospitality Management

9907 Universal Boulevard

Orlando, Florida 32819

USA

Telephone: +1 407-903-8191

Email address: Cynthia.Mejia@ucf.edu

Youcheng Wang, Ph.D.

Dean

Professor

William C. Peeper Preeminent Professorship in Destination Marketing

University of Central Florida

Rosen College of Hospitality Management

9907 Universal Boulevard

Orlando, Florida 32819

USA

Telephone: +1 407-903-8039

Email address: Youcheng.Wang@ucf.edu

Xiaoguang Qi, Ph.D.

1. Professor & Lifelong Member and PhD Supervisor

Wolfson College, University of Cambridge

Barton Road, Cambridge, UK CB3 9BB

2. Member of University Board & Marcel Mauss Chair Distinguished Professor
Anshan Normal University, China
43 ping'n Street, Tiedong District, Anshan, 114007, P.R.China
Telephone: +44(0)75 2693 4626
Email address: xiaoguang.qi@cambridgejbs.net

Jin Hooi Chan, Ph.D.
Senior Lecturer,
Faculty of Business, University of Greenwich,
London SE10 9LS, United Kingdom
Telephone: +44(0)20 8331 7812
Email address: jinhooi@cantab.net

*Corresponding Author of the paper is Shun Ying.

Independent Travelers' Niche Hotel Booking Motivations: The Emergence of a Hybrid Cultural Society

Abstract

This study attempts to examine travel motivations from a hybrid cultural perspective in the context of Chinese niche hotels. Using an in-depth netnographic methodology, the paper analyzed 659 online reviews on 12 niche hotels from 6 travel websites to identify the motivations of Chinese independent travelers' hotel selection. The research findings revealed that travelers' motivations include the following: attractive environment, quality, uniqueness, spiritual well-being, traditional architecture, family togetherness, foreign style offerings and service, luxury amenities, and entertainment. These motivations can be classified into modern Chinese cultural motivations, traditional Chinese cultural motivations and foreign cultural motivations. The study identifies the characteristics of the market segment of Chinese independent travelers and offers valuable insights into the role of this emergent travel group. The theoretical implications suggest a hybridization effect of culturally oriented motivations showing that hotel choice and perhaps domestic tourism destination choice are driven by both Chinese and Western cultures. Management implications are discussed, and marketing suggestions are made to better understand what attracts this growing market segment in China.

Keywords: Niche hotel market; Hybrid motivation; Social media; Culture; Netnography

1. Introduction

Motivation has long been proved in the extant literature to be a core concept in tourism and hospitality, and it has been comprehensively examined in both conceptual and empirical studies (Zhang and Peng, 2014; Wu and Pearce, 2017; Albayrak and Caber, 2018; Han and Hyun, 2018; Jia, 2020; Song and Lee, 2020). [For instance, motivations have been found to play a crucial role in travelers' satisfaction \(Albayrak and Caber, 2018; Battour et al., 2017\), loyalty \(Suhartanto et al.; 2020\), and revisit intention \(Dean and Suhartanto, 2019; Wen and Huang, 2019\).](#)

However, because of their complex intrinsic nature, culturally laden motivations have not been well understood by previous researchers and hoteliers. Culturally motivated aspects are considered to be one of the most critical factors in the travel experience. Travelers' behavioral patterns, perceptions, and interests towards a destination may vary due to their political, social, economic, technological, cultural, psychological and other backgrounds (You et al., 2000; Soldatenko and Backer, 2019). The tourism and hospitality management literature has shown that culturally motivated factors play an important role in travelers' experience and satisfaction, contributing to loyalty and revisit intention (Albayrak and Caber, 2018; Song and Lee, 2020).

Despite the fact that the previous relevant literature has recognized the significance of understanding cultural characteristics, travelers' behavior has long been considered to be mostly affected by their own culture (Soldatenko and Backer, 2019). For instance, it is widely recognized that travel motives, patterns, and behaviors are determined by travelers' cultural backgrounds (Ramkissoon, Uysal, and Brown, 2011). Turkish business travelers have been found to be uniquely focused on complementary goods, health sensitivity and single sensitivity (Cobanoglu et al., 2003). European travelers have been found to be distinctively concerned about hotel ratings and membership in a branded hotel chain while Mexican hotel guests emphasized green practices (Berezan et al., 2014). However, as China has been integrated into the world, and as globalization has evolved, some modern values have emerged and become widely accepted by a broader global society (Hsu and Huang, 2016). Younger travelers have been found to be

interested in experiencing Western culture (Hsu and Huang, 2016), and Chinese society has been described as a “melting pot of cultural values” (Zhang and Shavitt, 2003). Thus, it is of great value to highlight these types of potential, culturally hybrid, driving forces, which have yet to be a focus in the tourism and hospitality research. Hybrid culturally motivated factors indicate that travelers may not be motivated only by their own cultures but also by foreign cultures in making destination choices. As such, a hybrid cultural motivation perspective offers a great opportunity for exploring travelers' behavior in a hybrid cultural society. For instance, domestic travelers may be motivated by China's unique, intrinsic and complex cultural background including Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism (Little and Eichman, 2000) in combination with its Western-style high-standard hotels and amenities.

Therefore, this study attempts to investigate the hybrid culturally laden motivations of Chinese independent travelers' niche hotel choices. Specifically, it investigates the emergent themes of travelers' motivations and the hybrid nature of their motivations of niche hotel selection. Data from the most popular travel websites Agoda.com, Hotel.com, Tripadvisor.com, Elong.com, Booking.com and Ctrip.com were collected to identify the features of independent travelers' culturally laden motivations for hotel selection. The paper conducted in-depth study of the components of travelers' culturally laden motivations and developed a netnography method to investigate motivation in the hospitality context. The 12 niche hotel studies are located in Hangzhou, which is one of the most popular tourism destinations in China. In evaluating independent travelers' motivations in hotel selection, the current study aims to emphasize the critical role of culture and the hybrid nature of domestic travelers' motivations, providing valuable implications for theory development and industry practice.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Independent Travelers and Niche hotels in China

With the surging economic development and technological innovations in the past several years, Chinese travelers are becoming younger, wealthier, more educated, and more connected

via social media than the previous generations (Mejia et al., 2018). Culturally embedded destinations and niche-based experiences are notable preferences of the new class of Chinese travelers, who seek recognition within their social networks (Mejia et al., 2018; Trivett et al., 2013). This demographic group, which largely forms the independent Chinese traveler segment, seeks unique experiences, exchanging traditional five-star multinational hotels for niche and small independent properties (Jing Daily, 2012; Sell, 2015). These young independent Chinese travelers increasingly avoid mainstream travel offerings, gravitating to high-end niche hotel products, which have been forecasted as a growing trend (Sell, 2015; Zhang and Tse, 2018).

As travelers' increasing emphasis on the experience economy and the Chinese government's advocacy in promoting tourism and cultural synergies (Ministry of culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China, 2019), niche hotels embedded with cultural backgrounds have gradually captured independent travelers' attention (China Tourism Academy, 2014). Cultural resources such as historical events, national culture, regional culture, folklore, real celebrity, health maintenance, art and music can be applied to niche hotels (Chen, 2007). Natural resources such as natural scenery, natural ecological features, and the local landscape as well as poetry, paintings and pictures can also inform niche hotel design (Chen, 2007). Such resources are considered to be the competitive advantage in the accommodation sector with regard to culturally based economic development in China (World Tourism Organization and Korea Culture & Tourism Institute, 2016). Rich cultural experiences offer great opportunities for young, wealthy and well-educated travelers to cultivate their personal interests as well as to seek self-enhancement and self-realization (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2018). From 2015 to 2018, niche hotels with different cultural or natural themes increased at an average annual rate of 50% (China Tourism Academy, 2018). As a result, niche hotels have proliferated as they are specialized tourism products that are typically embedded in rich cultural backgrounds and surrounded by beautiful natural environments (Huang, 2006; Liu and Li, 2014), offer novel settings and other specialties (Sidali, Kastenholz, and Bianchi, 2015), and meet the needs of

specific market segments (Prabakaran and Panchanatham, 2013).

The definition and classification of niche hotels are varied in different countries and regions. Dalgic and Leeuw (1994) defined niche hotels in terms of small-scale, homogeneous market segments. Prabakaran and Panchanatham (2013) describe niche hotels as fulfilling well-educated and affluent guests' specific needs. Verrier et al. (2005) contended that niche hotels offer unique cultural, ethnic or historical contexts, demonstrating the importance of cultural factors in their design and management. Liu and Li (2014) defined niche hotels as being typically embedded in rich cultural backgrounds and surrounded by natural environments. Modern but deeply rooted in Chinese culture, niche hotels in China can be categorized into various types of themes such as the historical and cultural themed, national culture themed, regional cultural themed, folk culture themed, celebrity themed, economic and cultural themed, education and cultural themed, natural experience cultural themed, natural aesthetic cultural themed hotels (Chen, 2007). Zhou et al. (2015) suggested that the following three types are overarching in China: reclusive themed hotels, agricultural themed hotels, and heritage themed hotels.

The first type of niche hotel is a reclusive themed hotel. Reclusive hotels are decorated with traditional landscape paintings, pottery, and antiques; they are lodgings in which visitors enjoy seclusion, poetry, painting, and music (Tao, 2012). Modern reclusive hotels contain up to 22 rooms, each offering its own unique décor (Tong, 2014). Located in peaceful environments with distinctive aesthetics and services, reclusive hotels are one of the most popular emergent niche hotel offerings in China (Zhou, 2015). The second hotel type, agriculturally themed hotels, includes niche hotels in agricultural settings or specialty food growing regions. Many agricultural hotels in China are situated within tea-growing regions and offer relaxing environments in destinations that cultivate famous varieties such as Longjing tea (Huang, 2006). Specific to the Westlake region of Hangzhou, Longjing tea reflects the ancient tea culture of *chayi* (the art of tea drinking) (Huang, 2006). Historically, tea drinkers were educated scholars and the elites of Chinese society (Cai and Shi, 2002); they exchanged ideas in teahouses and

helped create the art of tea ware, which led to the development of iconic porcelain art forms and centuries-old customs (Chen, 2007; Shen, 2015). Teahouses are still popular today, attracting the affluent and educated in Eastern Chinese cities (Chen, 2007). The third type includes niche hotels that are located within historic areas near archetypal monuments or in places associated with important people, especially culturally important individuals, and they are classified as heritage themed hotels (Wong, 2014; Goh, 2015). Heritage hotels also thrive in lush garden locations, which are deeply admired in Chinese culture (Wong, 2014). Chinese gardens are thought to highlight the harmony between humans and nature and include features such as bridges, lakes, waterfalls, artificial rocks, trees, flowers and fish within wooden halls and pavilions across the garden landscape (Wang, 2009).

2.2 Hybrid cultural society

With China's policy of opening up to the outside world, since 1978, Chinese society has been described as a "melting pot of cultural values" (Zhang and Shavitt, 2003). These hybrid culturally motivated attributes profoundly influence traveler behavior (Hsu and Huang, 2016) and are emerging in China as a revitalizing motivation to experience tourism destinations. On one hand, traditional Chinese culturally motivated factors may fulfill travelers' deeper hedonic needs and promote well-being (Goossens, 2000). For example, based on Confucianism, Chinese travelers worship family togetherness and tend to maintain intensive relationships with their parents in terms of their daily routine and providing psychological support (Gruijters, 2017). Examples of Confucianism travel motivations include traveling with one's senior parents for purposes of health and recovery or health and wellness, novelty and learning, commemoration and celebration, dream fulfillment, family togetherness and relationships, and expressions of filial piety (Wang et al., 2018). As for those who travel with their children, motherhood and fatherhood are highlighted in the recent research (Schänzel and Yeoman, 2015; Wu et al., 2019), reflecting the Confucianism value of maintaining close relationships with one's children. For instance, Chinese children's travel motivations include the pursuit of family togetherness,

physical activities, encounters with animals, savoring local food and snacks and enjoying the natural landscapes with their parents (Wu et al., 2019).

Seeking spiritual well-being is central to Taoist culture, which advocates for valuing authenticity, seeking tranquility, living in harmony with nature, escaping from the material world, and cultivating inner peacefulness (Ho, 2007; Shuo, Ryan, and Liu, 2009; Han, 2019). Tao culture is frequently demonstrated in Chinese poems, landscape paintings, calligraphy, music, and architecture. Chinese travelers tend to seek products that can fulfill their escapist needs. For instance, Han (2019) examined travelers' tranquility-seeking in the Chinese countryside and revealed push dimensions (reclusiveness, relaxation, rurality seeking, nature seeking, escape, reflection) and pull dimensions (environment quality, living in the present, fascination and extent, compatibility, rural wildness, sense of tranquility, recovery, rural lifestyle). These motivational attributes were largely rooted in Chinese Taoism culture. Religious worship is another important aspect of Chinese culture, particularly when citizens encounter difficult life situations and seek spiritual fulfillment (Jiang et al., 2018; Yang, 2019). Religious worship and temples serve as a spiritual refuge (Zürcher and Stephen, 2007, page 116). For instance, travelers are motivated to separate from daily life in search of the natural landscape, a temple atmosphere, contact with individuals who seek similar experiences, and interaction with monks and mentors when visiting Chinese temples (Jiang, Ryan, and Zhang, 2018). These cultural and spiritual motivations are increasingly becoming dominant inner drivers for Chinese travelers seeking spiritual well-being (Hsu and Huang, 2016).

On the other hand, independent travelers are inclined to experience typically Western features in a hotel. One reason for the Western cultural preference is that the domestic hotel industry has maintained low standard levels for the past several decades (Hardingham, 2012) while an increasing number of travelers have become more well-educated, wealthier and pursue higher-standard products and services (Mejia et al., 2018). The discrepancy between demand and supply offers international brand hotels great opportunities to enter the Chinese market. Foreign

hotel brands' higher standards in terms of aspects such as service, features, facilities, amenities, and alien themed decorations cater to the market segment of independent travelers in China (Schuckert, 2019). For example, Zhou et al. (2014) evaluated guest satisfaction of 4- and 5-star hotels in China, and their findings showed that guests were more satisfied with international brand hotels. The satisfaction attributes from the findings were physical setting (room, hotel, food), price, location and staff, indicating that international brand hotels provided higher standards of products and services. Recently, to gain competitive advantages, newly built Chinese domestic hotels have positioned themselves in different segments including luxury sectors such as niche hotels (Gu et al., 2012).

Thus, niche hotels, which are characterized by features such as cultural embeddedness, modern decor, beautiful surroundings, and personalized service, cater to the emerging market segment of independent travelers in a hybrid cultural society. The study attempts to investigate independent travelers' motivations and the hybrid nature of their motivations of niche hotel selection. It aims to make a better understanding of what attracts this growing market segment in China.

2.3 Travel motivations

Motivation have long been considered to be a critical concept in tourism and hospitality studies (Wang et al., 2018). It is a psychological term describing that which directs consumers toward the fulfillment of travel needs/wants (Lee et al., 2017). Crompton (1979) noted that "it is possible to describe the who, when, where, and how of tourism but more difficult to answer the question Why? - a critical factor underlying all tourist behavior". Motivation is therefore considered to be an internal variable that guides consumer behaviors; it is the starting point of decision making and an important construct for understanding systems of tourism (Crompton and McKay, 1997; Pearce and Lee, 2005).

The previous studies on travel motivation can be grouped into three research streams. The firstly category of the studies explores the relationships among motivation and other variables of

consumer behavior. The most frequently tested relationship is between motivation and satisfaction. For instance, Albayrak and Caber (2018) compared two approaches to study the relationship between motivation and satisfaction. The classic model showed that motivation does not significantly influence satisfaction in pre-experience measurement while the performance model revealed that motivation is critical for satisfaction in post experience assessment. Wong et al. (2017) found that push motivations displayed a stronger influence on satisfaction than pull motivations. Battour et al. (2017) discovered that motivation significantly and positively influences satisfaction as well as the moderating role of religion on that relationship. They further revealed that religion moderates the relationship between pull motivation and satisfaction while the moderating role was not supported for the relationship between push motivation and satisfaction. Huang et al. (2012) found that motivation does not directly affect satisfaction and that performance evaluation intervenes in the relationship between motivation and satisfaction.

The next frequently explored question is related to how motivation and other variables influence behavioral intention. For instance, Suhartanto et al. (2019) disclosed the key role of motivation in formulating loyalty. They revealed that motivation directly influences loyalty and mediates the links between loyalty and experience quality and between perceived value and satisfaction. Arya et al. (2018) confirmed the impact of motivation on destination attachment and revealed that tourists' attitude mediates the link while spiritual stimuli is a mediating moderator of the link. Dean and Suhartanto (2019) explored the role of push and pull motivations in behavioral intention formation. The results showed that both push and pull motivations impact behavior intention to re-experience while the link between push motivation and behavioral intention is enhanced by experience quality and perceived value. Similarly, push factors (unique experiences) and pull factors (destination-specific attractions and socialistic nostalgia) are proved to predict revisit intention (Wen and Huang, 2019). Travel motivation dimensions such as shopping positively influence revisit intention (Huang and Hsu, 2009). In addition, factors that influence motivation have also been investigated. Lu et al. (2016) discovered that perceptions of

time (present-time perspective and future-time perspective) were directly related to travel motivation. Hsu et al. (2010) held that expectations about visiting a destination have direct impact on motivation. Li and Cai (2012) proved that both internal and external values have a positive effect on motivation.

The second group of the motivation studies is related to market segmentation. For instance, Park et al. (2015) segmented travelers according to cultural differences. The study conducted a comparative analysis of travelers' motivations in Macau (Mainland Chinese, Hongkongese, Taiwanese, and Westerners) and showed that push motivational dimensions consist of knowledge and fun, relaxation and escape, and shopping and nightlife while pull dimensions cover exciting and relaxing atmosphere, local and cultural resources, gambling and entertainment, and famous destination. Among the push dimensions, Taiwanese and Westerners show stronger motivations for knowledge and fun. Mainland Chinese and Hongkongese show higher motivations for relaxation and escape. Among the pull dimensions, Mainland Chinese are more attracted to local and cultural resources. Hongkongese are more pulled by local and cultural resources as well as gambling and entertainment. Taiwanese are more attracted to gambling and entertainment while Westerners are more pulled by an exciting and relaxing atmosphere. Meng and Uysal (2008) categorized travelers by gender differences. The study showed that in the nature-based resort context, males identified "activities and fun" as the most important motivations while females were more attracted to "relaxation experiences". Kim et al. (2008) segmented tourists based on motivation factors of nature tourism. The results showed four clusters of tourist groups: "escape-seeking", "knowledge- and novelty-seeking", "novelty-seeking" and socialization". Similarly, Sung et al. (2016) classified travelers into five groups: "scenery/knowledge seekers", "accessibility/expenditure seekers", "relaxation/relationship seekers", "novelty/experience seekers", "sport/service seekers".

The third category is linked to the scale development of motivations. For example, Zhang and Xie (2019) investigated the motivational determinants of creative tourism. The study

indicated that “sightseeing”, “social contact”, “self-improvement” and “escape” are primary motivations. Pan and Ryan (2007) discovered five dimensions of mountain tourists’ motivations: “relaxation”, “social needs”, “sense of belonging”, “mastery skills”, and “intellectual needs”. Wang et al. (2016) explored religious tourists’ motivational dimensions including “religious beliefs”, “mental relaxation”, “cultural enjoyment” and “one item belonging to religious beliefs”. Chan and Baum (2007) developed eco-tourists’ motivational factors showing that push factors involve “escape from their routine of normal life” and pull factors include seeking “natural attractions”, “wildlife”, “local lifestyle” and “eco-activities”.

2.4 Travel motivations in the hospitality field

In the hospitality context, the previous studies can also be classified into three groups, namely, the relationship among motivations and other behavioral variables, market segmentation, and motivational determinants. The first group indicates the critical role of motivation in consumer behavior. For instance, Lu et al. (2020) explored the relationship between motivations and guests’ response to service failure in home-sharing. The study revealed that if a service failure is typical and controllable, guests with hedonic motivations are less likely to complain when interacting with a private host (versus a hotel representative), and the levels of failure mediate the effects. The study further showed that guests with utilitarian motivations have similar responses to service failure in both types of service contact. Kim and Jang (2014) explored the motivational drivers of the younger generation (Generation Y) for status consumption in luxury restaurants/cafés. The study indicated that compared with “earned money”, “easy money” (pocket money from parents) is more likely to motivate Gen Y to engage in status consumption. Miao and Wei (2013) compared the underlying motivations of pro-environmental behavior in two contexts (household and hotel settings). The results showed that normative motives (the motivation to “act appropriately”) are the key determinants in a household setting while hedonic motives (seeking direct pleasure, personal comfort, or excitement) more strongly predict pro-environmental behavior in a hotel setting. Zupan and

Milfelner (2013) investigated the relationships among social responsibility, motivation and satisfaction in small hotels. The results indicated that guests with a stronger sense of social responsibility have a greater tendency to select small hotels for vacations.

The second group of the research is linked to market segmentation. For example, Guttentag et al. (2017) segmented Airbnb tourists into five categories: Money Savers, Home Seekers, Collaborative Consumers, Pragmatic Novelty Seekers, and Interactive Novelty Seekers. The results indicated that Money Savers were mostly young and motivated by cost savings. Home Seekers tended to be older, well-educated backpackers, predominately motivated by amenities, ample space and a homey feeling. Collaborative Consumers tended to be older and less affluent, mostly motivated by interactions with locals and authentic experiences. Pragmatic Novelty Seekers were relatively young and mostly motivated by uniqueness. Interactive Novelty Seekers were more likely to be backpackers and motivated by both uniqueness and interactions. Huang et al. (2014) showed that female and younger guests are more likely to be environmentally friendly. Kim et al. (2011) segmented tourists according to gender difference and level of expertise when reading online hotel reviews. The analysis found that women tended to be motivated by convenience, quality and risk reduction while men were more likely to be motivated by level of expertise. Finally, the third group of the research is related to decomposing the motivations and revealing the critical determinants of motivations. For instance, So et al. (2018) explored the motivational factors of Airbnb consumers. The results suggested that consumers are motivated by price value, enjoyment, and home benefits in selecting Airbnb. Wang et al. (2015) investigated consumers' motivational determinants for boutique hotels. The study identified "uniqueness-seeking", "interpersonal experience", "social networking", "decoration and theme", and "site value" as primary motivational drivers.

Although the literature review shows that travel motivations have been widely studied in the tourism and hospitality field, very few studies focus on the motivations in the selection of niche markets in the hospitality field, especially in a society that can be described as a "melting pot of

cultural values". The current study thus seeks to explore this phenomenon. The objective of the current study is to investigate the travel motivations of an emerging market segment (Chinese independent travelers) in a hybrid cultural society based on the traditional Chinese culture of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism as well as modern Western culture and to provide valuable theoretical and pragmatic implications.

3. Methodology

Qualitative text analysis was employed utilizing a netnographic approach, which is an ethnographic methodology adopted for extracting review data from online social communities (Dwivedi, 2009; Mkono, Markwell and Wilson, 2013; Mkono and Markwell, 2014). Since online users are allowed to cover their identities and to provide anonymous or pseudonymous reviews, user generated content such as attitudes and opinions seem to be more objective (Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2012; Mkono, Markwell and Wilson, 2013). Therefore, netnography has been considered to be an effective method to tap into users' multi-dimensional perspectives in terms of products or services and offers great opportunities to gain deeper insights into motives, concerns, experiences, rare-yet-important topics, demographic transitions, consumer behaviors, and emergent trends in market segments (Mkono, 2013; Mkono, Markwell and Wilson, 2013; Janta and Ladkin, 2009).

By addressing these features, netnography offers a novel perspective for considering social science studies including tourism and hospitality studies (Watson, 2008). This method allows researchers to study travel motivations in-depth and apply an exploratory approach. For example, several tourism studies in the Chinese context have used netnography to examine the motivations of Chinese recreational vehicle use in Australia (Wu and Pearce, 2014), the Chinese female tourist gaze (Zhang and Hitchcock, 2017), and Chinese adult children's motivations for traveling with their parents (Wang et al., 2018). The current research gave us the opportunity to investigate an emerging travel market in China, specifically, Chinese independent travelers' and their motivations toward niche hotels. A netnography approach is suitable for the current research

based on its advantages.

3.1 Travel websites selection

The online reviews of customers who stayed in niche hotels in Hangzhou, China, were chosen as the study's primary data source. Six travel websites, (Agoda.com, Hotel.com, Tripadvisor.com, Elong.com, Booking.com and Ctrip.com) were selected as the online channels for data collection. These were the leading travel websites in China at the time of the study. The data for the niche hotels were readily available, thereby ensuring a wide breadth and depth of information. Accessing online comments about the targeted hotels from the websites produced a large number of comments. The niche hotels that were most frequently rated, and therefore included in this study, were built within the last 5 years. The average page views per day across the six websites from June 2016 to August 2016 were 3,800,640 for Agoda.com, 510 for hotel.com, 18,329,160 for Tripadvisor.com, 507,600 for Elong.com, 48,707,820 for Booking.com, and 7,380,000 for Ctrip.com, respectively (www.aizhan.com). In addition to online reviews, the niche hotel reviewers disclosed additional information by uploading hotel images and thousands of destination photos, embellishing their post-consumption discussions with rich analysis, which were included in the analyses.

3.2 Data collection

In the study, “reclusive” related words (“隐居”, “归隐”, “隐士”, “禅意” “宁静” in Mandarin), “agricultural” related words (“茶园”, “田园”, “龙井” in Mandarin) and “heritage” related words (“文化”, “名人”, “园林” in Mandarin) were used as key words to search relevant hotels in the six travel websites in December, 2015. The researchers checked each relevant hotel and selected those with fewer than 100 rooms and rich reviews. Then, twelve niche hotels with the highest frequency of mentions were selected. [To ensure the diversity of the data, a maximum number of 100 recently posted reviews \(till December 2015\) were adopted from each hotel. If there were fewer than 100 reviews of a certain hotel, all available reviews posted in the period from 2013 to 2015 were selected. Finally, 659 online reviews from these twelve hotels were](#)

extracted. The data were categorized according to three categories of themed hotels: reclusive, agricultural, and heritage (see Table 1). The sample of niche hotels in this study represented the high-end of the hotel sector. The numbers of rooms in each niche hotel ranged from 7 to 72. The selected hotels were all in Zhejiang Province, China. Domestic private owners operated ten of the niche hotels, and the remaining two were owned and managed by international parties.

Table 1. *Profile of Niche Hotels Included in the Research*

Hotel Type and Name*	Price Range (\$US)	# Rooms	Location	Owner
Reclusive				
SMJL	104-244	22	Hangzhou	Zhejiang Seclusion Group Co. Ltd
STZL	181-367	7	Hangzhou	Zhejiang Seclusion Group Co. Ltd
YML	104-259	7	Hangzhou	Zhejiang Seclusion Group Co. Ltd
BLQ	90-259	16	Hangzhou	Zhejiang Seclusion Group Co. Ltd
Agricultural				
TH	150-1137.	30	Anji	Shanghai Tent Hotel Co. Ltd
HTVBH	64-137	19	Hangzhou	Hangzhou Tea Villa Co. Ltd
LLRHZ	124-185	51	Hangzhou	Landison Longjing Resort Co. Ltd
Heritage				
AMFY	735-1645	42	Hangzhou	Aman Group Co. Ltd
BYTHZ	426-684	72	Hangzhou	Banyan Tree Shareholdings Co. Ltd
HZSC	68-388	13	Hangzhou	Serene Cicada Co. Ltd
SXACGH	49-89	18	Shaoxing	Shaoxing Ancient Culture Co. Ltd
BHR	154-492	63	Hangzhou	Blossom Hill & Resort Co. Ltd

*Note: SMJL: Shang Man Jue Long; STZL: Shang Tian Zhu Lan; YML: Yang Mei Ling; BLQ: Bai Le Qiao; TH: Tent Hotel; HTVBH: Hangzhou Tea Villa Boutique Hotel; LLRH: Landison Longjing Resort Hangzhou; AMFY: Amanfayun; BYTHZ: Banyan Tree Hangzhou; HZSC: Hangzhou Serene Cicada; SXACGH: Shaoxing Ancient Culture Guest House; BHR: Blossom Hill & Resort

3.3 Data analyses

The study utilized Maxqda v.12 qualitative software (Kuckartz, 2014) to analyze the data. A coding system was applied and emergent themes identified guided by grounded theory procedures and techniques (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). First, as the online comments were written in Chinese, the researchers of the study translated them into English, then back-translated them to ensure that the meanings across English and Chinese contexts were consistent. Second, the researchers sought to become familiar with the data, discussed possible categories for the data, and recorded their initial ideas with regard to the data. By adopting an inductive approach, the categories were not predefined. Third, the first half of the data was analyzed by the first researcher while the second researcher checked the rest of the data for coding. The third researcher was invited to discuss the results of the coding. Fourth, after finishing the first round of coding, the researchers engaged in discussion to synthesize the emergent themes, to categorize sub-themes according to theories from the previous literature, and to identify potential themes when necessary. Finally, when disagreements arose in the thematic analysis process, the researchers (with native language and culture in the Chinese and Western contexts) further gathered to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each possible theme based on the raw data until a consensus was finally reached.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Demographics of the sample

The current study collected 659 online comments with regard to the 12 niche hotels located in Hangzhou, China, from six websites (Agoda.com, Hotel.com, Tripadvisor.com, Elong.com, Booking.com and Ctrip.com). The time span of the data was from 2013 to 2015, and the data coding generated 1,171 coded segments. The distributions of the data in terms of websites, travel type, travel group, year of review, and month of review are shown in Table 2.

Ctrip.com contained the majority of the posted online reviews at over 72% of the comments

in the sample followed by Elong.com (15.4%). The remaining travel websites all generated less than 5.0% of the comments. The general demographics collected included travel type, number of people in the traveling party, and the date of the review. A total of 82.5% of domestic Chinese independent travelers stayed in the niche hotels for leisure purposes, 7% did so for business, and 10.5% did not divulge their travel motives. The number of people in the traveling party were categorized according to single travelers, couples, family, friends, and unknown types. A total of 39% of the sample traveled as a family, followed by traveling as a couple (20.4%), traveling with friends (15.4%), and traveling as a single individual (14.6%). The majority of the reviews were posted during August and July, 17.2% and 13.2%, respectively, while September ranked third, accounting for 11.7% of the posts. The fewest niche hotel stay reviews were posted in January, at 2.6% of the travelers, followed by December (3.2%) and November (4.0%) (see Table 2).

Table 2. *Demographics of the Sample (online textual review)*

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Websites		
Ctrip.com	520	78.91
Elong.com	111	16.84
Tripadvisor.com	2	0.30
Agoda.com	11	1.67
Booking.com	10	1.52
Hotel.com	5	0.76
Travel type		
Personal	539	81.79
Unknown	78	11.84
Business	42	6.37
Travel group		
Family	269	40.82
Couple	121	18.36

Friends	101	15.33
Single	93	14.11
Unknown	75	11.38
Year of review		
2015	497	75.42
2014	75	11.38
2013	87	13.20
Month of review		
January	18	2.73
February	35	5.31
March	41	6.22
April	56	8.50
May	69	10.47
June	61	9.26
July	87	13.20
August	115	17.45
September	80	12.14
October	54	8.19
November	26	3.95
December	17	2.58

4.2 Emergent themes

Using an inductive grounded approach to analyze the underlying motivations of Chinese independent travelers in niche hotels, the data suggest a hybrid motivation with three culturally oriented dimensions: (1) modern Chinese culture, (2) traditional Chinese culture, and (3) foreign culture. The *Modern* Chinese culturally oriented motivations included attraction to certain environments (eco-friendly environment, near scenic areas or historical sites); a desire for quality (high-end hardware and service, high quality food and drink); and the pursuit of uniqueness. The *traditional* Chinese culturally oriented motivations included the goal of fulfilling spiritual

well-being (serenity, religious worship, rustic charm or bucolic dreams, feeling at home, seclusion, and nostalgia); a preference for traditional Chinese architectural layouts, and seeking family togetherness. Finally, the *foreign* culturally oriented motivations reflected hardware and service features not typically found in Asia (butler service, a particular decoration or style, luxury amenities, and entertainment activities). (See Figure 1 and the following sections.)

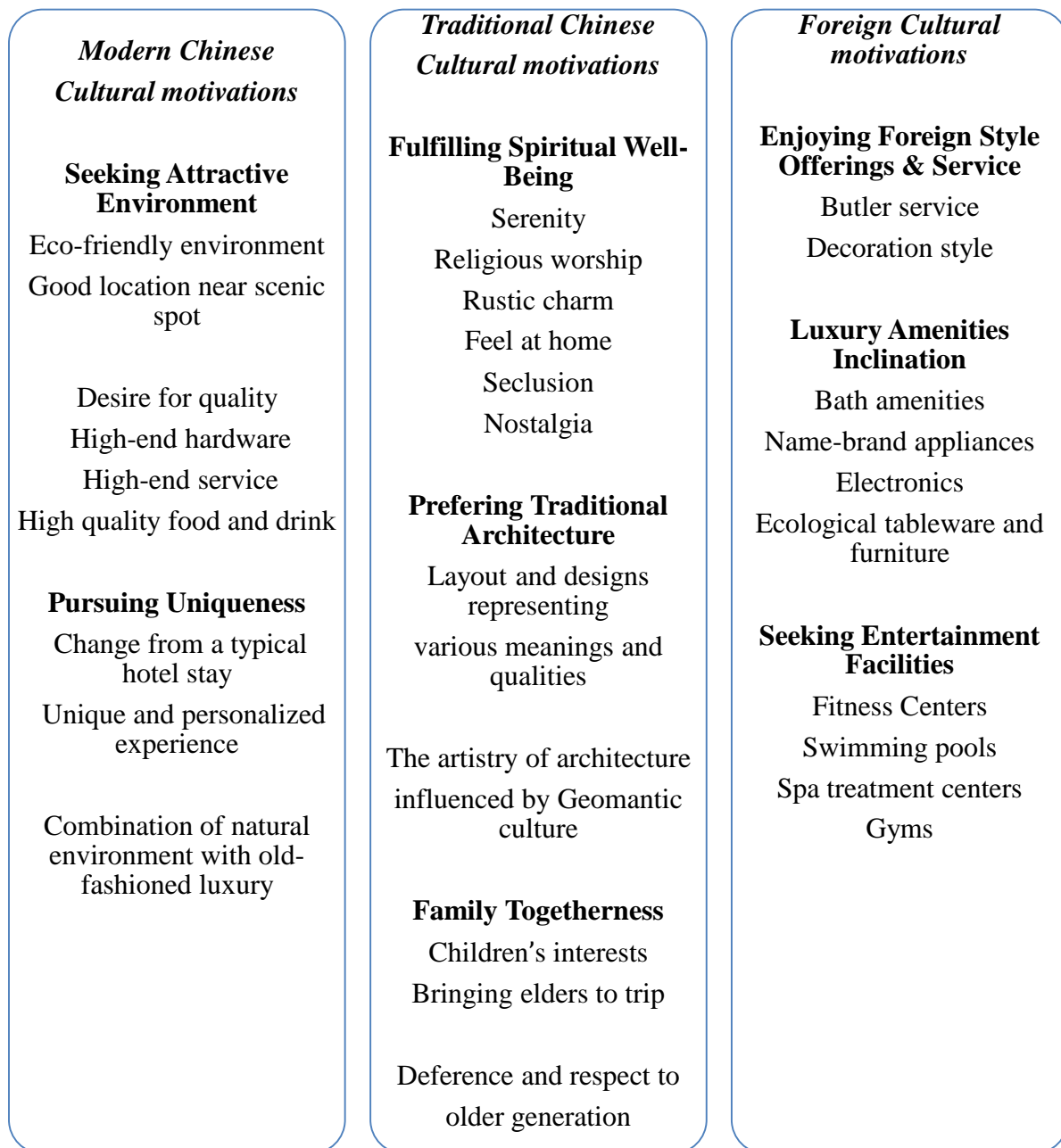


Figure 1. Culturally Hybrid Motivations of Chinese Independent Travelers' Niche Hotel Stays

4.2.1 Modern Chinese cultural motivations

The dominant and recurring theme among the 659 blog posts analyzed here revealed niche hotel customers' modern Chinese cultural motivation as the most dominant motif. Major sub-themes included seeking attractive environments, the desire for quality, and the pursuit of uniqueness.

Seeking attractive environment. The theme consists of dimensions such as an eco-friendly environment and a good location near a scenic spot reflecting the need for good health, peace, tranquility and relaxation. The dimension of “eco-friendly surroundings” is distinctive in the Chinese context due to the country's severe air pollution problems. With China's rapidly developing economy, the burning of coal and automobile exhaust produce large amounts of smog (Li, 2019). The annual mean value of PM_{2.5} has exceeded the WHO standards in 74 cities of China during the past five years (2015-2020) (Zou et al., 2020). Therefore, the dimension of “eco-friendly surroundings” suggests a touch of clean air, plants, animals and physical health benefits. Compared to Scott (2002)' notion of Naturalness indicating travelers' willingness to see a landscape untouched by human activity, this theme plays a unique emphasis on physical health benefits in Chinese context. The dimension is identified by posts with statements such as “the ecological place seemed like a natural oxygen bar; good for keeping healthy.” and “I felt comfortable when waking up early listening to the birds singing while eating a freshly cooked breakfast.” Other reviewers noted that they enjoyed the “sounds of streaming water”, “insects and birds singing”, and “views of delicate bridges and villages”, “rows of willow trees”, “ponds with beautiful fish”, and natural grass lands. The dimension of a “good location near a scenic spot” echoes the need for escaping from the mundane world and turning to nature for psychological fulfilment (Han, 2019). For instance, some posts mentioned a preference for hotels that were situated near the *Su Causeway* and *Bai Causeway*, which were “especially attractive in the spring with willow trees waving and flowers blooming on both sides”. The reviewers were also attracted to historical sites such as the *Former Residence of Lu Xun* (a great writer in China)

and *Shen Garden* (the resident of Luyou, a famous ancient poet), all important motivations for choosing to stay at the niche hotels' locations.

Desire for quality. The theme covers the dimensions of high-end hardware, high-end service and high quality food and drink. It suggests that affluent independent travelers seek high quality life experiences. It is consistent with Iloranta (2019)' finding that with the rise of luxury experiences, travelers' attitudes towards high-end hardware and services have gradually changed from pure conspicuous materialism to the desire for inspiration and experience. This trend can be illustrated by online posts such as "super fabulous, stunning, graceful, exquisite and old-fashioned luxury with great texture" and "it was a work of art that may even parallel a "6-star hotel".

High-end service was frequently mentioned. Travelers felt comfortable with warm and personalized service. One reviewer explained as follows:

It was my second time to stay [in this niche hotel]. The last time was my honeymoon, and we had a good experience. This time I wanted to give my wife a surprise. The hotel helped arrange rose petal decorations and balloons for free. The most intimate part is that they helped check the room during our first stay. I was never touched by a hotel like this before. In addition, the facilities were also very good. I have nothing to be critical of.

The reviewers also reported specialized services that went beyond expectations:

It was raining heavily in Hangzhou that night, and I was having dinner with our parents and kids in a green tea restaurant. I called the hotel manager and asked if there was a cab that could pick us up. The manager said he would drive his own car and pick us up for free. Before the rain started, I left our stroller outside, and when we returned to the hotel, the staff had already put the stroller inside.

Many hotel owners provided extra services, displaying personal kindness to help customers, which met positive high-end service expectations. One guest's brief encounter with a manager

revealed the following: “I had the opportunity to chat with the manager, and he said his philosophy was to make guests feel at home, which was my true experience of the one-night stay.” The caring atmosphere and personalized attention to detail exceeded the customers’ perceptions of niche hotels and their reported high-end service expectations.

Pursuing uniqueness. The dimensions under the theme category include difference from a typical hotel stay, a unique and personalized experience and a combination of a natural environment and old-fashioned luxury. On one hand, these dimensions reflect the need for novel or unusual experiences and positive emotions (Amaldoss and Jain, 2005; Jaeger et al., 2017). On the other hand, they suggest the need for display of wealth, privilege, social status and enhancing one’s social image (Amaldoss and Jain, 2005; Sharifi, 2020). Many travelers actively pursued an experience that was different from a typical hotel stay, preferring a unique and more personalized experience in a niche hotel. In China, travelers have become accustomed to the “sameness” of food and décor in franchised hotels with similar decor (King, 2013). China’s new niche hotels are designed to set themselves apart, they are mostly located in the context of attractive natural scenery, and individual rooms are often uniquely decorated. Many customers were enticed to try this new type of hotel, indicating the emergence of a new transitional travel phenomenon.

4.2.2 Traditional Chinese cultural motivations

The second ranked recurring theme exhibited traditional Chinese cultural motivations, and this theme was further categorized into three sub-themes: the fulfillment of spiritual well-being, the preference for traditional Chinese style architecture and design, and the pursuit of family togetherness.

The fulfillment of spiritual well-being. This category generated the highest frequency within the current theme and can be further sub-divided into the following aspects according to the online reviews: *serenity, religious worship, rustic charm, seclusion, and nostalgia.*

Serenity. This sub-theme not only reflects the desire to be free from worry and to attain a so-called pure mind but also to pursue personal growth, self-understanding and inner peace (Han,

2019). The meaning and value of serenity in China originated from the Taoist culture, which condemned materialism and addressed a “spiritually tortured atmosphere” during periods of feudalism. Taoism offers serenity as a preferred alternative found in environments where people can seek spiritual well-being (Wang, 2009). As illustrated in numerous landscape paintings, poems, and literature in the Song and Yuan dynasties, traditionally, well-educated Chinese people depicted their ideal serene environment from which to escape from mortal society (Wang, 2009). Ancient Chinese culture further categorized serenity into two levels: a serene living environment and spiritual serenity (Wang, 2009). The blog posts in the sample revealed that the travelers pursued serene environments to achieve spiritual well-being. The reviewers noted that travel allowed them to escape heavy traffic and the hustle and bustle of the cities or evade the mundane world and enter a serene, quiet, tranquil, and peaceful environment offered by the niche hotels. Flowing streams of water, bamboo gardens, ancient trees, warm farmhouses, and other serene environments were listed as enticements to “get in touch with nature” and participate in meditation, which reportedly generated feelings of tranquility.

Religious worship. This sub-theme can be traced back to Buddhism. It suggests that Zen meditation brings wisdom to travelers and allows them to experience inner peace (Jiang et al., 2018). Many Chinese travelers in this study sought religious worship in an effort to gain spiritual well-being. Among the most popular religious houses of worship mentioned was *Lingyin Temple*, which is one of the largest Buddhist temples in China with pagodas and Buddhist grottoes (Jiang et al., 2018). Just as Westerners seek spiritual refuge in churches, Chinese people visit temples when seeking relief from the mundane world (Jiang et al., 2018; Yang, 2019). Temples in China are regarded as places for *soul retreat* and protection from the sacred immortals (Jiang et al., 2018). The monks in the temples are considered to be wise men who can navigate the materialized world and provide counsel (Jiang et al., 2018). *Lingyin* attracted numerous travelers to the related niche hotel, as evidenced in the large proportion of blog posts, the majority of which identified a specific desire to visit the temple. As Buddhism is renowned in China, the key

factors attracting the Chinese tourists to the hidden paradise near *Lingyin Temple* were its silence and its religious atmosphere. One guest explained as follows:

It was easy to indulge yourself in the atmosphere and completely forget the busy outside world. I was also surprised to find a green path at the Yongfu Temple and Lingyin Temple so that guests can leisurely stroll and enjoy the scenery of the Buddhist culture in the temple and refresh the soul.

Rustic charm. This sub-theme can also be traced back to Taoism, and it suggests the desire to escape from social duties, return to the countryside, and experience a simple lifestyle that represents authenticity and freedom of the soul (Salazar and Zhang, 2013). The Taoist perspective was that the essence of life was simplicity, and it valued living in harmony with nature and dismissing materialism (Tang and Wang, 2009). Rustic charm has been a treasured natural quality since ancient times when famous poets, painters, and well-educated scholars worshipped the paintings depicting landscapes (mountains, trees, and streams), flowers, birds, plants, and stones to express the search for spiritual freedom (Tang and Wang, 2009). Baishi Qi, (1864-1957), a well-known contemporary Chinese painter, vividly illustrates rustic charm in his paintings, which include images of fish, crabs, shrimp, frogs, and a broad array of insects and birds (Jin, 2015). Taking into consideration this cultural value, the travelers were attracted to the rustic charm around the hotels. Many travelers described in great detail the sounds of streams, cocks crowing, singing birds, buzzing insects, squirrels climbing in the trees, and butterflies collecting pollen. Other related activities such as climbing the nearby mountains, touring tea gardens, picking tea leaves when singing songs, and drinking tea were attractive features mentioned, well expressed in the following post:

Although it was raining here, it was good to listen to the music when drinking tea and reading in the room. We heard large and small raindrops beating on the windows, the birds in the woods, water buzzing in the stream, and the monastery

bells not far away. We felt relaxed physically and mentally. When the rain stopped, we saw a big white goose rest on the shore and then swim in the water.

Feeling “at home”. This sub-theme can be traced back to Confucianism. Reciprocity and consideration in relationships are key qualities advocated by Confucius (Suen et al., 2007), and they reflect the desire to be treated warmly outside one's home. The ambiance within the niche hotels generated strong feelings of home and spiritual well-being. The travelers associated feelings that were congruent with home when they encountered warm and thoughtful décor that was similar to that of their own homes. Chic courtyards, simple room design and furnishings, and home-made breakfasts all elicited a sense of familiarity.

Seclusion. This sub-theme is also consistent with Chinese travelers' desire to return to a Taoist culture. This concept originated from the Taoist philosophers Zhuangzi and Laozi, who advocated a lifestyle apart from the constraints of society and free from obligations and pressures (Lu, 2010). The concept of seclusion exerts great influence on Chinese society. It is passed down from older to younger generations and values a free life grounded in spiritual peacefulness and surrounded by natural environments. For thousands of years, the idea of the hermit (“隱士” in Chinese) originated from Taoism, and it has been considered to be the goal of intelligent people of high morality and social status who seek to escape the material world and mundane life for a peaceful environment (Salazar and Zhang, 2013). Recluses were historically regarded as graceful persons who excelled in music, poetry, landscape painting, and calligraphy (Jiang, 2014; Xie, 2014), and the reclusive life continues to be viewed as an ideal life with a notable social identity in Chinese culture (Yang, 2000; Li, 2004). Due to this deeply ingrained social cognition, affluent independent travelers in China are eager to experience the graceful life in the types of tranquil environment emphasized by Taoism. The niche hotels inspired the travelers' inner desire to return to a country life. Many online posts mentioned the hotel's being relatively isolated and reclusive, enabling guests to realize their dreams in both the countryside and the city.

Nostalgia. The sub-theme reflects the feeling of a sad beauty such as homesickness, the

desire to return to one's youth, or stimulating childhood memories (Wang, 2011).

Representations of nostalgia emerged as the final sub-theme under the category of spiritual well-being. For thousands of years, in Chinese society, nostalgia has been associated with feelings of saddened beauty, melancholy, or longing, such as nostalgia for travelling or residing far away from one's hometown, generating feelings of loneliness or homesickness (Wang, 2011). The reviews predominantly mentioned this type of nostalgia. For example, when the guests walked around the niche hotel and neighboring areas, they felt as if they were "stepping back in time". When the travelers heard the sounds of their youth (e.g., someone talking quietly), saw animals in nature (e.g., frogs hopping), or tasted foods from childhood memories (e.g., Chinese style tea, cakes, or home-made soup), their childhood memories were evoked.

Preferring traditional Chinese style architecture and design. This theme covers the dimensions of layout and design representing various meanings and qualities and the artistry of architecture influenced by geomantic culture. Chinese classic garden architecture is embedded in traditional culture. Although the grand classic Chinese garden architecture was traditionally designed for imperial families (Su, 2004), garden architecture on a smaller scale has been designed by artists, well-educated scholars, retired officials and wealthy businessmen to escape from the mundane world (Li and Zhang, 2006). Since Taoism advocated that human beings should live in harmony with nature and seek spiritual well-being in a beautiful natural environment, a miniature imperial garden with artificial stones, waterfalls, plants, flowers, fish, ponds, lakes, and bridges is representative of Taoist principles. Buddhism is similar to Taoism from the perspective of the human connection to nature, and it prescribes that a limited area of a Chinese garden should reveal the infinitude of the world. As a result, classic garden architecture has attracted well-educated and affluent Chinese people from ancient times through modernity. The dimension of "layout and designs representing various meanings and qualities" means that flowers, grass, trees, and rockeries are assigned meanings in Chinese classic gardens (Tang and Wang, 2009). For instance, the pine tree, with its evergreen character and long life span,

symbolizes tenacity, nobility, longevity and immortality (Tang and Wang, 2009). With its slim, peaceful and evergreen traits, bamboo has been appreciated by scholars since ancient times. It has been considered to be a graceful decoration for hermits' residences as such places "will become vulgar without living with bamboo" (Tang and Wang, 2009). The lotus reflects beauty, purity and sincerity (Tang and Wang, 2009). Another dimension is the artistry of architecture influenced by Chinese geomantic culture or "Feng Shui". This practice is based on the idea that the location of a building, the number of rooms, the direction of the front door, and the layout of decorations were said to reveal the good or bad luck of its inhabitants (Zhou et al., 2011).

Some of the reviewers indicated that they were attracted to the traditional Chinese style floor plans of the niche hotels and described the decor in great detail. One reviewer referred to the "well-preserved Song dynasty style resort." Another discussed the "charming style of the garden with cultural and traditional settings" and "a southern courtyard with distinctive tea sets, tea boxes, and wash cups." The reviewers also mentioned "walking on the zigzag bridge and traversing the pebble path", enjoying "hundreds of species of flowers, thousands of red carp fish swimming in the pond, and pavilions with poem inscriptions".

Family togetherness. This theme comprises the dimensions of children's interests, bringing elders on a trip and deference and respect to the older generation. This value is ingrained in Confucianism, which emphasizes a strict social-political doctrine including filial obedience and close relationships with one's children (Jenkins, 2002). On one hand, the younger generations demonstrate respect to the elder generations when travelling together (Wang et al., 2018). On the other hand, parents value time spent travelling and sharing unique experiences with their children. Meeting one's children's needs is crucial as this notion is deeply rooted in China's family-oriented collectivist culture. Travel is revered in China and considered to be a good opportunity for children's education as the culture believes that "*it is better to travel ten thousand miles than to read ten thousand books.*" With respect to the value of life experiences,

parents tend to take to their children to experience China's scenery, local customs, cultural relics, historic sites, and local cuisines (Wang et al., 2018).

The reviews make note of bringing elders on one's trip and showing deference and respect to the older generations of one's family. Some reviewers also described their children's interests such as playing in the surrounding areas, picking tea leaves in a tea garden, receiving small gifts every day from the niche hotels, reading books in the lobby bookstore, playing in the playground, and swimming in the pool. The data also demonstrated that facilities that appeal to children and the elderly were very important for Chinese customers.

4.2.3 Foreign cultural motivations

With more than 30 years of exposure to the outside world, China and its people have been introduced to "foreign" cultures from many nations. Previously mysterious and unknown international cultures have attracted Chinese travelers in general and affluent independent travelers who are eager for new experiences. From the data, it appears that foreign cultures were appealing to Chinese travelers when seeking niche hotels in three respects: foreign hardware and service, luxury brand amenities, and facilities and recreation.

Enjoying foreign style offerings and service. This theme consists of dimensions such as butler service and decor. "Butler service" reflects the desire for novelty, unusual offerings and the experience of an alien culture. With more than 30 years of exposure to the outside world, China and its people have been introduced to "foreign" cultures from many nations (Zhang and Shavitt, 2003; Hsu and Huang, 2016). The previously mysterious and unknown cultures from around the world have attracted Chinese travelers and affluent independent travelers who are eager for new experiences, especially foreign style offerings and service (Sell, 2015; Zhang and Tse, 2018). Butler service, which originated in medieval times, previously involved a type of domestic servant in Chinese households who was in charge of chores, has been introduced to

Chinese niche hotels to provide personalized service for customers that is very different in scope from the standard service offered in four- or five-star hotels.

In the comments, butler service was described as “first class, warm, intimate, considerate, in place, enthusiastic, polite, patient, attentive”. It was perceived as an individualized service, distinctive of traditional four- or five-star hotels as described here:

When I arrived at the hotel and parked the car, a warm housekeeper came and helped with the luggage, which made me feel so good. In the evening, the night butler brought tasty soup before I went to sleep. Traditional 5-star hotels never provide this kind of service.

In addition to intimate butler service such as freshly prepared meals, fruit delivered upon check-in, a text message sent one night prior with a detailed travel schedule, and soup prepared for ill guests, butlers also surprised travelers:

The steward was a particularly kind girl and asked about our breakfast the night before. The staff prepared specially fried eggs for my daughter and sent delicious hand-made biscuits to us before we left. We really appreciated that.

Another aspect frequently described was the foreign style decor of the niche hotels. Foreign decor such as French, European, Mediterranean, Southeast Asian, Japanese, American, and Scandinavian styles also give Chinese travelers the experience of mysterious cultures and novelty.

Luxury brand amenities inclination. This theme covers the dimensions of bath amenities, name-brand appliances, electronics, and ecological tableware and furniture. As “luxury” is related to “beauty” and flatters all senses by providing extra pleasure (Kapferer, 1998), it reflects the desire for psychological and intangible benefits (Vigneron and Johnson, 2004). Luxury foreign brand products and indulgent experiences give travelers good opportunities to experience cross-cultural differences (Shukla and Purani, 2012) and offers an opportunity for them to cultivate self-interest, self-enhancement, and self-realization (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2018). Luxury products of excellent quality as well as unique and artistic design cater to independent

travelers. The posts frequently mentioned L'Occitane bath amenities, Kohler brand appliances, WMF brand cutlery, and famous brands of televisions and electronics. The travelers noted that the niche hotels paid attention to details including quality slippers and toothbrushes, professionally wrapped toiletries, and elegantly designed and ecologically friendly tableware and furniture.

Seeking entertainment facilities and recreation. This theme comprises the dimensions of fitness centers, swimming pools, spa treatment centers and gyms. It shows that exercise facilities and the concept of bodybuilding were attractive to the Chinese travelers. Bodybuilding can be understood as a supplement to traditional Chinese physical health regimes such as Taiji, which is said to be beneficial the human nervous system, circulatory system, respiratory system, digestive system, bones, joints, muscles, and immune system (Chen, 2012). Practicing Taiji can be a good way to maintain both mental and physical health (Chen, 2012). The various types of bodybuilding exercises from foreign countries enrich the physical health regime in China attract the independent travelers to experience new types of bodybuilding in niche hotels. Such experiences include yoga from India and European spas as well as morning jogs, riding bicycles, and exercising in a fitness center: all illustrate foreign-originating activities that are available in niche hotels. The online reviews mainly focused on fitness centers, swimming pools, spa treatment centers, and gyms. The reviewers also discussed getting a massage as well as visiting bars and cafes, movie theaters or open-air cinemas, and bookstores as being attractive in the niche hotel experience.

5. Conclusions and implications

The current study reveals independent travelers' hotel selection motivations from a new perspective in a hybrid cultural society. As a pioneering attempt, it makes theoretical contributions to the existing motivation literatures. First, it contributes additional dimensions to extend the understanding of motivation theory. Compared with the previous literatures, which have mainly examined hotels' utilitarian dimensions (Zhou et al., , 2014), the current study discovered culturally laden dimensions with Chinese characteristics. For instance, fulfilling

spiritual well-being such as seeking serenity, religious worship, rustic charm, home feeling, seclusion, nostalgia, preferring traditional architecture such as assigning meanings to layout/designs and deference and respect to the older generation and highlighting children's interests, enjoying foreign features and the desire for luxury amenities. Although cultural characteristics are proved to be critical in the tourism literatures, these issues have long been reduced to a single dimension and have yet to be fully investigated in detail. The findings extend the understanding by focusing on the motivational framework and clarifying the dimensions in the Chinese niche hotel context.

Second, the study reveals the cultural background of each emergent theme and obtains a deeper understanding of the motivational mechanism that triggers niche hotel selection in China. The current findings show that the motivational forces of cultural features in niche hotels have multi-faceted dimensions. From a modern Chinese cultural motivation perspective, travelers select niche hotels to satisfy their high-standard. For instance, travelers highlight attractive natural or eco-friendly surroundings, high-end products and service and uniqueness. From a traditional Chinese cultural motivations perspective, niche hotels embrace multiple cultural attributes to meet that psychological need. The emergent attributes reflect travelers' psychological needs triggered by Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Compared with the previous literatures that have investigated visitors' tranquility seeking in the Chinese countryside (Han, 2019), this study takes an in-depth view of the cultural reasons for tranquility seeking and other dimensions with Chinese characteristics including religious worship, rustic charm, home feeling, seclusion, and nostalgia. From a foreign cultural motivation perspective, niche hotel travelers are inclined to pursue products/services with foreign features to satisfy novelty seeking and needs for ostentation. For instance, the travelers prefer butler service, alien decor, and luxury amenities.

Third, the hybrid motivational mechanism offers a new angle to investigate the emergent market segment of independent travelers in China. It suggests that Chinese independent travelers

not only desire the experience of traditional cultures such as Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, but they are also inclined to pursue novel, high-standard travel products with Western features. Specifically, the findings indicate that in the Chinese niche hotel context, the travelers' motivational mechanism is to meet their needs for high-standard products/services (modern Chinese cultural motivations); psychological, emotional and spiritual satisfaction (traditional Chinese cultural motivations); and novelty seeking and ostentation (foreign cultural motivations). Thus, in a hybrid cultural society, niche hotel selection evaluation is distinct from other types of hotel assessment for which travelers are mainly concerned about utilitarian dimensions (Zhou et al., , 2014).

The pragmatic implications drawn from the findings are valuable for branding, marketing, and management in the hospitality industry. Although hotels have long been considered to be functional products, in recent years, they have gradually changed into a lifestyle destination, especially for long-tail sectors such as niche hotels. Thus, culturally motivated attributes are value-added components in travelers' experience of hotels and may serve as critical factors for satisfaction. Culturally motivated attributes can also exert a powerful influence on travelers' behavioral attributes such as decision making, intention to return, and loyalty. The hybrid motivations revealed in this study can be beneficial for hotels' branding, marketing, and management. For example, facilitating a hybrid cultural strategy can enhance competitive advantage and accentuate hotel branding. Since the previous hotel market has been saturated with homogenous products and services, culturally laden features can be core factors leading to higher satisfaction. The current study also found that one reason for seeking Western-style products is because of the discrepancy between the supply and demand of high-end hardware and software. This indicates that, to various degrees, Chinese domestic hotel performance has been operating at a relatively low level and still has huge room to improve. With the advantages of being familiar with Chinese traditional culture, domestic hotels have great opportunities to gain competitiveness among their international counterparts by enhancing hardware and software

performance.

Overall, the nine identified themes and three types of motivation offer a better understanding of travel motivations in hotel selection. The findings of the current study are beneficial for attaining effective marketing strategies such as product innovation, brand building and market segmentation. According to our findings, as niche hotels are gradually considered to be a lifestyle, culturally laden features are linked to higher overall satisfaction. Thus, hoteliers must understand travelers' preferences in the design of products and services. Since hotel marketing practices have long paid attention to utilitarian attributes, the culturally motivated attributes identified in our study present a novel perspective for hoteliers to implement more appropriate marketing strategies catering to the emergent market segment. While luxury hotel sectors are increasingly considered to be a travel destination instead of merely an accommodation, unique features can be a powerful driving force in the competitive market. The findings also offer contributions beyond the hospitality domain. The results contribute to the consumer behavior literature by revealing how high-end products are made in other areas. As the current study identified culturally motivated attributes that have not been reported in the previous literatures and hybrid cultural embedded features are shown to be tightly linked to satisfaction and experience, consumer behavior researchers in other domains may find these findings significant in high-end product development.

6. Limitations and future research

As with any exploratory research endeavor, there were limitations to the present study. First, the data from the online travel websites and the sampling frame were confined to the Zhejiang Province in China. The niche hotel sector stretches across all of China: future research should include niche hotels from other parts of the country. Second, as an investigation of the current niche hotel sector, online secondary data utilizing a qualitative methodology was effective to reveal the present issues related to customers' concerns. However, empirical studies are also

suggested to build the theory and further test customers' cultural motivations. Third, although the culturally motivated attributes in the study were appropriately analyzed to show the prevalent issues embedded in the niche hotel sector, utilitarian attributes should also be studied in the future to improve niche hotel hardware and service offerings. Fourth, this study used secondary data to reveal customers' motivations in selecting niche hotels: future research should be conducted from the perspective of managers to uncover current niche hotel operating strategies to meet customers' demands. Lastly, Chinese travelers' preferences and behaviors are in transition: longitudinal studies are recommended to reveal key trends.

References

- Albayrak, T., Caber, M., 2018. Examining the relationship between tourist motivation and satisfaction by two competing methods. *Tourism Management* 69, 201-213.
- Amaldoss, M., Jain, S., 2005. Pricing of Conspicuous Goods: A Competitive Analysis of Social Effects. *Journal of Marketing Research*, XLII, 30-42.
- Arya, V., Sharma, S., Sethi, D., Verma, H., Shiva, A., 2018. Ties that bind tourists: embedding destination motivators to destination attachment: a study in the context of Kumbh Fair, India. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 23(12), 1160-1172.
- Battour, M., Ismail, M. N., Battor, M., Awais, M., 2014. Islamic tourism: an empirical examination of travel motivation and satisfaction in Malaysia. *Current Issues in Tourism* 1-18.
- Berezan, O., Millar, M., Raab, C., 2014. Sustainable hotel practices and guest satisfaction levels. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 15(1), 1-18.
- Björk, P., Kauppinen-Räsänen, H., 2012. A netnographic examination of travelers' online discussions of risks. *Tourism Management Perspectives* 2–3, 65-71.
- Cai, Z. C, Shi, Z. P, 2002. Emperor Qianlong's Tea Poems and the Art of Tea in China. *Journal of Hunan University (Social Science)* 16(1), 12-19.
- Chan, J. K. L., Baum, T., 2007. Motivation Factors of Ecotourists in Ecolodge Accommodation: The Push and Pull Factors. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 12(4), 349-364.
- Chen, W. J., 2007. Subject choice of theme hotel, Enterprise Vitality, Zhengzhou.
- Chen, Y. H., 2007. Teahouse, Resident Culture, and Social Change. Master's thesis, Zhejiang University.
- Chen, X., 2012). Eighteen Moves of Taiji Kungfu. *ShaoLin and Taiji*, (9), 38-40.
- China Tourism Academy, 2014. Chinese Boutique Hotel Forum 2014. China Tourism Academy, Beijing.
- Cobanoglu, C., Corbaci, K., Moreo, P. J., Ekinici, Y., 2003. A comparative study of the importance of hotel selection components by Turkish business travelers. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 4(1), 1-22.
- Crompton, J. L., 1979. Motivations for Pleasure Vacation. *Annals of Tourism Research* 6(1), 408-424.
- Crompton, J.L., McKay, S.L., 1997. Motives of visitors attending festival events. *Annals of*

- Tourism Research 24 (2), 425–439.
- Dalgic, T., Leeuw, M., 1994. Niche marketing revisited: concept, applications and some European cases. *European Journal of Marketing* 28(4), 39-55.
- Dean, D., Suhartanto, D., 2019. The formation of visitor behavioral intention to creative tourism: the role of push–pull motivation. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 24(5), 393-403.
- Dwivedi, M., 2009. Online destination image of India: a consumer based perspective. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* 21(2), 226-232.
- Goh, Y. N., 2015. Investigating Revisit Intentions for the Boutique Hotels of Penang-A UNESCO World Heritage Site. *Asian Social Science* 11(4), 126.
- Goossens, C., 2000. Tourism information and pleasure motivation. *Annals of Tourism Research* 27(2), 301-321.
- Grujters, R. J., 2017. Intergenerational contact in Chinese families: Structural and cultural explanations. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 79(3), 758–768.
- Gu, H., Ryan C., Yu L., 2012. The changing structure of the Chinese hotel industry: 1980–2012. *Tourism Management Perspectives* 4, 56–63.
- Guttentag, D., Smith, S., Potwarka, L., Havitz, M., 2018. Why Tourists Choose Airbnb: A Motivation-Based Segmentation Study. *Journal of Travel Research* 57(3), 342-359.
- Han, J., 2019. Vacationers in the Countryside: Traveling for Tranquility? *Tourism Management* 70, 299-310.
- Han, H., Hyun, S. S., 2018. Role of motivations for luxury cruise traveling, satisfaction, and involvement in building traveler loyalty. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 70, 75-84.
- Hardingham, S., 2012. Why China? A Study of Why Foreign Hotel Companies Are Rushing to Develop New Luxury Hotels in China. UNLV Theses, Dissertations, Professional Papers, and Capstones. Paper 1364.
- Ho, D. Y. F., 2007. Selfhood and Identity in Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Hinduism: contrasts with the west. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 25(2), 115-139.
- Huang, H-C., Lin, T-H., Lai, M-C., Lin, T-L., 2014. Environmental consciousness and green customer behavior: An examination of motivation crowding effect. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 40, 13-149.

- Huang, S., Hsu, C.H.C., 2009. Effects of travel motivation, past experience, perceived constraint, and attitude on revisit intention. *Journal of Travel Research* 48(1), 29-44.
- Huang, Y., Luo, S., Ding, P., Scott, N., 2014. Impressions of liusanjie: a study of motivation, theatrical performance evaluation, and satisfaction. *Current Issues in Tourism* 17(3), 280-296.
- Huang, Z. G., 2006. Tracing back the Relationship of Longjing Tea Culture and Hnagzhou (West Lake). *Journal of Zhejiang University (Humanities and Social Sciences)* 36(1).
- Hsu, C. H.C., Cai, L. A., Li, M., 2010. Expectation, Motivation, and Attitude: A Tourist Behavioral Model. *Journal of Travel Research* 49(3), 282-296.
- Hsu, C. H.C., Huang, S., 2016. Reconfiguring Chinese cultural values and their tourism implications. *Tourism Management* 2016, 54, 230-242.
- Iloranta, R., 2019. Luxury tourism service provision - Lessons from the industry *Tourism Management Perspectives*. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 32, 100568.
- Jaeger, S. R., Cardello, A. V., Jin, D., Hunter, D. C., Roigard, C. M., Hedderley, D. I., 2017. Product uniqueness: Further exploration and application of a consumer- based methodology. *Food Quality and Preference* 60, 59-71.
- Janta, H., Ladkin, A., 2009. Polish Migrant labor in the hospitality workforce: Implications for recruitment and retention. *Tourism Culture & Communication* 9(1/2), 5-15.
- Jenkins, T.N., 2002. Chinese traditional thought and practice: lessons for an ecological economics worldview. *Ecological Economics*, 40, 39-52.
- Jia, S., 2020. Motivation and satisfaction of Chinese and U.S. tourists in restaurants: A cross-cultural text mining of online reviews. *Tourism Management* 78.
<https://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S0261517719302687?token=E18EE2CF5C55D5F13D7F06C436A12C6ABE8E3245507C020DF2F29DA93AA3CE8BAC6A74990559AAB9AE6737D5CFC2DAA9>
- Jiang, T., Ryan, C., Zhang., C. Z., 2018. The spiritual or secular tourist? The experience of Zen meditation in Chinese temples. *Tourism Management* 65, 187-199.
- Jin, P., 2015. A Study on the Characteristics of Flower and Bird Paintings. (Master's thesis, China Academy of Art).
- Jing Daily., 2012. Luxury hotels in China combine art & accommodations. *Jing Daily: The Business of Luxury & Culture in China* [Online]. Retrieved June, 25th, 2019 from

<http://jingdaily.com/luxury-hotels-in-china-combine-art-accommodations/>

- Kapferer, J. N., 1998. Why are we seduced by luxury brands? *Journal of Brand Management* 6(1), 44–49.
- Kauppinen-Räsänen, H., Björk, P., Lönnström, A., Jauffret, M-N., 2018. How consumers' need for uniqueness, self-monitoring, and social identity affect their choices when luxury brands visually shout versus whisper. *Journal of Business Research* 84, 72-81.
- Kim, D. H., Jang, S. C., 2014. Motivational drivers for status consumption: A study of Generation Y consumers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 38, 39-47.
- Kim, E. E. K., Mattila, A. S., Baloglu, S., 2011. Effects of Gender and Expertise on Consumers' Motivation to Read Online Hotel Reviews. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly* 52(4), 399–406.
- Kim, S. S., Kim, M., Park, J., Guo, Y., 2008. Cave Tourism: Tourists' Characteristics, Motivations to Visit, and the Segmentation of Their Behavior. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 13(3), 299-318.
- Kuckartz, U., 2014. *Qualitative Text Analysis: A Guide to Methods, Practice & Using Software*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Lee, S., Chua, B., Han, H., 2017. Role of service encounter and physical environment performances, novelty, satisfaction, and affective commitment in generating cruise passenger loyalty. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 22, 131–146.
- Li, B. Y., Zhang, Q. X., 2006. The Embodiment of “the Unity of Heaven and Man” Philosophic Ideology in Chinese Garden. *Journal of Beijing Forestry University (Social Science)* 5(1), 16-19.
- Li, H. C., 2020. Smog and Air Pollution: Journalistic Criticism and Environmental Accountability in China. *Journal of Rural Studies* (in press).
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0743016719300932>
- Li, H. X., 2004. Social Mentality of Scholars in Tang Dynasty and the Evolution of Reclusion. *Journal of Peking University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)* 41 (3), 114-120.
- Li, M., Cai, L. A., 2012. The Effects of Personal Values on Travel Motivation and Behavioral Intention. *Journal of Travel Research* 51(4), 473-487.
- Little, S., Eichman S., 2000. *Taoism and the Arts of China*. Oakland, CA, University of California Press.
- Liu, J., Li, Z. M., 2014. The Cultural Gene of Classic Chinese Garden. *Journal of Southwest*

- China Normal University (Natural Science Edition) 39 (10), 76-80.
- Lu, J., Hung, K., Wang, L., Schuett, M.A., Hu, L., 2016. Do perceptions of time affect outbound-travel motivations and intention? An investigation among Chinese seniors. *Tourism Management* 53, 1-12.
- Lu, L., Mody, M., Andajigarmaroudic, S., 2020. Exploring guest response towards service failure in home-sharing: service presence and consumption motivation. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 87, 102498.
- Lu, P. X., 2011. *Elite China: luxury consumer behavior in China*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Meng, F., Uysal, M., 2008. Effects of Gender Differences on Perceptions of Destination Attributes, Motivations, and Travel Values: An Examination of a Nature- Based Resort. *Destination, Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 16(4), 445-466.
- Mejia, C., Wei, W., Fu, X., Hua, N., Wang, Y., 2018. Hospitality and tourism experts' perspectives on Chinese independent tourists' U.S. service expectations through a mobilities lens. *International Journal of Tourism Research* 20(6), 726-737.
- Miao, L., Wei, W., 2013. Consumers' pro-environmental behavior and the underlying motivations: A comparison between household and hotel settings. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 32, 102-112.
- Ministry of culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China, 2019. *The General Office of the State Council Opinions on stimulating the potential of cultural and tourism consumption 2019*. Ministry of culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China, Beijing.
- Mkono, M., 2013. Using Net-Based Ethnography (Netnography) to Understand the Staging and Marketing of "Authentic African" Dining Experiences to Tourists at Victoria Falls. *Journal of hospitality & tourism research (Washington, D.C.)* 37(2), 184-198.
- Mkono, M., Markwell, K., Wilson, E., 2013. Applying Quan and Wang's structural model of the tourist experience: A Zimbabwean netnography of food tourism. *Tourism Management Perspectives* 5, 68-74.
- Mkono, M., Markwell, K., 2014. The application of netnography in tourism studies. *Annals of Tourism Research* 48, 289-291.
- Pan, S., Ryan, C., 2007 *Mountain Areas and Visitor Usage—Motivations and Determinants of*

- Satisfaction: The Case of Pirongia Forest Park, New Zealand. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 15(3), 288-308.
- Park, S.H., Lee, C-K., Miller, J. C., 2015 A Comparative Study of the Motivations, Activities, Overall Satisfaction, and Post-Trip Behaviors of International Tourists in Macau: Mainland Chinese, Hongkongese, Taiwanese, and Westerners, *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 20(10), 1174-1193.
- Pearce, P., Lee, U-I., 2005. Developing the travel career approach to tourist motivation. *Journal of Travel Research* 43(3), 226-237.
- Prabakaran, N., Panchanatham, N., 2013. Niche Tourism Products of India. *Abasyn University Journal of Social Sciences* 6(1). 53-64.
- Ramkissoon, H., Uysal, M., Brown, K., 2011. A cross-cultural comparison of tourists' cultural behavioural intentions. *E-Review of Tourism Research* 9(5).
- Salazar, N. B., Zhang, Y., 2013. Seasonal Lifestyle Tourism: the Case of Chinese Elites. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 43, 81-99.
- Schuckert, M., Liang, S., Law, R., Sun, W. J., 2019. How do domestic and international high-end hotel brands receive and manage customer feedback? *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 77, 528-537.
- Scott, A. (2002). Assessing public perception of landscape: the LANDMAP experience. *Landscape Research* 27(3), 271-295.
- Sell, G., 2015. China, the future of travel. *Boutique Hotel News* [Online]. Retrieved April, 27th 2019 from <http://www.boutiquehotelnews.com/home/features/2015/4/27/event-review-china,-the-future-of-travel-book-launch/>
- Schänzel, H. A., Yeoman, I., 2015. The future of family tourism. *Tourism Recreation Research* 39(3), 343–360.
- Sharifi, S., 2020. When more pain is better: Role of need for uniqueness in service evaluations of observable service recovery. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 85, 102339.
- Shen, H., 2015. Critical success factors for leading hotel brands in Asia: a case study of banyan tree. *International Journal of Marketing Studies* 7(3), 19.
- Shukla, P., Purani, K., 2012. Comparing the importance of luxury value perceptions in

- cross-national contexts. *Journal of Business Research* 65(10), 1417–1424.
- Shuo, Y(S)., S., Ryan, C., Liu, G(M)., 2009) Taoism, temples and tourists: The case of Mazu pilgrimage tourism. *Tourism Management* 30, 581-588.
- Sidali, K. L., Kastenholz, E., Bianchi, R., 2015. Food tourism, niche markets and products in rural tourism: combining the intimacy model and the experience economy as a rural development strategy. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 23(8-9), 1179-1197.
- So, K. K. F., Oh, H., Min., S. 2018. Motivations and constraints of Airbnb consumers: Findings from a mixed-methods approach. *Tourism Management* 67, 224-236.
- Soldatenko, D., Backer, E., 2019. A content analysis of cross-cultural motivational studies in tourism relating to nationalities. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* 38, 122-139.
- Song, S., Lee, S., 2020. Motivation of internationalization and a moderating role of environmental conditions in the hospitality industry. *Tourism Management* 78.
<https://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S0261517719302481?token=4F9CA81F504C7435209579087AA1C97D261BC9EB89D2C639FAB44C42E73D532DE0527BD79F16C31A1B18E22DE17E3C22>
- Suen, H., Cheung, S-O., Mondejar, R., 2007. Managing ethical behaviour in construction organizations in Asia: How do the teachings of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism and Globalization influence ethics management? *International Journal of Project Management*, 25, 257-265.
- Strauss, A., Corbin, J. M., 1990. *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Su, X. Y., 2004. Artistic Charm of Chinese Garden Architecture. *Journal of Nanjing Forestry University (Humanities and Social Sciences Edition)*. 4(1), 89-91.
- Suhartanto, D., Brien, A., Primiana, I., Wibisono, N., Triyuni, N. N., 2019. Tourist loyalty in creative tourism: the role of experience quality, value, satisfaction, and motivation. *Current Issues in Tourism* 1-13.
- Sung, Y-K., Chang, K-C., Sung, Y-F., 2016 Market Segmentation of International Tourists Based on Motivation to Travel: A Case Study of Taiwan. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research* 21(8), 862-882.
- Tang, Z-X., Wang, Y-F., 2009. Cultural implication of plants in classical Chinese. *Journal of*

- Landscape Research 1(7), 49-53.
- Tao, T., Chai, Z. C., 2012. Reclusive Life. Home Idea, 10, 024.
- Tong, W. J., 2014. Huang Yan: When you are determined, the world will make a way for you. Innovation Time (9), 54-56.
- Trivett, V., Skift Staff., 2013. Rise of the Chinese Independent Traveler. Retrieved 16th August 2019 from [http:// skift.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/skift-chinese-traveler.pdf](http://skift.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/skift-chinese-traveler.pdf)
- Verrier, E., Tixier-Boichard, M., Bernigaud, R., Naves, M., 2005. Conservation and value of local livestock breeds: usefulness of niche products and/or adaptation to specific environments. Animal Genetic Resources Information 36, 21-31.
- Wang, D., 2009. Classic Chinese Garden Landscaping in Song Dynasty. New Arts (2), 103-104.
- Wang, T., Luo, Y., Tang, L. R., 2015. The investigation of consumer motivations to patronize boutique hotels using push-pull theory: a case study in Xiamen, China. International Journal of Tourism Cities 1(4), 317-328.
- Wang, W., Chen, J. S., Huang, K., 2016. Religious Tourist Motivation in Buddhist Mountain: The Case from China. Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research 21(1), 57-72.
- Wang, W., Yi, L., Wu, M. Y., Pearce, P. L., Huang, S. S., 2018. Examining Chinese adult children's motivations for traveling with their parents. Tourism Management 69, 422-433.
- Wang, Y. C., 2011. Wang Xizhi's Vigorous Style and Calligraphic Realm. Journal of Peking University. 6.
- Wen, J., Huang, S., 2019 The effects of push and pull travel motivations, personal values, and destination familiarity on tourist loyalty: a study of Chinese cigar tourists to Cuba, Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research 24(8), 805-821.
- Wong, B. K. M., Musa, G., Taha, A. Z., 2017. Malaysia my second home: the influence of push and pull motivations on satisfaction. Tourism management 61(AUG.), 394-410.
- Wong, K. M., Ng, C. Y. N., Valerian, V., Battistotti, M. G., 2014. Satisfaction of Heritage Hotels' patrons in Penang Island: A Research Note. International Journal of Business and Society 15(2), 255.
- World Tourism Organization and Korea Culture & Tourism Institute (2016), Case Studies of Traditional Cultural Accommodations in the Republic of Korea, Japan and China, UNWTO, Madrid.
- Wu, M. Y., Pearce, P. L., (2014). Chinese recreational vehicle users in Australia: A netnographic

- study of tourist motivation. *Tourism Management* 43, 22-35.
- Wu, M. Y., Pearce, P. L., (2017). The rally experience: Exploring motivation patterns of Australian Grey Nomads. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management* 6, 407-415.
- Wu, M. Y., Wall, G., Zu, Y. J., Ying, T. Y., 2019. Chinese children's family tourism experiences. *Tourism Management Perspectives* 29, 166-175.
- Yang, C. Y., 2000. Serenity and Peacefulness: Characteristics of Reclusive Culture in Song Dynasty. *Journal of Peking University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)* (S1)
- Yang, X. T., Hung, K., Huang, W-J., Tseng, Y-P., 2019. Tourism representation by DMOs at religious sites: A case of Shaolin Temple, China. *Tourism Management* 75, 569-581.
- You, X., O'Leary, J., Morrison, A., Hong, G.-S., 2000. A cross-cultural comparison of travel push and pull factors. *International Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Administration* 1(2), 1–26.
- Zhang, E. Y., Tse, T. S., 2018. Tapping into Chinese Luxury Travelers. *Journal of China Tourism Research* 14(1), 71-99.
- Zhang, J., Shavitt, S., 2003. Cultural values in advertisements to the Chinese X- Generation: promoting modernity and individualism. *Journal of Advertising* 32(1), 23-33.
- Zhang, Y., Xie, P. F., 2019. Motivational determinates of creative tourism: a case study of Albergue art space in Macau. *Current Issues in Tourism* 22(20), 2538-2549.
- Zhang, Y., Hitchcock, M. J., 2017. The Chinese female tourist gaze: a netnography of young women's blogs on Macao. *Current Issues in Tourism* 20(3), 315-330.
- Zhang, Y., Peng, Y., 2014. Understanding travel motivations of Chinese tourists visiting Cairns, Australia. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management* 21, 44-53.
- Zhou, L. Q., Ye, S., Pearce, P. L. Wu, M. Y., 2014. Refreshing hotel satisfaction studies by reconfiguring customer review data. *International Journal of Hospitality Management* (38), 1-10.
- Zhou, X. F., Zhou, Y. Z., Ou, Y. J., 2011. Geomorphic spatial differences of Kasite settlements based on geomorphic spatial pattern: A case study of three typical geomorphic areas in Guizhou Province. *Economic Geography* 31(11), 1930-1936.
- Zhou, Y., 2015. The Perception of Reclusion. *Art Education Research* (16), 47-47.
- Zou, B., Li, S., Lin, Y., Wang, B., Cao, S., Zhao, X., Peng, F., Qin, N., Guo, Q., Feng, H., Matthew, C. J., Xu, S., Duan, X., 2020. Efforts in reducing air pollution exposure risk in

China: State versus individuals. *Environment International* 137, 105504.

Zupan, S., Milfelner, B., 2014. Social responsibility, motivation and satisfaction: small hotels guests' perspective. *Kybernetes* 43(3/4), 2014.

Zürcher, E., Stephen, F. T., 2007. *The Buddhist conquest of China: the spread and adaptation of Buddhism in early medieval China*, 3rd ed., Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands.



Click here to access/download

Data in Brief
data in brief.xlsx

