

GENERATIONAL ANALYSIS ON TOURISTS' TRAVEL
BEHAVIORS: EXPLORING CHINESE OUTBOUND TOURISTS

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- Spine -

Abstract

China is now considered a newly emerging tourism market that is worthy of more attention. Due to Confucian philosophy, Chinese way of living is quite different from other countries. Additionally, given the massive changes in China's recent history and the lack of related study concerning this market, the present research aims to investigate Mainland Chinese outbound tourists' travel behaviors from a generational perspective and identify the similarities and differences among them, since distinctive attitudes, values, and behaviors exist among different cohorts. In this case, interviews are conducted on two Chinese generations (Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation); and five variables are chosen, namely, travel motivation, information sources, preferred activities, destination evaluation concerns and post-visit behavioral intentions.

The results of this study reveal that: these two generations are similar in travel motivation, and they both concern for personal safety, food experience and friendliness of local people. However, they are different in information search; besides, though they are quite similar in preferred activities, Only-Child Generation prefer shopping also and is more likely to revisit and share experiences online than Social Reform Generation.

It is necessary for a destination and service providers to gain insights into Chinese outbound tourists and tailor strategies to meet their expectations. Therefore, based on the findings, touristic offers must be developed and continuously adapted to tourists' changes in terms of needs and travel behaviors of different segment, in accordance with the target of corresponding marketing practitioners.

Keywords: Tourism; Generational analysis; Travel behaviors; Chinese outbound tourists

JEL Classification: M31 & L83

Resumo

A China é hoje em dia considerada um novo mercado emergente e, devido à filosofia confucionista, o seu modo de vida é significativamente diferente dos restantes países. Adicionalmente, considerando as enormes mudanças na história recente da China, e à falta de estudos sobre este mercado, o presente estudo tem como objetivo investigar o comportamento dos turistas da China continental, tendo em conta a diferença das gerações, atitudes, valores e comportamentos enquanto turistas. Desta forma, a pesquisa foi realizada em duas gerações chinesas, a Geração de Reforma Social e a Geração de Filho Único; e cinco variáveis foram analisadas, nomeadamente, motivação de viagem, fontes de informação, atividades preferidas, preocupações de avaliação de destino e intenções pós-visita.

Os resultados demonstram que estas duas gerações são similares em termos de motivações em viajar e ambas têm em consideração segurança pessoal, experiência gastronómica e simpatia local. No entanto, diferem enquanto procura de informação. Apesar de semelhantes nas atividades preferidas, a Geração do Filho Único dá muita importância à experiência das compras e tem maior probabilidade em visitar o país em questão, tal como partilhar a sua experiência *online*.

É necessário que o destino turístico e as empresas que dele fazem parte tenham uma maior visão e conhecimento sobre os turistas chineses, para trabalharem em estratégias que satisfaçam as suas expectativas. Portanto com base nos resultados, a oferta turística deve ser desenvolvida e continuamente adaptada às mudanças dos comportamentos dos turistas em todos os diferentes segmentos.

Palavras-chaves: Turismo; Análise geracional; Comportamento dos turistas; Turistas chineses

Classificação JEL: M31 e L83

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1 Introduction

1.1 Relevance of the Research

Indeed, China is a very appealing market as it has become the largest tourist source and the top spender in tourism expenditure (UNWTO, 2017). It is necessary for a destination to gain insights into Chinese outbound tourists in order to tailor its strategies to become a must-go place.

As Confucian philosophy is the basic pillar of Chinese life, the decision making and consumption patterns of Chinese consumers are different from the Occidental, while also in view of the unique social, historical background of China (Li and Su, 2007). When studying them, “face” concept (classified as *lien*, and *mien-tsu*) plays a role in their psychology and behavior (Kwek and Lee, 2010). In some sense, they connect “face” through consumption, and have the motivation for higher quality of life and premium products/services (Li and Su, 2007); it is clear to understand why Chinese are now more likely to travel abroad.

Furthermore, since collectivism and emphasis on “relationships” deeply root in minds, Chinese are more group-oriented and rely on word of mouth communication (Yau, 1988; Kwek and Lee, 2010). They also stress family obligation and filial piety (Yau, 1988; Kim, Wan and Pan, 2015; Gardiner and Kwek, 2017). Thus, they prefer to participate group travel, choose multi-destination and follow the fixed itineraries because of their needs to enhance social and family harmony as well as to reduce uncertainties about language barrier and safety issues, etc.

As for the social life, China is leading the e-commerce market and mobile payment revolution; most of the Chinese use Taobao for online shopping, relying on Alipay and Wechat Pay for payments, when consumers in other countries mainly use Amazon or other sites and PayPal correspondingly. Chinese is currently living in an era of simpler life and seeking for more efficiency and convenience. Moreover, due to the government control, people use Baidu, Weibo, and Wechat in daily, but not Google, Facebook, or WhatsApp, which are blocked (BBC News, 2017). It could be seen that, owing to all those distinctiveness in people’s way of living compared with other nations, specific strategies are needed since Chinese live and consume in a different way, while their consumption habits and travel patterns also keep changing.

In this case, five variables are chosen to explore tourists' inner thoughts and behaviors, namely, travel motivation, information sources, preferred activities, destination evaluation concerns and post-visit behavioral intentions. Additionally, these travel behaviors would be studied from the perspective of generation since distinctive attitudes, values, and behaviors exist among different cohorts (Schewe and Meredith, 2004; Huang and Petrick, 2010; Li, Li and Hudson, 2013).

Due to the distinct background, Chinese generations are being considered as different from those developed countries that being studied the most (e.g., America). Also, little applications of generational analysis were conducted concerning China, let alone its outbound tourism market, which call for further research. More importantly, based on the previous literature, the generations in Mainland China that correspond to Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y are Lost Generation, Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation in terms of the time frame (Egri and Ralston, 2004; Huang and Lu, 2017). Additionally, taking the future market potential into consideration, only the latter two groups would be further studied in this case.

1.2 Research Problem and Research Questions

Given the massive political, social and economic changes in China's recent history, the main research problem of this study is to investigate Mainland Chinese outbound tourists' travel behaviors from a generational perspective. In order to figure out the results, it is important to propose the research questions: what are significant differences and similarities among the two generations (Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation) of Mainland Chinese travelers on their travel behaviors. In this research, the studied travel behaviors are travel motivations, information searches, activity preferences, destination evaluation concerns and future behaviors, based on the previous literature review. In addition, during the research, some other aspects would be also explored, for example, what do researchers need to pay attention on, while predicting the Chinese outbound tourist behaviors in accordance with those previously mentioned elements; and which generation has greater propensity in positive future behavioral intentions.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

In this case, unlike most studies focus on developed countries (mainly Western), the generational theory would be extended to China considering its distinctive core values. As Chinese generations are different in terms of political, cultural and social background, the analysis of Chinese generational characteristics is needed.

For this study, the aim is to understand more of the thoughts and behaviors about the outbound tourists from two Chinese generations (Social Reform Generation, and Only-child Generation) and identify the similarities and differences among them. In order to address an effective communication plan, it is important to know what marketing message to spread, which information sources to use and how to adapt the offerings to meet consumers' needs and expectations. Also, it is necessary to identify their incentives to travel abroad and the barriers that might keep them away. To develop a more specific target segment, there is also a need to observe which cohort would have more positive future behaviors and market potentials, and what should be focused on when destination marketers intend to target both generations successfully.

Through the research, useful information would be offered to the tourism researchers and destination marketers when delving into the Chinese outbound tourism market.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Consumer Behavior Research

2.1.1 Consumer Behavior and Decision Making

Consumer behavior is one of the most researched aspects in marketing areas that has been studied in a variety of sectors relating to diverse topics. Generally speaking, it is defined as *“the processes involved when individual select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, or experiences to satisfy needs and wants”* (Solomon, 2015: 28). Those needs and wants could be categorized into two types: utilitarian (functional) and hedonic (emotional/experiential) needs. More importantly, it represents an ongoing process that exists before, during and after a purchase (Solomon, 2015).

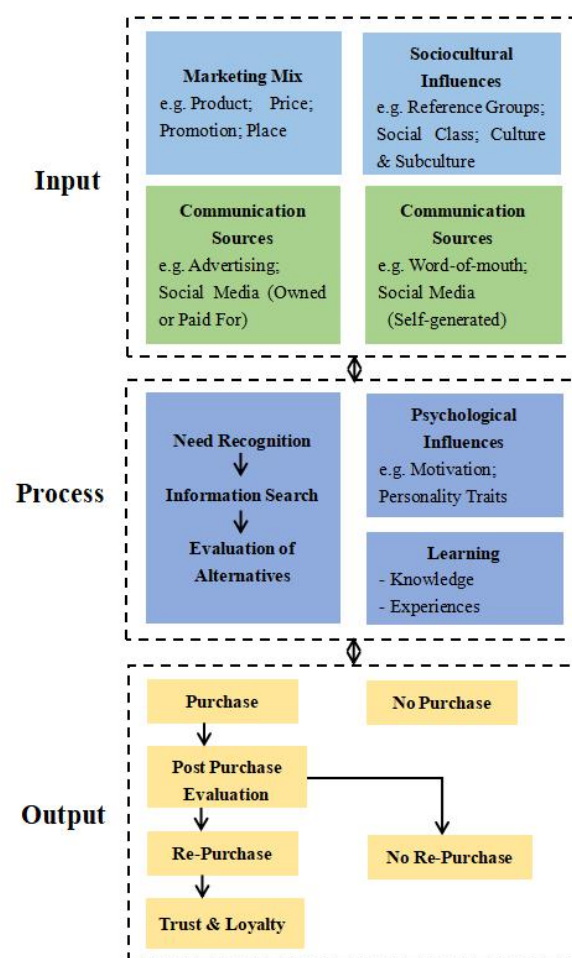
What's more, regarding to consumer behavior as a whole, there are a number of sociocultural influences that could have effects, including cultural and sub-cultural dimensions, social class, reference groups, as well as family impacts and interpersonal communications. On the other hand, marketing stimuli and individual psychological factors also play significant role in affecting consumer behavior, such as individuals' personality and lifestyle, their motivations, perceptions and information processing, etc. (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2015; Solomon, 2015).

Due to the distinctiveness of consumers, it is of great importance for marketers to understand the needs and wants of different segments that affected by a range of factors, which call for further segmentation strategy. Besides, the important criteria that help marketers to identify them are **demographics** (e.g., age, family structure, social class), **geographics** (e.g., nationality) and **psychographics** (e.g., values, preferences and lifestyles) (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2015; Solomon, 2015).

Undoubtedly, understanding the decision making of potential customers is essential while developing marketing strategy. Based on the previous literature, scholars mainly consider decision making as a process consisted of multiple stages that lead to customer's final choice. In general, the decision-making model that widely accepted includes three stages: **input**, **process** and **output** (as **Figure 1**). “**Input**” stage includes the purchase situation affected by marketing efforts, customers' sociocultural characteristics and information sources (e.g., marketing mix and social media) transmitted to customers. “**Process**” stage focuses on

how customers make decisions, including some important variables like need recognition, information search, and evaluation of alternatives, which are mediated by consumers' psychological factors on the impacts from the input stage; it is also the stage when individuals learn from the evaluation. “**Output**” stage refers to the post-decision aspect that consists the purchase itself and post-purchase evaluation (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2015). Through this, knowledge is accumulated by learning, and often store for extensive periods as memory (Moore, Smallman, Wilson and Simmons, 2012).

Figure 1 - Consumer Decision-Making Model



Source: Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015)

To explain differences in consumer decision making, level of involvement and level of decision-making are also important. As seen in **Figure 2**, consumer **involvement** is influenced by **personal factors** (e.g., needs), **object or stimulus factors** (e.g., marketing communication) and **situational factors** (e.g., occasion). Also, the level of involvement may

be affected by more than one of them (Solomon, 2015). Generally, as **Figure 3** shown, lower involvement is associated on habitual consumption decisions (e.g., household cleaners), while higher involvement with cognitive and affective decision making (e.g., travel arrangement) (Smallman and Moore, 2010; Munar and Jacobsen, 2012).

Figure 2 - Antecedents of Consumer Involvement (Solomon, 2015)

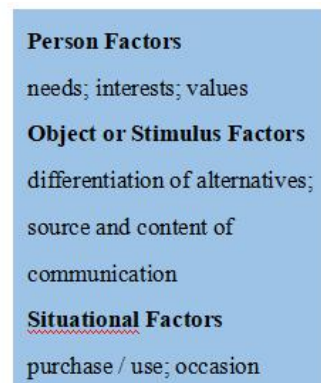
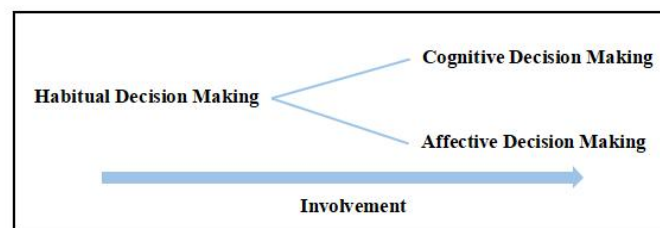


Figure 3 - Involvement and Decision Making (Solomon, 2015)



Nowadays, technology and culture create a new “always on” consumer; with the development of the Web and social media, consumers and companies could interact with each other online, also between consumers and consumers as well, regardless of some constraints, like the distance and time (Solomon, 2015). As besieged by an abundance of information, no matter they are promotional or non-promotional, decision making is more sophisticated and even more important to consumers today.

2.1.2 Consumer Behavior in Tourism

A good management of tourism requires successful understanding of tourist behaviors and experiences, which remains a significant challenge for both tourism practitioners and researchers (Moore *et al.*, 2012). Indeed, related tourism research about consumer behavior

has becoming more complex and challenging, since consumers are now rapidly changing, who have become more demanding and unmanageable, which leads to complicated behaviors (D'Urso, Disegna and Massari, 2016). For understanding consumer behavior, some key concepts would be discussed in general and in tourism context as follows, including the similarities and differences among them.

- **Decision making.** The process of decision-making is not perfectly rational. As mentioned and considering the “grand models” of consumer behavior, five steps are generally acknowledged: 1) **need recognition**; 2) **information search**; 3) **alternatives evaluation**; 4) **product choice and purchase**; 5) **post-consumption evaluation** (Martin and Woodside, 2012). This process is not only affected by both internal/personal factors, such as, attitudes, motivations and lifestyle, but also interpersonal (e.g., word-of-mouth) or non-interpersonal factors (e.g., marketing stimuli), especially in tourism context since a tourist decision is impacted more by situational factors (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005; Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2015).

Arguably, little research on tourist decision-making focus on the “process” aspects (Smallman and Moore, 2010; Moore *et al.*, 2012; Cohen, Prayag and Moital, 2014). It is suggested that the conventional decision making process is not suitable in every situation, like the travel decision (Morgan and Pritchard, 2012; Moore *et al.*, 2012). As suggested, those “grand models” of consumer behavior fail to clearly distinguish tangible products from intangible ones (e.g., services), as they mainly conceptualize decision-making as a “simple” input-output model (Smallman and Moore, 2010); however, tourists’ decision-making is more complicated, including planned and unplanned choices that are made before and during the travel (Smallman and Moore, 2010; Choi *et al.*, 2012; Moore *et al.*, 2012), while the perceived risk and uncertainty is relatively higher. Also, most studies explored simply a particular aspect like the destination choice, whereas, the choice made after selecting a destination is also of importance (Smallman and Moore, 2010). Hence, the conventional models of decision-making is constrained and not good for effective marketing practices.

Recent researches also demonstrated that travel decision making is a dynamic and ongoing process (e.g., Choi *et al.*, 2012; Martin and Woodside, 2012). Unlike the classic decision-making stages, decisions on purchase of services is different for its **intangibility**,

inseparability, heterogeneity and perishability (Morgan and Pritchard, 2012). Thus, there are more complex variables included in a travel decision making: 1) **recognizing a need to travel**; 2) **pre-trip planning** (e.g., destination choice, trip booking); 3) **on-site experiences** (e.g., planned/unplanned activities and evaluation); 4) **post-trip evaluation and future intentions** (Martin and Woodside, 2012).

Also, travel decision is sophisticated, since related purchase decision is viewed as more risky, requires more problem solving and planning, and costs relatively higher, in addition to the lack of related knowledge and experiences of tourists themselves, so that they tend to be highly involved and concern more (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005; Smallman and Moore, 2010; Martin and Woodside, 2012). Besides, travel decision process sometimes is not only affected by individual's thoughts but could also relates to group (e.g., family) decision (Hsu *et al.*, 2006; Gardiner and Kwek, 2017).

- **Motivation.** As a psychological term, motivation is the initial driving force that plays a crucial role in market decisions, such as segmentation, positioning and product development (Huang and Hsu, 2009; Cohen *et al.*, 2014). In general, it is defined as “*a disposition or a state of need that drives individuals toward types of action that are capable of satisfying those needs*” (Li and Cai, 2012: 475). There are two types of human needs: physiological and psychological needs, and both of them affect individual's buying behaviors; besides, consumers usually set purchase goals that satisfy more than one need (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2015). Motivations could be utilitarian and hedonic which both are key for purchase decisions (Solomon, 2015).

As for motivation in general, the **hierarchy of needs** proposed by Maslow (1943) is one of the most influential theories in consumer research, which is considered as a useful tool to understand consumer that consists of five-level ranking in order of importance from lower-level needs to higher-levels, including physiological, safety, social, ego, and self-actualization needs. In the tourism context, motivation plays a role in the dynamic tourist behaviors (Li and Cai, 2012). In fact, Maslow's hierarchy is too general to explain tourism specific motivations and decision (Gnoth, 1997).

It is widely acknowledged that the “**push or pull**” model is well cited in some important tourism literature (e.g., Crompton, 1979; Chon, 1990), which originated from the Maslow's

hierarchy of needs and has become the most-used one by tourism researchers (Prayag and Ryan, 2011). On one hand, “**push**” refers to the factors that impel individuals to travel, such as the desire for novelty, escape/relaxation, self-development, relationship enhancement and social interaction, etc. (Cohen *et al.*, 2014). On the other hand, “**pull**” relates to the factors that direct consumers towards it, like the perceived value of a destination, namely, historic attractions, local food and recreation facilities, etc. (Yoon and Uysal, 2005; Prebensen, Woo, Chen, and Uysal, 2012). Generally speaking, it is suggested that individuals travel because they are pushed by intrinsic motives and pulled by some external forces from a specific destination. The latter (pull) is considered to inherent to and reinforce the former push motives (Yoon and Uysal, 2005; Li and Cai, 2012; Prebensen *et al.*, 2012).

It is supported that motivations exercise a direct and significant influence on the affective image of a destination (Beerli and Martín, 2004; Li and Cai, 2012). Therefore, it is essential for tourism practitioners to explore the consumer insights, while identifying the attributes that should be promoted and the features as well as resources that destinations could offer to meet their evolving needs and expectations.

Furthermore, motivation literature covers many aspects, for instance, including this concept as a stimuli of actual behavior and its measurement (e.g., Crompton, 1979), study a new emerging market (e.g., Jiang, Scott and Ding, 2015) and tourists’ characteristics (e.g., Woodside and Dubelaar, 2002; Jang and Wu, 2006), etc. Though travel motivation was mainly investigated in Western countries, now there is an increasing attention on nations with different cultural background, indicating the importance of extensive researches regarding different emerging markets.

- **Information search.** Indeed, information search is part of the decision-making or pre-decision necessity, which has a great impact on consumers’ decisions and behaviors, for reducing the cognitive dissonance, perceived risks and uncertainty (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005; Choi *et al.*, 2012). It could be also viewed as a dynamic and ongoing process includes **pre- and post-purchase stages** (Choi *et al.*, 2012). More importantly, consumers now are prone to actively engage in word of mouth, especially online (Luo and Zhong, 2015; Xiang *et al.*, 2015).

Generally, tourists make their destination choices on the basis of a variety of information

sources, and this information sourcing behavior involves when, where to and how to search. It is noted in the influential research by Fodness and Murray (1999) that these sources could be classified into “**external**” and “**internal**” dimensions. **External sources** include promotional information from the marketers (e.g. advertisements) but not only limited to this, which also from some unbiased channels, such as news media, books, word-of-mouth (e.g., recommendations) and movies.

Meanwhile, **internal sources** could be individuals’ previous experiences and past information searches, either towards the same destination or a similar one (Fodness and Murray, 1997), which form their prior memory and knowledge; it is deemed that these have an initial impact in the destination image formation (Ho *et al.*, 2012).

Notably, interpersonal influence, with its contribution to an individual’s psychological formation, is an important determinant of decision-making process (Bieger and Laesser, 2004; Ye, Law, Gu and Chen, 2011; Gardiner, King and Grace, 2013; Luo and Zhang, 2015). It is well cited that consumers is prone to accept information from their reference groups (Ye *et al.*, 2011), and word-of-mouth is one of the most influential sources for its high credibility when a destination is significantly evaluated after actual experiences, and the effect of friends and family referrals is stronger due to the social ties among them (Bieger and Laesser, 2004; Luo and Zhong, 2015).

Furthermore, digital revolution has become one of the most influential factors on consumer behavior (Ye *et al.*, 2011; Munar and Jacobsen, 2012; Xiang, Magnini and Fesenmaier, 2015). Particularly, as for tourism, the Internet provides the platforms for information exchanges among the consumers themselves, consumers and intermediaries (e.g., travel agents) and destination marketing organizations (e.g., tourism offices), etc. (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010). It’s been said that the three types of website that are deemed as most trustworthy are official sites of tourism organization, travel agencies and third party websites (Luo and Zhong, 2015), as they are the essential sources of destination information for travelers to gain familiarity and details before making a decision (Ho *et al.*, 2012).

Beyond that, social networks have aroused a worldwide upsurge in destination marketing as they become a daily necessity for consumers (Luo and Zhong, 2015). Social media is increasingly important for consumer generated contents, where tourists could share their

experiences and photos as references as a virtual community, and therefore traditional travel intermediaries is being challenged since consumers increasingly rely on online sources (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010; Ye *et al.*, 2011; Luo and Zhong, 2015; Xiang *et al.*, 2015).

Apparently, tourists always seek for needed information through various channels, while firstly recall the internal sources and then move forward for more useful external sources for trip planning.

As for tangible products, consumers could try before purchase or observe others' experiences (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005). However, they could not perceive the quality of tourism products in advance since it is experiential (Ye *et al.*, 2011; Luo and Zhong, 2015). After deciding to start a trip, people would have higher involvement and engage in more extensive search due to the higher risk and uncertainty (Smallman and Moore, 2010; Martin and Woodside, 2012). Potential tourists tend to consider online reviews more helpful and particularly significant, relying on this type of word of mouth than information offered from service providers and mass media (Ye *et al.*, 2011; Filieri, Alguezaui and Mcleay, 2015; Xiang *et al.*, 2015).

More importantly, after the destination choice and purchase in the initial stage, post-purchase information search is more detailed and destination-specific (Choi *et al.*, 2012), including the future weather, food choices, recreation activities and events, etc. Normally, there is a particular time lag between the purchase and consumption.

Moreover, prior studies focus a lot on the information channels from the perspective of tourists, such as their demographics, behavioral and geographic characteristics, which are considered valuable for targeting a specific segment. Besides, the usage of related sources mainly depend on travel behavior, like past experiences (Hsu and Huang 2009); situational factors, such as travel companions and the destination; and the availability of internal and external sources (Choi *et al.*, 2012).

- **Perception.** Perception, a key concept in consumer behavior, refers to the process about "*how individuals select, organize and interpret the stimuli in a meaningful and coherent way*" (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2015: 114). It is basically about how consumer see the products or services. Generally, sensation is an important element of consumer perception, which is the response to five **basic sensory stimuli: sights, sounds, smells, taste and textures** (Solomon,

2015). Though individuals might be exposed to the same stimuli, they would have different perceptions towards it due to their personal factors, like expectations and previous experiences, which then lead to the variations of behavioral intentions (Beerli and Martín, 2004; Li and Cai, 2012).

Since a destination is an experiential product (Luo and Zhong, 2015), tourist perception runs through the whole travel experience, including **prior knowledge** about it, **actual experience** there and **post-visit assessment** (Cohen *et al.*, 2014). Moreover, tourism behavior research on perceptions mainly investigate tourists' cognition in the perceptual process, followed by affective and conative dimensions. In tourism studies, perception plays a significant role in tourists' involvement, satisfaction and destination image as well as the service quality (Cohen *et al.*, 2014).

Particularly, **destination image** is one of the most-researched topics among scholars. With regard to its value, this image plays a critical role in individual's subjective perception, influencing the destination choice, on-site experience, evaluations as well as the post-visit behavioral intentions (Bigné, Sánchez and Sánchez, 2001; Chen and Tsai, 2007; Chi and Qu, 2008; Stylos *et al.*, 2016). In addition, perceived service quality is another important topic. Tourists' satisfaction and dissatisfaction mainly depends on the differences between their expectations and the experienced service quality of that destination (Chi and Qu, 2008; Chen and Chen, 2010). In addition, this image may change constantly due to the potential influences of external information and actual experiences, as the image that forms after travel is more realistic and complex than the initial one (Beerli and Martín, 2004; Stylos *et al.*, 2016).

Besides, studies on perceptions also focus a lot on perceived risk and safety (Sharifpour *et al.*, 2014), which is also in connection with the destination image. Thus, it is important for marketers to understand consumer perceptions when marketing a destination, since creating and managing a positive image and its service quality is of great significance (Wang and Hsu, 2010).

- **Future behavioral intentions.** Generally, behavioral intention refers to an individual's subjective judgment for planned future behavior that represents the expectations of a specific pattern of behavior and the likelihood to act (Chen and Tsai, 2007). Positive disconfirmation

could influence consumers' emotions, satisfaction and therefore behavioral intentions (Bigné *et al.*, 2009a). In the tourism setting, positive behavioral intentions are mainly as follows: (1) revisit the same destination, (2) recommend the place to other potential consumers, and (3) say positive things about them (Castro, Armario and Ruiz, 2007; Chen and Tsai, 2007).

Many researchers have studied the revisit intention, examining the factors that contribute to it (Bigné *et al.*, 2009b; Stylos *et al.*, 2016). It is suggested that the willingness to return to a place is impacted by the level of satisfaction (Chen and Tsai, 2007), the perceived value, and past behavior; besides, variety seeking also may influence the revisit intentions, as people who seek for novelty and variety tend not to do the same (Bigné *et al.*, 2009a; Prayag *et al.*, 2017). Huang and Hsu (2009) explored the effects of travel motivation, past experiences, perceived constraints and revisiting intention. They found that past experience has an impact on revisit intention, while attitude is important in the total effect of satisfaction on revisit intention.

Recommendation to others is also a commonly acknowledged measures of tourist behaviors (Prayag *et al.*, 2017). Many researchers have already ascertained that tourists are more likely to recommend if they have a positive overall image towards a place (Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Papadimitriou *et al.*, 2015). Also, the relationship between satisfying experiences and willingness to recommend has already been examined and verified (Bigné *et al.*, 2001). It is argued that tourists who are satisfied are more likely to recommend to others than to return to the destination in the future.

A positive word of mouth is considered as an indicator of intention to continue the relationship with the destination; it is also a convincing source for potential visitors (Yoon and Uysal, 2005). It is suggested that the likelihood to return and recommend is both directly and indirectly impacted by destination image (Castro *et al.*, 2007).

Table 1 - Comparison of Consumer Behavior in General and in Tourism Context

	Consumer behavior in general	Consumer behavior in tourism
Decision-making	Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015) Consumer decision-making model includes three stages: input, process and output. Sirakaya and Woodside (2005); Smallman and Moore (2010) “Grand models” are commonly accepted in examining consumer behavior. Martin and Woodside (2012) - Stages: 1) need recognition; 2) information search; 3) alternatives evaluation; 4) product choice and purchase; 5) post-purchase evaluation. Smallman and Moore (2010) - Consumption frequency: more frequent - relatively lower consumer involvement	Smallman and Moore (2010); Martin and Woodside (2012) Travel decision-making is more complex, including many sub-decisions (planned/unplanned); perceived risk is higher. Sirakaya and Woodside (2005); Morgan and Pritchard (2012) - Characteristics: intangibility; inseparability; heterogeneity; perishability Martin and Woodside (2012) Stages: 1) travel decision; 2) pre-trip planning (e.g., travel party, destination, and booking); 3) on-site experiences (e.g., activities & evaluation); 4) post-trip evaluation and future intentions. Smallman and Moore (2010) - Consumption frequency: less frequent - relatively higher consumer involvement
	Sirayaka and Woodside (2005); Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015) Decision making process is affected by both personal or non-personal factors (e.g., word-of-mouth or external marketing stimuli) and is not perfectly rational.	

Motivation	Li and Cai (2012: 475) It is defined as “<i>a state of need that drives individuals toward types of action that are capable of satisfying those needs</i>”.	
	Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015) One of the most influential theory in consumer research is the hierarchy of needs proposed by Maslow (1943). Gnoth (1997) Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory is too general to allow for any particular degree of specificity.	Crompton (1979); Chon (1990); Prebensen <i>et al.</i> (2012) “Push” and “pull” model specifically in tourism: - Push: personal desire for novelty seeking, escape/relaxation, self-exploration/development, relationship enhancement, etc. - Pull: perceived value of the destination, including historic attractions, value for money, recreation facilities, etc.
Information search	Sirakaya and Woodside (2005); Choi <i>et al.</i> (2012) It is an ongoing process includes pre- and post-purchase stages, for reducing the cognitive dissonance, and uncertainty. Fodness and Murray (1999) - Internal: individuals’ previous experiences and past information searches, etc. - External: promotional sources (e.g. advertisements) and unbiased channels, like books, word-of-mouth and movies, etc. Munar and Jacobsen (2012) Electronic social networks and online information platforms have a tremendous impact on consumer behaviors now.	
	Sirakaya and Woodside (2005) As for tangible manufactured consumption, information search may include pre-purchase trial or observation of	Smallman and Moore (2010); Martin and Woodside (2012) People may engage in more extensive search due to higher risks. Xiang and Gretzel (2010); Luo and Zhong (2015)

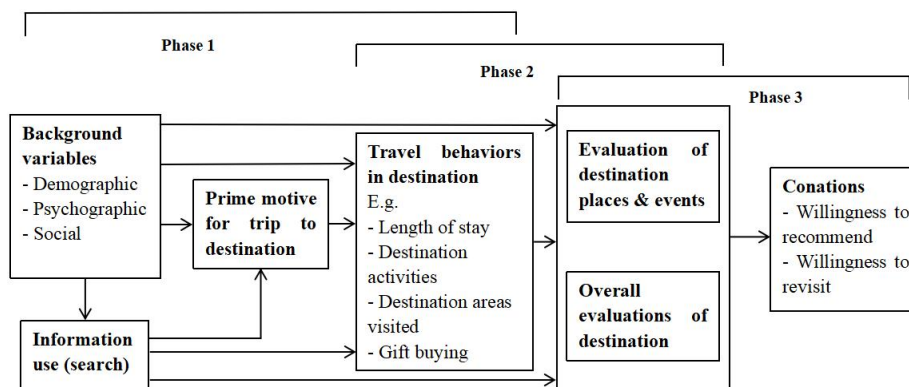
	others.	Customers are likely to use reference groups for travel decisions. Choi <i>et al.</i> (2012) After the destination choice and purchase, post-purchase information search is more detailed and destination-specific.
Perception	Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015: 114) It maybe influenced by personal factors (e.g, expectations) and marketing messages, which leads to different intentions.	
	Solomon (2015) - Sensation is an important element, which is the response to five basic stimuli: sights, sounds, smells, taste and textures. - Stages of perception: exposure, attention and interpretation.	Cohen, Prayag and Moital (2014) - Researches mainly explore tourist' cognition, then the affective and conative ones. - Perception plays a role in destination image, satisfaction and perceived service quality. Beerli and Martín (2004); Stylos <i>et al.</i> (2016) Perceptions that forms after travel is more realistic and complex.
Future behavioral intentions	Chen and Tsai (2007) It refers to customers' subjective judgment for future behavior and the likelihood to act.	
	Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015) - re-purchase the products; recommend to others or say something positive (word-of-mouth)	Castro <i>et al.</i>, (2007); Chen and Tsai (2007) - revisit the same destination; recommend to others or say something positive (word-of-mouth)

2.1.3 Tourism Consumption System

Based on the extant studies, Woodside and Dubelaar put forward a theory called **tourism consumption systems (TCS)**, which is referred to as “*the set of related travel thoughts, decisions, and behaviors by a discretionary traveler prior to, during, and following a trip*” (2002: 120). More importantly, its theoretical framework is also an influential models in related research, and was built on the contributions of Clawson and Knetsch (1966), who presented five-stage of the total travel process, including (a) trip planning, (b) travel to the destination, (c) actual experiences, (d) return home, as well as (e) the recollection sharing with others.

It is suggested that the three dimensions in tourism consumption system (thoughts, decisions and behaviors) with regard to one aspect could affect many others, focusing on the inter-relationships among them when a tourist’s destination choice has already been made, instead of simply the destination selection process. What’s more, a relationship among the multi-dimension variables is proposed, and presented as the following figure:

**Figure 4 - Relationships Among Decision and Behavior Variables
of Tourism Consumption System (Woodside and Dubelaar, 2002)**



The proposition of Woodside and Dubelaar’s study (2002) is about how travelers’ background variables influence the following travel behaviors as shown, in which first-time visitors and repeat visitors are taken as the subjects in their research. Throughout this variable-level analysis, it is indicated in **phase 1** that pre- and during-travel relationship influences travel behaviors in a given destination; and **phase 2** presents the during- and post-travel relationship as well as **phase 3** the post-visit relationship with future behavioral

intentions. It has been ascertained that the travel party characteristics, including demographic, psychographic and social variables, could influence their prime motives, information search, decision and actual travel behaviors, evaluations of the destination as well as their future intentions.

As could be seen, tourism consumption system concerns the direct and indirect bonds among all the related variables regarding to a trip as they are all interdependent, so that the exploration of them as a whole is of great importance. Certainly, positive tourist future behavior is the goal of destination practitioners.

With light of the subsequent literature, this theory was supported by many following studies. For instance, first-time and repeat travelers are studied by investigating their demographic characteristics, trip planning, pre- and post-visit differences in their preferred activities and post-visit evaluations (Li, Cheng, Kim and Petrick, 2008). Also, a study that examines generational analysis on travel behaviors with the application of this tourism consumption system theory provide empirical support, while exploring dimensions like information sources, visitation history, destination and activities preferences and evaluation criteria (Li *et al.*, 2013).

2.1.4 Tourists in their Social and Cultural Settings

To ensure effective tourism marketing, marketers not only should understand what people do on holiday, but also how they make travel decisions (Kim *et al.*, 2010). As mentioned, consumer behavior is influenced by many internal and external factors.

2.1.4.1 Reference Group Influences and Family Decision Making

It is worth noting that decisions sometimes are not simply made by people on their own, indeed, they might be affected by others' opinions, and many of the choices are made in groups. Given that, consumers tend to act in accord with the social group with which they identify (Hsu *et al.*, 2006; Gardiner and Kwek, 2017), **interpersonal influences** are important in developing individuals' attitudes, values and behaviors.

Regarding to a travel decision, they share information or direct experiences, about destination(s), services or other needed information (Hsu *et al.*, 2006; Luo and Zhong, 2015).

As previously mentioned, the characteristics of services include intangibility, perishability, heterogeneity, and impulsive consumption, which could result in higher perceived risks and consumer involvement (Smallman and Moore, 2010; Munar and Jacobsen, 2012); therefore, consumers are likely to rely on others' opinions, especially family members, relatives, and friends (Bieger and Laesser, 2004; Ye *et al.*, 2011; Luo and Zhong, 2015) which are sometimes termed as **normative referents**.

It is examined that family is an influential social group, with whom people choose to spend their time, especially vacations (Fodness, 1992; Luo and Zhong, 2015). Evidently, differences in family characteristics may influence many sub-decisions, such as what and how they purchase (Kim *et al.*, 2010; Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2015; Solomon, 2015). In tourism context, these sub-decisions would firstly be concerning where and when to go, what to do, etc. Thus, understanding how families make travel decisions is also of great value to tourism marketers and practitioners.

Tourism researchers have identified three modes of **family decision making**: husband-dominant, wife-dominant or a joint decision between husband and wife (Kim *et al.*, 2010), when now "autonomic decisions" is added (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2015). In terms of previous studies, family decision making has become more complex and hybrid that includes both individual and joint decision making instead of simply individual decision in the past. Also, it is revealed that the prevalence of husband as the head decision maker has already being challenged by the position of wife for decades. Besides, it is ascertained that most of the travel decision results from joint decision making (Fodness, 1992; Kim *et al.*, 2010).

Nevertheless, it is suggested that husband mainly dominates the role in decisions about accommodation and transportation-related activities, while wife decides the overall travel plan, particularly, eating, buying souvenirs, and the future revisit. Moreover, patterns between family with children and without children are quite similar except for the online sharing of travel experience (Kim *et al.*, 2010).

Furthermore, family life cycle is a key concept that often used for segmentation, includes many socioeconomic and demographic variables (e.g., age and marital status). Though it is a popular topic in marketing researches, few studies were concerning with the relationship

between family life cycle and travel-related decision making (Kim *et al.*, 2010). It is suggested that, as family structure shifts, there would be also observable changes in family decision making over time.

2.1.4.2 Culture and Subculture Influences on Tourist Behaviors

A **culture** is a society's personality. Products achieve success in one culture may not gain the same marketplace acceptance in another if marketers fail to understand the differences among consumers in different places (Solomon, 2015).

From the tourism perspective, researches have been focused on travel behaviors about a specific culture background. There are studies between sub-groups, those who are categorized by **ethnicity, religion, geographic location, age** or **gender** (Solomon, 2015). For instance, Mainland Chinese and Hong Kong tourists have been studied by Kim and Prideaux (2005), regarding travel motivation, preferred activities and pre-trip plan behaviors. Although cultural differences do exist among regions in the same country, larger differences could be found out between nations (Woodside, Hsu and Marshall, 2011; Li, 2014). Generally speaking, nation is a key concept to study culture, since members of a large society have a dominant language, history, religion, political and education systems, and sense of identity, which result in a certain pattern of cultural values, norms, customs and traditions, etc (Solomon, 2015).

Tourism researchers also pay attention to cross-cultural differences in behaviors since national culture has a strong moderating effects. For example, to address the impacts of various cultural backgrounds, different travel motives and benefit-seeking patterns between British and Japanese travelers are studied (You, O'Leary, Morrison and Hong, 2000). The research of Woodside, Hsu and Marshall (2011) made a contribution to the knowledge of national cultures' impacts on behaviors mediating by tourists' age and prior experience by examining travelers to Australia from 14 Asian, European and North American nations.

More importantly, understanding consumers from a culture perspective should not only explored from their nationalities, but to define the **core values**, which is one of the key point that distinguish a particular group and characterize consumers' behaviors (Li *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, marketers should be sensitive to those distinctive cultural values and deliver the marketing messages that suit target consumers' values and preferences.

2.2 Distinctive Background of Chinese Consumers

2.2.1 Culture and Socioeconomic Distinctiveness

It is commonly acknowledged that Chinese are affected by distinctive cultural beliefs and historical events unique to China. Traditionally, under Confucian philosophy, Chinese society has been male-dominated for a long time, especially in rural areas. Though this circumstance has been improved and egalitarianism becomes increasingly significant due to the huge social changes, China is still a more patriarchal society. It has been revealed that there are fewer joint decisions of both husband and wife in many household purchases in China but more husband-dominant decisions; also, in urban areas, the influences of both couples' decision in bigger cities are more than those in rural areas (Ford, LaTour and Henthorne, 1995).

Different from the individualism commonly promoted by Western culture, Chinese cultural tradition is collectivism-oriented because of the Confucianism. Being involved in this culture, Chinese generally not simply focus on a person as a complete entity but also strongly value an individual's relation with others, like family and friends (Li and Su, 2007). Besides, they stress family obligation and relationship harmony, tend to avoid uncertainty to a great extent (Kim, Wan and Pan, 2015), adhere to social norms, and are more consistent with the social group with which they identify (Hsu *et al.*, 2006; Gardiner and Kwek, 2017).

Furthermore, “face” (classified as *lien*, and *mien-tsu*), a core concept to Chinese culture, plays a role in Chinese's psychology and behavior (Kwek and Lee, 2010). Chinese have a strong “face” consciousness, which makes them more sensitive to failures towards social recognition (e.g., social status); In some sense, they connect “face” through consumption (Li and Su, 2007), and sometimes tend to purchase a well-known brand or expensive products to “have face” (Bao, Zhou and Su, 2003). In these years, with the explosive economic and social transformation of the Mainland China, the size of middle class would keep increasing, especially the upper-middle citizens (McKinsey & Company, 2013). These consumers have developed different lifestyles and spending preferences as they are the group that is prone to spend more to pursue higher quality of life and premium products/services. As the economy getting better, people tend to pursue better life, and take holiday as the way to relax, to enhance personal relationships and even to bring them satisfaction of “having face”.

2.2.2 Social Life Distinctiveness

Lifestyle refers to a distinctive pattern of consumption that defines how one allocates time and money (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2015), like their daily routines, interests, and perceptions. In order to understand Chinese, various distinctive conditions should be considered.

Given that shopping is an important part of Chinese's daily life, one of the biggest online shopping website "Taobao" that belongs to Alibaba Group should have to be mentioned. It provides the platform for small businesses and any other brands to open online stores that facilitates a huge number of transactions in China and also abroad, offering greater convenience since people could buy almost everything, including a number of services (e.g., application for things, like visa).

Due to governmental control/restrictions, and the so-called "Great Chinese Firewall", the network environment in China differs significantly from the West. In other words, most of the widely-used social networks are blocked so that Chinese could only rely on other corresponding sites. For instance, Baidu, the most used online search engine, functions the same as Google (Zhang, Song and Qu, 2011); it is the most important platform where marketers make efforts to spread the marketing messages. Also, when Facebook has created thousands of online consumption communities, people in China use Weibo instead, a corresponding platform where people share life experiences, ideas, opinions or any recommendations towards everything (BBC News, 2017).

As a matter of fact, China is leading the mobile payment revolution, with the usage rate of 65.5% in 2017, increased from 50.3% in 2016 (CNNIC, 2018). Chinese is currently living in an era of simpler life not to deal with cash and credit cards (China Daily, 2018). Wechat, launched in 2011, is a multi-purpose app that being the most widely-used by a number of Chinese active mobile users, and it is much more than a way for instant messaging, but also performs a wide range of functions that are not available on Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp (widely-used instant messaging tools in Western countries).

It is worth noting that Chinese payment platforms are quite unique and advance in mobile payments, for having Alipay and Wechat Pay which people rely the most in daily. It is reported that mobile payments in China had reached 81 trillion RMB (approximately 12.8

trillion dollars) by October 2017 (China Daily, 2018); Alipay had about 54% share of the Chinese mobile online payments market in 2017 while WeChat about 40% (Forbes, 2017).

Generally, there is even no need to bring any cash or bank cards but their smart phones or tablets. The reason is that citizens could utilize these two mobile Apps (when linked with bank card) to pay for the goods and services, almost everywhere (except for rural areas) by scanning (bar or QR) codes, including shops, markets, restaurants, and even for public transportation like buses, metros and taxis, etc.

Alipay, established in 2014, is a third-party payment platform that functions diversely. Generally, individuals use it to transfer money, pay credit card debts and utility bills, manage their investments as what banks could offer, and do an amount of other things, like buying any kind of tickets, manage the express delivery, book accommodations and tourism products, etc. While Wechat, except for socializing, it also contains lots of functions like Alipay, such as doing any payments safely and quickly.

Though Alipay and WeChat Pay have already been applied in many countries/regions (China Daily, 2018), in addition to the unique online platforms towards Chinese daily life, these applications should be valued by marketers to win Chinese consumers.

2.3 Generation Theory in Tourism

2.3.1 Generation Theory

Generation theory was introduced by Mannheim (1952) in sociology field and following the psychology. As an important subculture, a **generation** generally refers to the cohort of people who were born in the same period and therefore has experienced similar epochal events that help shape their lives (e.g., Pennington-Gray, Fridgen and Stynes, 2003; Schewe and Meredith, 2004; Huang and Petrick, 2010). It is acknowledged that this theory is a dynamic, social-cultural theoretical framework (Pendergast, 2010) and a series of factors could have a profound impact on the collective memory of the cohort groups, for instance, unique historical, political, economic and social events, as well as technological revolution and lifestyle changes throughout their **formative** or **coming-of-age years** (Lehto *et al.*, 2008; Huang and Petrick, 2010; Gardiner *et al.*, 2013; Li *et al.*, 2013). Apparently, the impacts of the experiences between an individual's adolescence and adulthood could be particularly

influential (Schewe and Meredith, 2004; Glover, 2010; Gardiner *et al.*, 2013).

Due to the shared life experiences, each generation is distinctive for their similar core values, attitudes, and behaviors, which could be also considered as **generation persona/mindset** (Pendergast, 2010; Gardiner *et al.*, 2013) and remains relatively stable over their lifetimes (Schewe and Meredith, 2004; Glover, 2010; Li *et al.*, 2013). It could be said that each generation is distinct from past and future cohorts, due to the so called “generation gap” (Gardiner *et al.*, 2013; Cohen *et al.*, 2014). Yet, the influences does not determine all behaviors; though they share common characteristics, they still differ in some ways, especially when generations is considered in different cultures (Schewe and Meredith, 2004).

Furthermore, there is no absolute consensus on the exact time frame with respect to a specific generation; in most cases, a cohort is usually 18 to 22 years in length. The idea of generation, has been mainly studied in the context of the United States since it was originally an American concept (Schewe and Meredith, 2004); then, it is widely applied to other English-speaking countries that have a relative cultural background, despite of the geographic differences (Pendergast, 2010).

Additionally, it is ascertained that **generational analysis** is a significant segmentation approach, due to the commonalities within generations, and the distinctiveness across them (Li *et al.*, 2013). As for now, the current major living generations that being widely researched is labeled as Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y/Millennial (e.g., Pendergast, 2010; Li *et al.*, 2013), while Generation Z as the latest cohort that is still in their formative year, has not being studied thoroughly as the former generations yet.

In light of the previous studies, this theory was investigated in public and social fields, and mainly concentrates on work-related variables, including personality, work values, leadership (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman and Lance, 2010; Lyons and Kuron, 2014), and also on learning and education domains (Wilson and Gerber, 2008).

Furthermore, a consumer’s age exerts a significant influence on his/her identity when individuals consider themselves similar as others of the similar age. As the generation concept has considerable correlation with consumer behaviors, and the generational differences of core values as well as attitudes have already been explored in various areas, such as shopping (Jackson, Stoel and Brantley, 2011), wine consumption (Fountain and Charters, 2004), and

media consumption patterns (Dou, Wang and Zhou, 2006), and tourism, etc.

- **Baby Boomers.** Baby Boomers is the generation born from 1946 to 1964 (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2015), who are already in their peak-earning years and elder-hood (Huang and Petrick, 2010; Pendergast, 2010). Most of them have higher disposable incomes and more leisure time in their retirement years. Given that, they expect to spend more time on hobbies and special interests, particularly travel currently (Lehto *et al.*, 2008). Considering the experiences of the historical movements during their formative years, Baby Boomers was born in an era of optimism and growth with increased educational, financial and social opportunities. This group of retirees would not pursue things to merely fill their time, but to seek experiences that bring emotional satisfaction or quest for self through self-exploration and be more individual conscious (Pennington-Gray *et al.*, 2003; Li *et al.*, 2013).

It is suggested that Baby Boomers is the most lucrative segment among generations in terms of their sheer size (Li *et al.*, 2013). What's more, they perceive themselves younger regardless of actual age, and act differently from the stereotypical seniors, so that this generation is considered as a "new-age elderly" (Lehto *et al.*, 2008).

- **Generation X.** This generation born from 1965 to 1976 (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2015), who currently entering their peak-earning years (Huang and Petrick, 2010). People grew up under the economic downturn and social instability, so they became more cautious and rational. Moreover, many of them are raised as latchkey kids due to both parents working or the high percentage of divorce at that time (Pennington-Gray *et al.*, 2003), which led to them being more independent and desiring for stable family compared to former generations; besides, they value entrepreneur spirit and work harder on balancing work-life responsibilities to avoid the same situation as they involved during childhood (Li *et al.*, 2013). They are ambitious to achieve success, however, unlike their former cohorts, they would rather focus less on excessive work and career advancement if these result in insufficient time for family; additionally, they place more emphasis on satisfaction and quality on job for chasing freedom and flexibility (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2015).

Compared with Baby Boomers, this generation born with the emergence of MTV and being firstly exposed to the internet world, so that they became tech-savvy and creative, and tend to use the internet for information in everyday life (Gardiner *et al.*, 2014).

As for consumption, this cohort spend more freely than Baby Boomers, consider sincerity of the marketing messages particularly important and need convincing proof of the reliability and quality of the products (Huang and Petrick, 2010); meanwhile, they concern about functional value, prefer products that are cheaper and with better performance, but they are also willing to try new things (Gardiner *et al.*, 2014).

- **Generation Y.** Generation Y represents those born from 1978 to 1996, which is also often labeled as “Millennial”, or the “Digital Natives” as they are the first cohort that grew up with widely available computers and embraced with social media (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2015). This cohort is mainly in their young adulthood at the moment, with a focus of brands, sociability, recreation and digital culture (Pendergast, 2010). Even though they have suffered the recession, they are still upbeat and optimistic about the future though there exists financial uncertainty. With the widespread use of information technologies, they are also recognized as higher educated, long for authentic experiences and are expected to become the main market to be served in the coming years (Santos, Veiga and Aguas, 2016).

Notably, while many Generation X grew up as latchkey kids due to the absence of their parents in childhood for work or divorce issues (Pennington-Gray *et al.*, 2003), a number of Generation Y have been doted upon since their parents try to ensure work-life balance and offer more to their kids. Besides, they are more confident, consumption-oriented and are predicted to have the biggest spending potentials; also, they are considered to be the most independent decision makers (Huang and Petrick, 2010). Furthermore, they are the first cohort that born in the “age of terrorism”, and being sheltered/overprotected by the family and the society, so they particularly concerned with personal safety and security (Pendergast, 2010).

As the most globally connected generation, they appreciate integrated and interactive marketing platforms (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2015) and are more likely to share information, communicate and evaluate (give opinions) through a variety of social networks, like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram, etc. Moreover, they value teams and collaborations, and strongly influenced by friends’ and peers’ opinions (Pendergast, 2010). It could be said that, there is a bigger gap between the previous generations and Generation Y, due to the enormous impacts of those societal changes (Glover, 2010).

Table 2 - Key Characteristics of the Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y

Generations	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y (Millennial)
- Year of birth (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2015) - Age in 2018	1946 - 1964 1964 - 1982 (formative years) 54 - 72 years old	1965 - 1979 1983 - 1997 (formative years) 39 - 53 years old	1980 - 1996 1997 - 2014 (formative years) 22 - 38 years old
Epochal events (Schewe and Meredith, 2004; Lehto <i>et al.</i> , 2008; Pendergast, 2010; Li <i>et al.</i> , 2013)	The Civil Rights Movement The Women's Liberation Movement The Vietnam War President John F. Kennedy's Assassination First Moon Landing	Energy Crisis The End of the Cold War Fall of the Berlin Wall Watergate Scandal Advent of Television September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attack	Dissolution of the Soviet Union The Stock Market Crash of 2008 Emergence of the Information Age (e.g., founding of Google) Revolution and Widespread Use of Communications (e.g., Social networks)
Core values (e.g., Pendergast, 2010; Li <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Gardiner <i>et al.</i> , 2014)	optimism, individual consciousness, self-exploration, self-actualization, youthfulness, work, more concern with health and wellness	independence, diversity, practicality, entrepreneurship, ambitiousness, self-confidence, cautiousness, desire for work-life balance, peer-orientation, flexibility, and technology-savvy	high adaptability, self-confidence, achievement-orientation, sheltered, sociability, diversity, creativity, flexibility, most tech-savvy, broader connection, and desire for freedom (from pressure)

2.3.2 Generations in the Tourism Research

Tourism could be characterized by multi-generational tourists (Glover, 2010). Considering the dynamic changes of today's society, the emergence of new tourist profiles is substantially an ongoing process as they are becoming savvier and their preferences are more diverse than in the past (Gardiner *et al.*, 2013). In order to adapt to these transitions, **generational analysis**, rather than mere age, plays a crucial role in understanding and characterizing cohorts of people (Pennington-Gray *et al.*, 2003; Schewe and Meredith, 2004; Huang and Petrick, 2010; Pendergast, 2010); whilst, it is also a valuable segmentation method for investigating aspects of the tourism industry due to its wide adoption to understand the psychology and behaviors of a particular target market (e.g., Beldona, 2005; Glover, 2010; Gardiner *et al.*, 2013). In recent years, more and more attentions focus on conducting this approach with regard to the tourism context in the academic field and in practice (Glover, 2010; Li *et al.*, 2013).

Gardiner, King and Grace (2013) have conducted a cross-generational study concerning Australian Baby Boomers, Generation X and Millennial that collective memory in their formative year has a great impact on travel decision making among generations. They further affirmed that future travel behaviors will also differ among these cohorts, as formative experiences shape their key formative referents (informational and normative referents), perceived value, attitude and intention (Gardiner *et al.*, 2014). Due to the mentioned distinctiveness, this analysis could provide implications to the destinations, enabling marketers to segment consumers, predict their interests and expectations, to further generate the strategies towards the right targets in the right place (Schewe and Meredith, 2004; Huang and Lu, 2017).

2.3.3 Generational Analysis on Tourists' Travel Behaviors

More importantly, due to the generational persona, differences among the tourist behavior of generational cohorts is evident, and increasing sophistication in their travel behaviors are found (Gardiner and Kwek, 2017). It is found out that previous generational research has been conducted on behaviors like motivations, preferred information sources and activities, as well as destination perception, as showed in **Table 3** relating to the similarities and differences

among generations. However, more attentions of those related studies are regarding to Silent Generation and Baby Boomers, which call for more focus concerning Generation X and Generation Y.

As for **motivation**, Generation Y tend to seek different experiences that make them feel unique, and then Generation X; Generation X also long for fun and family time to balance work and life which travel could provide. Additionally, Baby Boomers are highly motivated by hedonic and high quality experiences and they desire for novelty, escape and authentic experiences (Gardiner *et al.*, 2014), which confirmed the results from previous research that Boomers are experiential travelers who consider themselves younger than their ages, tend to emphasize the need to have fun, to seek new adventures, and novelty experiences, as well as quality family time away from home (Lehto *et al.*, 2008). Similarly, Glover (2010) also suggested that Generation Y has a strong interest in traveling overseas and more frequently due to curiosity for new experiences and desire for sense of uniqueness. In Chung, Chen and Lin's study (2016), Social Reform Generation (similar to Gen-Y) is particularly motivated by fun and entertainment and long for thrilling/exciting adventures; besides, the conclusion was that discovering new things and curiosity is the primary motivation in all generational cohorts, which seems reasonable based on the previous comparisons.

As for **information search behavior**, though the Internet is considered mostly-used by younger cohorts, Beldona (2005) supported that online information is increasingly used by senior travelers as well, and gradually used by aged segments; whilst, Baby Boomers adopted the internet earlier than assumed. Another study by Li, Li and Hudson (2013) also verified that online sources is also important for Baby Boomers and Generation X, and elder generations rely more on professional advice (e.g., travel agents) and word of mouth than younger generation. Though word of mouth is also important for the younger, social media plays a considerable role in Generation Y information search which indicates the significance of e-WOM, and paid advertising has little influence for all generations. According to Gardiner, King and Grace (2014), informational referents (mass media and interpersonal referents) are important for Generation X and Millennial. As for Generation X, they are the first generation who grew up with the introduction of new technologies like the Internet, which globally influence the society. Additionally, Millennial is facing a more open world of Internet and

more accessible communication channels, and they spend a lot of time on media. Furthermore, Xiang, Magnini and Fesenmaier (2015) agreed that they are more active in travel planning, and use more diverse sources, especially online channels. Thus, marketers should focus more on offering diverse sources and the right combination of channels when developing appropriate marketing strategies to stimulate them.

About the **preferred activities**, significant differences were found in Baby Boomers, Generation X and Y (Pennington-Gray *et al.*, 2003). As they aged, less interests are found in national/provincial parks and shopping is becoming more important. Huang and Petrick (2010) also supported that shopping is important for Generation Y. However, others argued that regardless of the cohort to which they belong, mature travelers generally seek for nature and cultural tourism, and sightseeing activities (e.g., Lehto *et al.*, 2008). Li, Li and Hudson (2013) suggested that, all cohorts seek a diverse range of experiences. Specifically, Baby Boomers prefer cultural-related activities; Generation X and Generation Y both like excursions and shopping more.

Additionally, generational analysis is also applied on the **perceptions** of travelers, for instance, **evaluation criteria** is studied as tourists' perception towards a destination. It is examined that Silent Generation and Baby Boomers are similar, as they concern about eight attributes (e.g., value for money, service quality, friendliness and food) more than others. Generation X and Generation Y are somewhat similar and destination attributes seem less significant in these two cohorts. Also, all generations attach great importance to safety and security when evaluating destinations (Li *et al.*, 2013). A research related to the behaviors of Chinese potential outbound tourists by Huang and Lu (2017) suggested that life experiences may influence the cognitive image of a destination; yet, no significant differences in affective image were found.

It is suggested that Generation X and Y are similar in travel behaviors (Gardiner *et al.*, 2014), probably because they were born in the society that are more stable and the information age with social media. Also, due to their wants for instant gratification, Generation Y also travel frequently and tend to travel overseas (Cohen *et al.*, 2014).

Table 3 - Similarities and Differences Among The Three Generations

	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y
Motivation (Lehto <i>et al.</i> , 2008; Gardiner <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Chung, Chen and Lin, 2016)	- novelty and cultural experience - hedonic experiences - new adventures - family time away from home	- novelty - having fun - unique experiences - work-life balance	- novelty - having fun - unique experiences - exciting adventures
	<i>Seek for novelty and hedonic experiences; Curiosity</i>		
Information search (Huang and Petrick, 2010; Li <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Gardiner <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Xiang <i>et al.</i> , 2015)	- advertising - online sources (least) - professional advice (travel agents) - word-of-mouth (offline)	- television advertising - online sources (less) - rely on professional advice - word-of-mouth (mainly offline)	- rely on online sources - word-of-mouth (online & offline) - use more sources than others, especially online channels
	<i>Rely more on advertising, professional advice and word-of-mouth</i>		
		<i>Rely on word-of-mouth and use more online sources</i>	
Activity preferences (Pennington-Gray <i>et al.</i> , 2003; Lehto <i>et al.</i> , 2008; Huang and Petrick, 2010; Li <i>et al.</i> , 2013)	- cultural-related experience - historical places (more) - local food - spiritual pursuits	- environmental excursions - shopping - historical places - festivals	- environmental excursions - shopping - historical places - festivals, concerts and dance

	- outdoor activities in nature-based setting	- local food - natural scenery sights	- local food - city sightseeing
		<i>Enjoy excursions, shopping, historical places, and local life (more diverse)</i>	
Destination evaluation concerns (Li <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Gardiner <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Huang and Lu, 2017)	- safety and security - recreational opportunities - cultural/historical sites - environmental quality - cleanliness - food - friendliness of people - accommodation/transportation - service quality - language	- safety and security - recreational opportunities - cultural/historical sites - environmental quality - cleanliness - food - shopping opportunities - natural scenery	- safety and security - recreational opportunities - cultural/historical sites - environmental quality - cleanliness - food - shopping opportunities - friendliness of people
		Except for those common factors in three generations, shopping opportunities is particularly important for Generation X and Generation Y.	
	<i>Concern about safety, recreational facilities, attractions, environmental quality, cleanliness and food.</i>		
Future intentions (Gardiner and Kwek, 2017)			- most prone to revisit and share experiences online

2.3.4 Generational Characteristics of Chinese Tourists

There is no absolute consensus on the generational character traits, since these traits emerge over time, and are shaped by events under a particular circumstance (Pendergast, 2010). As previously stated, there are a number of researches focus on generations concerning different dimensions, but relatively fewer studies are conducted to explore the tourist behaviors from generational perspective, not to speak of the context of China outbound tourism market. As Beldona (2005) suggested, cultural and social contexts are important to consider while carrying out generational analysis. In this respect, people normally share similar traits and consumption patterns, not only due to similar experiences, but also their reference groups that have particular behavioral norms.

Owing to the distinctive historical environment, China moved from a closed to a more open society; hence, it could be said that the key to understand China is to understand its generations. While these age groups have been faced with social transitions over the past century, they also share values and traits that deeply rooted in China's ancient culture of Confucianism (Kwek and Lee, 2010).

Currently, there are lacks of agreement on the labels and time periods regarding to Chinese generations. Even though Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y (Millennial) is now the most widely-acknowledged (Gardiner *et al.*, 2013), owing to the unique social and economic transformations of China, different labels are used in this study when analyzing the characteristics of the Chinese consumer cohorts. Thus, based on the distinctive event periods, and certainly the previous literature (e.g., Egri and Ralston, 2004; Huang and Lu, 2017), three cohorts are named as “**Lost Generation**, **Social Reform Generation** and **Only-Child Generation**” (that could almost correspond to Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y in terms of the time frame). The summary of each cohort and their generational backgrounds, values and characteristics are outlined in **Table 4**.

Table 4 - Key Characteristics of the Three Generations in China

Generations	Lost Generation	Social Reform Generation	Only-Child Generation
Year of birth	1949 - 1966	1967 - 1978	1979 - 1996
Coming of age	1967 - 1984	1985 - 1996	1997 - 2014
Age in 2018 (Egri and Ralston, 2004; Huang and Lu, 2017)	52 – 69	40 – 51	22 - 39
Epochal events (Egri & Ralston, 2004; Hung, Gu and Yim, 2007)	Great Leap Forward The Cultural Revolution Maoist Ideology	Cultural Revolution Economic Reform and Openness Asian Financial Crisis Evolution of technologies (e.g., Baidu)	One Child Policy China's Entry into WTO Revolution of the Internet Social media (e.g., Weibo, WeChat)
Core values (references same as "Epochal events")	Conservatism; self-enhancement; frugality; caring about politics; pessimism; bonding with peers; hard-worker	Open-mindedness; entrepreneurship; materialism; intelligence; independence; accumulating personal wealth; balance of work and life	Individualism; creativity; confidence; hedonism; materialism; optimism; competitiveness; adventurousness; desire for freedom; tech-savvy
Travel characteristics (Huang and Lu, 2017; CTA, 2018)	Tend to travel in group; engage more in cultural local experiences and natural scenery attractions	Travel more and tend to go with family; concern about the quality of experience	Tend to go abroad and travel independently, spend more for fun and revisit; love sharing experiences online

- **Lost Generation (1949-1966).** This generation was born in the period of the founding of People's Republic of China in 1949. By 1958 and the beginning of the Great Leap Forward, people grew up during this period were under the economic downfall and the shadow of "the Great Famine" in the China's history, which led to their life value of frugality (Egri and Ralston, 2004).

From 1966 to 1976 were the years of the Cultural Revolution, a period of social upheavals and political instability (Sofield and Li, 1998) when today's middle-aged Chinese went through in their formative years. As this revolution lasted for about ten years, the economy was destroyed seriously and developed far behind other countries. Given that the propaganda slogans through this period was to smash the "the Four Olds", namely, the Old Customs, Old Culture, Old Habits, and Old Ideas, as well as the destruction of the education system, a large amount of people became literate and conservative, blindly followed the political instructions though it was extremely wrong. Given that, Lost Generation is more pessimistic and care about politics; and due to the upheavals they suffered, they desire self-enhancement and work hard for a better future life. It is undeniable that these events could have such an impact on their lives, and those memories are still fresh in the minds of people until now.

- **Social Reform Generation (1967-1978).** Though the Chinese born during this period when the Cultural Revolution happened, but with the end of this extreme-left revolution before their adolescence, the influences on them were much less than the Lost Generation.

Instead, this cohort was named due to the important social, political and cultural reforms period in China (Egri and Ralston, 2004); they grew up after the dramatic changes since the "Reform and Opening-up Policy" was well implemented by Deng Xiaoping in 1978, when tourism transited from being almost non-existent to acceptable (no matter domestic or international tourism) (Sofield and Li, 1998). Since that time, China has started embracing the world and developed rapidly; with the urban middle class growing, this generation was the first group to come of age in a consumer society (Hung, Gu and Yim, 2007). This generation of teens also grew up with more personal rights and freedoms than the previous ones, with more open mind and sense of entrepreneurship, beginning to work hard so as to accumulate their personal wealth as the nation economy was getting better.

In 2000, as the biggest online search engine in China Baidu was established, this generation is exposed more to the world and become the first to widely use the Internet. Also, with the flood of new information, academic opportunities, and worldwide connections, they are more likely to learning from multiple sources and become more open-minded than previous generations.

- **Only-Child Generation (1979-1996).** It's until the 1990s that China's economy developed in a rapid pace and gradually become prosperous, which leads to new ways of thinking and behaving as for this generation. During this period, One Child Policy was enforced to implement in 1979, which restricted couples to have only one child if they were official urban citizens of the ethnic Han Chinese majority (Gardiner and Kwek, 2017). Not only it is for slowing the population growth rate, it also offers women more opportunities of education, and careers. But, this policy is not fully conducted since it is most strictly enforced in more developed cities and this policy has been relaxed (so called "two-child policy") recently, as China is facing an aging population and shortage of workers now (BBC News, 2015; Financial Times, 2018).

Besides, after China's entry into World Trade Organization, following the fast pace of globalization and the proliferation of new technology as well as more academic opportunities, they become tech-savvy and is the generation that relies the most on the Internet, and further shape a life-long propensity towards learning from more diverse sources. With the gradual openness of China, this generation is considered to be the first group that are more likely to seek education in other countries, and now this has been being a common phenomenon for self-development (Gardiner and Kwek, 2017). They are better educated, start to embrace the Western lifestyle and are addicted to the new forms of communication; also, as they could connect each other online and absorb foreign culture and ideas with least limitations, they socialize in entirely new ways.

Moreover, concurrent with the excitement of having broad economic opportunity and growing national pride, this cohort is more confident and competitive. Owing to the accumulation of wealth of their parents and the influence of the one-child policy, a proportion of this cohort is being spoiled, which lead to a phenomenon that they tend to spend more, being more hedonic-oriented and materialistic, and engage in conspicuous consumption as to

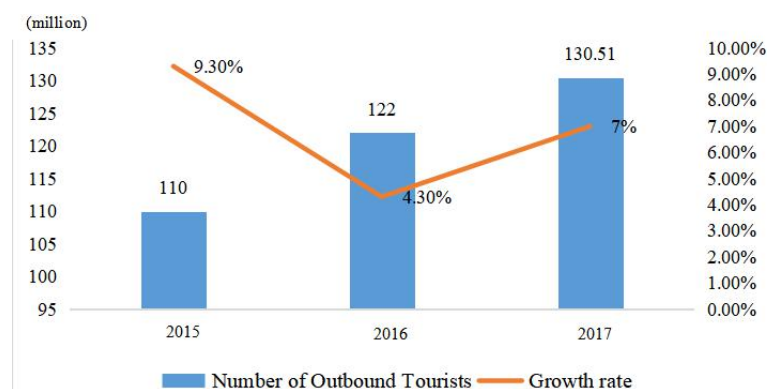
construct their self-identity (Hung *et al.*, 2007). What's more, under the huge pressure of emphasis on education, many of them suffered the tight control by their parents which lead to their strong desires of freedom, and therefore tend to participate in international education or travel more to get relief (Gardiner and Kwek, 2017). Besides, it is also common that this generation is more likely to share their life experiences online in daily, sometimes for showing off purposely.

2.4 Overview of the Chinese Outbound Tourism Market

2.4.1 Chinese Outbound Tourism

As the most populated country and largest outbound tourist source in the world now (UNWTO, 2017), China actually emerged on the tourism market during the late 1970s (Sofield and Li, 1998). Though it is a latecomer to international tourism, China has been changing massively in the past decade (Li and Cai, 2012). In terms of to the data from China Tourism Academy (CTA, 2018), the amount of outbound tourists in 2017 reached more than 130 million (+7% than 2016) that showed in **Figure 5**, generating about 115.29 billion tourism expenditures (+5% than 2016).

Figure 5 - Number of Chinese Outbound Tourists from 2015 to 2017



Source: China Tourism Academy (CTA, 2018)

However, though the Chinese outbound tourism market grows in a rapid speed in recent years, it is still in the early growth stage and only a small proportion of population has entered it (Li *et al.*, 2011). In other words, there is a huge lucrative market potential to be developed.

With the gradual maturity of outbound tourism, transformation has been taking place in the Chinese tourists' profiles and their travel behaviors (China Travel News, 2017). Historically, Chinese outbound travel demand was dominated by business tourism; but currently it accounts for less than half since leisure travel has already taken its place (IHG, 2015). There is an increasing share of leisure tourism regarding Chinese travel demand; now, this travel type accounts for about 59% of the total Chinese travel and tourism spending. Also, it is reported that females are more likely to travel abroad than male, with 18% higher in participation (China Tourism Academy, 2018).

Today's Chinese consumers, with increased leisure time, rising levels of personal disposable income and relaxation of travel restrictions, change a lot on their consumption habits as well as travel patterns; indeed, they become more active in making decisions among the larger variety of destinations (Jin and Wang, 2016). Moreover, there is an increasing number of luxury sales which shows that more people could afford luxury tourism experiences (McKinsey & Company, 2017). In terms of the booming of independent overseas tourists, it could be seen that organized tours are not that prevalent as before, as people are driven by life quality decisions, and tend to engage in independent trips with in-depth experiences that could make the journey unique instead of the traditional pattern (China Travel News, 2017). According to Mafengwo (2017), there is about 53% Chinese outbound tourists are independent travelers in 2017.

Moreover, first-time tourists prefer group tours, while experienced travelers prefer independent trips (European Commission, 2017). There is even a new trend of "going travel at any time you wish", with the increasing number of people who decide to go on a journey without a detailed plan, making decision within about two weeks before leaving (China Tourism Academy, 2018).

Furthermore, with the growth of urban middle class, millennial mostly makes up two thirds of today's outbound travelers, and they become more likely to spend more on "having fun". As for them, traveling is part of the experience-oriented lifestyle. As Gardiner and Kwek (2017) found out, younger travelers are more likely to travel independently and revisit; also, a number of young people participate in international education trips, and they thus become an important group for outbound tourism.

Additionally, according to the study of Sparks and Pan (2009) about Chinese outbound tourists, the younger (under age 35) are more “showy” and adventurous than those whose age are above 35. They prefer to explore new things, seek novelty and share their experiences online, mainly on social media as a way to improve their self-image and social status. Surprisingly, they now tend to desire more flexible time during the trip, instead of the classic “hopping on and off a coach” travel mode with a tightly organized itinerary (China Travel News, 2017).

While regarding to the tourism seasonality, most Chinese tourists prefer to take a short holiday, and they go for vacation mainly during the three so-called “Golden Weeks” public holiday peak periods (Guo *et al.*, 2007; Sparks and Pan, 2009):

- Chinese New Year Golden Week: in January or February and lasts about 7 days
- Labor Day Golden Week: May 1st to May 3rd (changed from 1st to 7th since 2008)
- National Day Golden Week: October 1st to October 7th

With respect to destinations, Asian countries and regions are still the most popular choices for Mainland Chinese, for instance, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Thailand, Japan, Singapore and Vietnam, etc. (China Tourism Academy, 2018). Moreover, Chinese prefer to visit a minimum of two or three countries in one time, and are more likely to be part of a package tour involving group trips with multiple destination stops, which seems to offer good value for money (Guo *et al.*, 2007; Li *et al.*, 2011; IHG, 2015). As Europe is a famous long-haul destination for them, the most popular destinations are Italy, France, Spain and Switzerland (China Travel News, 2017); besides, since Italy, France and Switzerland are neighbors, many free independent travelers are more prone to include these three nations in their itinerary, traveling around them for about 15 days (Mafengwo, 2017).

2.4.2 Incentives and Attractiveness of Overseas Travel

Over 85% of Chinese outbound tourists visit major cities around the world (IHG, 2015) for a variety of purposes, such as **leisure** and **sightseeing**, **shopping**, **personal fulfillment** and **horizon-expanding** (Guo *et al.*, 2007). In general, a growing amount of Chinese seeks for local life experience (e.g. festivals, street life, and performances), quietness and relaxation (e.g. spas, hot springs and sandy beaches). What's more, it's indicated that, with the

increasing number of students **study abroad** and citizens' immigration, travel abroad allows their **families and friends** to **visit** with this specific purpose (Gardiner and Kwek, 2017; European Commission, 2018).

Overseas destinations could provide opportunities for knowing different rich **cultures and histories**, with appealing and sometimes less polluted **environments**, enabling people to engage, take photos and share them online, which is considered as a must-do activity during the trip for Chinese travelers.

Additionally, it is prominent that Chinese prefer shopping, especially for luxury goods when traveling abroad (CNN, 2013; European Commission, 2018). Chinese tourists now have become the world's biggest consumers of luxury goods, who accounted for 30% of the world's luxury purchases in 2016 (Jing Daily, 2017). Also, 82% of Chinese consider **shopping** as a requisite part of the travel (The Economist, 2014), so it is not a surprise that great shopping opportunity is an appeal.

It is worth noting that many Chinese are increasingly interested in the vibrant street life and cultural activities since they are more experience-oriented now and would like to feel the **local vibe** (Li *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, they might expect an ideal destination which offers great amount of activities and experiences that match their lifestyles, and tend to discover those destinations and attractions that is less exploited which could offer unique travel experiences, since novelty seeking is the main motivation for overseas travel (Li and Cai, 2012).

2.4.3 Barriers and Constraints of Overseas Travel

Due to the distinctiveness of China, and especially the differences with the Western in various aspects, there are many barriers and constraints for Chinese to travel to an overseas destination (before and during their trips).

First of all, **language** is one of the important barriers (European Commission, 2018; Sparks and Pan, 2009). In light of the report on Chinese outbound tourism by the European Commission (2017), it could be seen that language and communication barrier is one of the most serious problem perceived by Chinese travelers. Due to the huge population of China, the amount of people who could not speak English (well) is also a majority, in addition to the

lack of on-site Chinese-language information and services, which lead to some problems in communicating or even misunderstanding (Li *et al.*, 2011). Besides, **safety issues** is also a prior concern, while theft and refugee problems are notorious, but more strikingly, a wave of terrorism threats appeared in Western Europe, which keep those tourists who preferentially concern personal safety away and choose to visit other nations where the safety risk is lower (Sparks and Pan, 2009; China Tourism Academy, 2018). This is in accord with those researches which contended that perceived risk is one of the key factors impacting the decision to visit or to avoid a destination (e.g., Sharifpour *et al.*, 2014).

What's more, as Chinese cuisines are more sophisticated and full of variety, which are almost completely different from the other ethnic food, most travelers are actually not get used to the local food or even consider the taste bad (Chang, Kivela and Mak, 2010); also, they complain that sometimes it is not easy to find good Chinese food at the destination (Li *et al.*, 2011). Also, younger Chinese consider themselves as “*Chi Huo*” (foodies), and there is a growing demand for authentic local culinary culture (European Commission, 2018). Because of the long history of food culture and people's desire for tasty cuisine as a belief in daily, **food** could be a constraint and negative factors for evaluation towards the destination (Li *et al.*, 2011).

As Chinese concerns for good **value for money** when engaging in outbound travel (Sparks and Pan, 2009; Li *et al.*, 2011), sometimes low value for money is a main perception for traveling to the long-haul destinations due to the distance and expensive currency, which might hinder them from visiting.

With the gradual relaxation of **restriction**, visa is considered less of a barrier than previously as the approvals become more accessible and less time-consuming, yet this is still needed to be considered (Sparks and Pan, 2009; Li *et al.*, 2011).

Furthermore, **acceptance of Chinese payment methods** is another constraint (European Commission, 2018). As mentioned, payment methods is also a consideration as Chinese rely a lot on UnionPay (similar to Visa or MasterCard) during travel, while Alipay and Wechat Pay are the e-wallets that they use most in daily life (Sparks and Pan, 2009; China Daily, 2018).

However, not every destination is available for UnionPay, not to speak of the other two methods, and many Chinese show greater willingness to spend and shop if Chinese mobile

payments are accepted; hence, this constraint is also worth attention from the destination practitioners and overseas merchants (Nielsen, 2017; European Commission, 2018).

2.4.4 Distinctive Online Information Sources of Chinese Tourists

In the context of China market, travelers relied a lot on travel agents for information. But currently, online channels also largely influence Chinese' decisions. As for social media, media advocacy and word-of-mouth are becoming more powerful in tourists' planning and purchasing process (Ye *et al.*, 2011; Luo and Zhong, 2015). Now, China is the largest media market; the use of online sources by Chinese customers is well above the average among all markets (BBC News, 2018), with about 772 million internet users and 55.8% penetration rate by the end of 2017 (CNNIC, 2018).

Thus, for this market, it is crucial to increase the visibility in those particular online platforms that consumers use the most (European Commission, 2018). As stated, in China, the situation is totally different as those widely-used global social media are blocked behind the “**Great Firewall**”. Thus, there are substitutes to those banned networks that most Chinese use in daily life due to the distinct environment (The Economist, 2018). For achieving successful marketing outcome, marketers should carefully select the specific communication tools to convey marketing messages, and build an appealing image to catch target customers' attention.

As described above, **Baidu** is the top search engine, same as Google, where all kinds of information are mainly disseminated. Alibaba, the e-commerce leader, created Sina Weibo with Sina website (BBC News, 2018). **Sina Weibo**, a micro-blogging platform functions as a hybrid of Facebook and Twitter for Chinese citizens. It is one of the most influential social media channels, where people spread word of mouth and share life experiences. Tencent, owns **Wechat** instant messenger that integrates all functions of life; except for communication and online payment, Wechat could be also used for tourism business purposes (BBC News, 2017). It is an effective platform for branding and digital marketing, offering better engagement between an official brand account and its followers by contents, including audio messages, videos, photos and texts, etc.

In light of these online information sources, not only the marketing implementation by

destinations is important, the sharing information among tourists, and their reviews as well as recommendations for some destination-related official accounts are also worth attention since word-of-mouth and interpersonal interactions play a significant role in the decision making process of potential consumers (Ye *et al.*, 2011; Filieri, Alguezaui and Mcleay, 2015; Luo and Zhong, 2015).

With the development of the **online travel agency (OTA)**, an increasing number of customers choose them to help with the destination selection, with both the websites and mobile apps. Regarding to the online information providers that are widely used, there are **Ctrip, Qunar, Fliggy** and so on, offering comprehensive travel products and services, including transportation and accommodation bookings, and also customized vacation packages as well as ticket buying, visa application, etc., where most traditional travel agencies now also use for promoting their products (European Commission, 2018). Among them, **Ctrip** has become the top travel company in China owing most of the market shares, and its official mobile app has already been downloaded over 3 billion times by consumers (China Travel News, 2017).

Other popular channels are those **user generated content platforms**, like **Mafengwo** and **Qyer** which are considered as online travel community for sharing and browsing photos, travel notes, journals and Q&A forums online, and also personalized travel products and services (European Commission, 2018). Notably, they are mainly used by the post 90's generation who are highly individualized and strong-minded, thus tend to be free independent travelers. These platforms are deemed to be more reliable since the reviews on destinations come from actual tourists rather than brands/organizations, so that users are more likely to believe what they see and desire to experience that have been enjoyed and shared by others with similar lifestyles as them (Filieri, Alguezaui and Mcleay, 2015).

Also, **third party platforms with tourism ratings and reviews** are commonly used. **TripAdvisor** is a leading example as one of the most popular online travel information source that inform and influence travel purchase decisions (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010), with more than 630 million reviews of approximately 7.5 million accommodations, restaurants and destinations, etc. (TripAdvisor, 2017). To develop the China market, there is **TripAdvisor China** (re-branded as “Mao Tu Ying” in 2015), with Chinese website, an e-WOM platform to

which Chinese outbound tourists gradually attach importance in recent years, both the site and the mobile app with considerable influences (TripAdvisor, 2015).

In addition, other sites like **Zhihu** (Q & A platform similar to Quora) also plays an increasingly important role in the information search process, where people get inspirations and experience-sharing articles (European Commission, 2018).

Although there are many sources to diffuse the messages to reach potential consumers, related marketing actions should be localized and adapt themselves so as to match the reality of a particular destination. More importantly, making good use of these platforms and disseminating information through target consumer groups are the most significant promotion and image-building strategies that should pay high attention to.

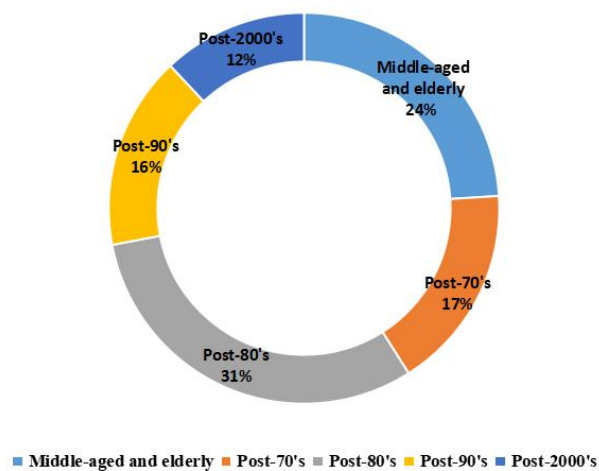
Table 5 - Most Used Websites and Types of Travel Information in China

	Sources	Types of information
Online search engine	Baidu	Most-used information search engine, like Google.
Online travel agency (OTA)	Ctrip.com Qunar.com Fliggy.com	Providers of travel products and services, including a variety of bookings, and customized vacation packages, etc.
User generated content platform	Mafengwo Qyer	Mainly used by independent travelers for sharing and browsing travel notes, and Q&A; also provide travel products and services
	Mao Tu Ying (TripAdvisor in China)	Platform with tourism rating and reviews of a variety of aspects, such as hotels, restaurants, attractions, etc.
Other general information platform	Wechat	Instant messaging and payments purposes; sharing and disseminating information.
	Zhihu	Q & A platform that is increasingly important in daily information search.
	Sina Weibo	A popular social media platform (micro-blog) where people share and get information.

2.4.5 Constraints to Travel Overseas for Chinese Senior Travelers

In these years, the surge in Chinese outbound travel is very much a generational phenomenon, to which marketers should pay high attention. According to China Tourism Academy (2018), Post 80's and Post 90's (mainly Only-Child Generation) make up about 47% of outbound tourists in 2017, Post 70's (mainly Social Reform Generation) around 17% and middle-aged and elderly (mainly Lost Generation) just 24%, which is way less than the younger generations, as shown in **Figure 6**.

Figure 6 - Proportion of the Age Periods of Mainland Chinese Outbound Tourists in 2017



Source: China Tourism Academy (CTA, 2018)

Indeed, the lower participation of this elder generation could be explained from various aspects, from the historical circumstance, government policy, to travelers' personal constraints that discussed as follows. It is only after the implementation of "Reform and Opening-up Policy" in 1978 that tourism became acceptable (Sofield and Li, 1998). What's more, Mainland Chinese outbound pleasure travel started in 1983 with the permission of traveling to Hong Kong and Macau in organized group for visiting friends and relatives (VFR). Then, agreements of Approved Destination Status (ADS) were negotiated from a small amount of neighbouring nations in Asia during 1990s for VFR purpose also, and the pace accelerated rapidly from 2003 (Arita, Edmonds and Croix, 2011); until now, more than 146 different countries and regions have been granted by the Chinese government while visa application is needed (China Contact, 2015). Besides, it was in 1997 that self-supported outbound leisure travel began (Guo, Kim and Timothy, 2007). Thus, consumers from Lost Generation are more

conservative; also, lesser travel opportunities and limited information of tourism existed when they were young.

Due to the economic downfall and the Great Famine during their formative years that previously mentioned, people from this generation are more accustomed to save money than spending it (Forbes, 2012; Guo *et al.*, 2007); and since most of them already enter into retirement and live on pensions, they are even more cautious on travel cost (Guo *et al.*, 2007). In addition, as they are not that familiar with the diverse communication tools which younger people rely on a lot in daily, limited availability of information is a barrier that leads to this phenomenon (Gao and Kerstetter, 2016).

For many Mainland Chinese, travel overseas means stepping out of their comfort zone and into somewhere unfamiliar (Li and Cai, 2012), particularly for seniors considering the culture shock (Gao and Kerstetter, 2016). Also, many other concerns constrain them to make travel decision, such as lack of time and partners, cost, health condition and fear of wasting time/money, etc. (Huang and Tsai, 2003). Specifically, it is difficult for elders to participate a long flight or keep up with others in the group. Considering the lower profits from this cohort, travel agencies and tour operators tend to focus less on them in marketing and promotional programs (Guo *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, considering of the market potential, Lost Generation would not be studied during the following methodology process, as the research subjects would be the two younger generations: Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation.

3. Methodology

Due to the exploratory nature of the study, qualitative approach was chosen as it is also a good method in studying tourist behaviors (Woodside and Dubelaar, 2002; Pearce and Lee, 2005; Li *et al.*, 2011; Hung and Petrick, 2012). Furthermore, in-depth interview was conducted so that to gain more meaningful and diverse information, through directly observing the consumers' inner thoughts. Specifically, semi-structured interview was employed to know their preferences and behaviors instead of providing specific options for them to choose, which might not be accurate because they would be confused and led by the given choices. Also, since most of the related studies were examined with quantitative approach, and little is explored in the context of the China market, in-depth interviews could

therefore be seen as an exploratory stage and provide a deeper understanding and details to establish a foundation for further quantitative research towards this lucrative market.

In addition, it is crucial to predict tourists' future behaviors, which could be impacted by their past decisions. So, tourists who have experiences of outbound travel are more likely to deliver a clear idea of their attitudes and exact behaviors. Thus, the interviewee selection criteria is that: Chinese residents who have already travelled overseas for leisure purposes (including Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan) and would like to take another overseas leisure trip in the future. Also, considering future market potentials, only those who were born from 1967 to 1996 would be chosen, including two cohorts: Social Reform Generation (1967-1978) and One-Child Generation (1979-1996), which are labeled due to the distinctive background of China based on the literature review (Egri and Ralston, 2004; Huang and Lu, 2017).

3.1 Data Collection

As in any research, it is often wise to first do a pilot study on several subjects. Considering its effectiveness in identifying flaws of the study method and interview questions, 10 people were interviewed first (5 from each of the two groups). After appropriate amendments, the designed interview questions then were used in the full study (10 participants in pilot study were not included). Thus, a better understanding of how to implement the interview was offered and also the approximate duration of the interview process as well, for informing the interviewees before interviews. Before the interview, interviewees were informed about the study objectives, the anonymity and confidentiality, and the need of voice recording. Also, they were told that some of the answers may be included in thesis and presentations. The interviews were started only after their consents, which could increase the likelihood of the authenticity. Moreover, interviews were conducted mainly when they were at home in the evening, due to the time difference and the reason that familiarity of the environment may help participants to relax and lead to a more productive interview.

Regarding interview process, nine parts would be included, and the interview questions are grouped by topic and logically sequenced: 1) demographic information; 2) warm-up questions to help put them at ease, and build up rapport; 3) questions relating to travel patterns in general and also specifically about outbound travel; 4) motivations for outbound travel; 5)

travel information sources; 6) destination evaluation concerns; 7) preferred activities; 8) post-visit behavioral intentions; 9) future destination choice and travel pattern. Therefore, the research objective would be achieved, comparing Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation about their travel behaviors as mentioned above.

Furthermore, interviews were carried out in Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese) through Wechat video call, to the Mainland Chinese residents in China. All interviews were voice-recorded under permission from the interviewees, and since this research is presented in English, interview contents were translated into English accurately and appropriately, then transcribed verbatim to provide records for further analysis.

3.2 Data Analysis

As qualitative data are textual, non-numerical and unstructured, coding or categorizing the data is the crucial stage in the qualitative analysis. Seidel and Kelle (1995) considered coding as an approach to reveal a phenomena; collect examples and analyze them so as to identify things, like the commonalities, and differences. By means of it, data are divided into categories and subcategories to organize them and make sense of them during a study (Dey, 1993). When coding, a paraphrase or label (a “code”) that describes what are found interesting or important in the transcriptions. The code names could come from previous literature work, and also the words and phrases used by respondents themselves (Tehmina, 2003).

In this study, considering the sample size, and the time cost to learn coding computer software, data are coded manually after the familiarization of the data. Also, by using note cards, building tables and figures about the frequency and percentage of different units through excel, for the purpose of making comparison to achieve the study objective. Based on the previous literature review, hypothesis are proposed as follow, and further data analysis would be done to prove that they are supported or not.

H1: Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation are similar in travel motivation for seeking novelty and hedonic experiences.

H2: Social Reform Generation rely more on travel agents than Only-Child Generation.

H3: Only-Child Generation rely more on online information sources than Social Reform Generation.

H4: Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation are similar in relying on word-of-mouth information.

H5: Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation are similar in preferred activities, like historical attractions, shopping and local life experiences.

H6: Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation are similar in considering the major importance of personal safety, recreational and shopping opportunities, environmental quality and food experience in the destination.

H7: Only-Child Generation is more likely to revisit and share experiences online than Social Reform Generation after visitation.

4. Findings

4.1 Demographic Analysis

In total, there are 60 interviews, with 30 in each generation. As **Table 6** shows, 48.3% of the interviewees were male, and 51.7% were female. 45% of the interviewees had achieved Bachelor Degree, who are mainly from Only-Child Generation and about 43.3% had only high school education background or below, who are mainly from Social Reform Generation. Moreover, more than half of them (60%) are married, and 40% remain single. The majority of them work full-time (60%), followed by unemployed status (26.7%) and self-employed status (13.3%). About one third of them (33.3%) had a monthly income lower than 5000 RMB (1000 RMB =125 Euros), 25% between 10001 to 15000 RMB, and 23.3% between 5001 to 8000 RMB.

Table 6 - Demographic Characteristics of The Interviewees (*N* = 60)

Variable	Percentage (%)	Variable	Percentage (%)
Gender		Marital status	
Male	48.3	Married	60.0
Female	51.7	Single	40.0
Birth year		Other	0.0
1966-1978	50.0	Education	
(Age: 40-51)		High school or below	43.3
1979-1996	50.0	Technical/Vocational school	8.3
(Age: 22-39)		Bachelor's degree	45.0
Occupation		Master's degree	3.3
Civil servant	1.7	Other	0.0
Businessperson	6.7	Monthly income (RMB)	
Manager/Executive	15.0	0-5000	33.3
Professional/Technical	5.0	5001-8000	23.3
Clerk/White-collar	41.7	8001-10000	5.0
Student	8.3	10001-15000	25.0
Retired person	0.0	15001-30000	3.3
Housewife	13.3	30001 and above	10.0
Other	8.3		
Employment status			
Work full-time	60.0		
Work part-time	0.0		
Self-employed	13.3		
Unemployed	26.7		
Retired	0.0		
Other	0.0		

4.2 Generational Analysis on Chinese Outbound Tourist Behaviors

4.2.1 Travel Pattern Characteristics Between The Two Generations

According to **Table 7**, even though **Social Reform Generation** have taken more outbound trips than Only-Child Generation, they actually prefer **domestic travel** more (50.0%), or both type (30.0%).

Table 7 - Travel Behavior Pattern of Outbound Travel

	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)
Variable	Social Reform Generation	Only-Child Generation
Preference of travel type		
Domestic travel	50.0	13.3
Outbound travel	20.0	63.3
Both	30.0	23.3
Travel pattern		
Independent travel	13.3	86.7
Package group tour (total)	73.3	13.3
Package group tour (partial)	13.3	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0
Numbers of outbound trips		
1 - 5	43.3	60.0
6 - 10	36.7	30.0
11 and above	20.0	10.0

Regarding the reasons, they think that the natural scenery and historical sites in China is more fantastic and diverse. In addition, considering the communication problem and personal safety issue, they consider safer when traveling domestically, due to the unstable political condition and terrorist attacks in some countries or regions.

- “I like domestic travel, because there are so many historical sites to visit, and also the natural landscape; we could say that the natural landscapes in China are one of

the best in the world. And also, there would not have any language barrier while traveling domestically, it is sometimes uncomfortable and inconvenient when traveling overseas.” (Interviewee 38, female, born on 1967, SRG)

- “Since some of the countries are in an unstable situation, if I travel overseas, I tend to choose those countries that are safer and more stable. Also, considering the language barrier, so I actually don’t travel overseas that much.” (Interviewee 47, male, born on 1974, SRG)

However, **Only-Child Generation** seems more likely to **take outbound trip**, as mentioned in the previous statement researched by China Tourism Academy (2018). Although they might travel less than Social Reform Generation, it could be seen that this generation has great potential to develop, as they love traveling and they are still accumulating their wealth in their present life stage. As Hung *et al.* (2007) demonstrated, this cohort is more likely to engage in conspicuous consumption as to construct their self-identity, which could relate with an important concept in Chinese culture - “gaining face”.

Also, they prefer destinations with less tourists, while in China, “there are too many travelers in the domestic tourist destinations ... and people’s way of living and habits are quite similar, so traveling domestically would lack of some excitement of novelty” (Interviewee 15, female, born on 1995, OG). Besides, they pay attention on the uniqueness of the destination and the travel experience, like Interviewee 16 (male, born on 1994, OG) said that:

- “in my opinion, people from different places in China are quite similar in living habits, such as eating habit; also, the attractions are similar to some extent too. In China, most of the attractions are ancient city sites, such as Chengdu, Xi’An and Yunnan, as well as the mountains and rivers. So, I would like to know more about the local culture, and customs, also those unique attractions in other countries. ”

As for **Social Reform Generation**, they are more likely to **travel in tour group** (73.3%). The main reasons are similar to what are mentioned above: their considerations of the unfamiliarity of the destination, the potential risks that might exist and the language barrier.

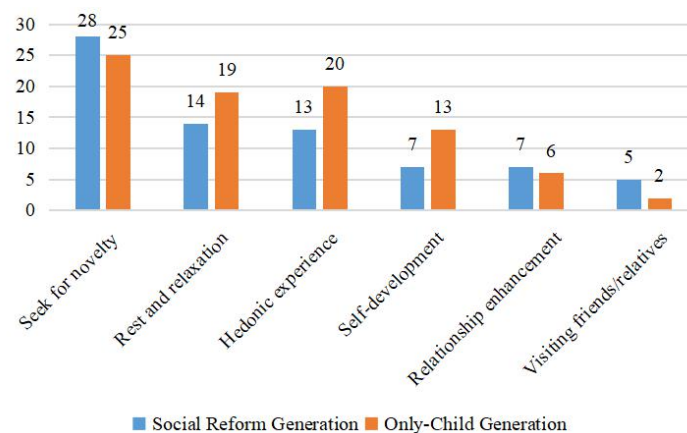
Also, according to **Table 7**, **Only-Child Generation** (86.7%) is more willing to **travel independently**, instead of choosing the classic “hopping on and off a coach” travel mode with

a tightly organized itinerary, which is consistent with the finding of Sparks and Pan's study (2009). Though the travel cost sometimes is higher, they value the travel quality more. For example, Interviewee 27 (female, born on 1995, OG) complained that “there are so many limitations if travel in group, and sometimes forced shopping schedule is included. Also, while travel independently, I could control the schedule myself, it is more free”. It indicates that Chinese outbound tourist behaviors and lifestyle are changing, especially the younger generation.

4.2.2 Travel Motivation

As indicated in **Figure 7**, six categories of motivation for outbound travel are labeled based on the interviewees' answers and literature review (Li and Cai, 2012). They are: (1) seeking for novelty, (2) getting rest and relaxation, (3) having hedonic experiences, (4) Self-development, (5) relationship enhancement, and (6) visiting friends/relatives. Among them, the main motivations of these two generations are the first three.

Figure 7 - Frequency Comparison of Outbound Travel Motivation Between the Two Generations



Combining with the mentioned frequency of each motivation category in **Table 8**, these two cohorts are particularly similar in seeking for novelty and getting rest/relaxation, but there are differences in desiring for “hedonic experience”. This result is consistent with previous finding that, in the context of Chinese outbound travel, **novelty seeking** is the main motivation of customers (Huang and Hsu, 2009; Li and Cai, 2012). Also, this supports Chung, Chen and Lin's study (2016) that all generational cohorts are mainly motivated by discovering

new things and curiosity. Besides, life in China is very stressful given the number of over-populated cities; given that, **relaxation** is one of the major motivations of outbound tourists (Li *et al.*, 2011). That is also the reason why the younger generation particularly prefer to travel independently because that tight schedule constrains them, which negatively impacts their travel mood, when they emphasize the sense of freedom and relaxation a lot.

Table 8 - Travel Motivation Characteristics Between The Two Generations

Travel motivation	Mentioned frequency	Mentioned frequency
	Social Reform Generation	Only-Child Generation
Seek for novelty	Visit new places (20) Know the culture & customs (22) Have some local experience (4) Know others' way of living (8) Meet people and socialization (3)	Visit new places (18) Know the culture & customs (24) Have some local experience (5) Know others' way of living (12) Meet people and socialization (8)
Rest and relaxation	Rest and relax (12) Release work and life pressure (8) Slow down the pace of life (1)	Rest and relax (13) Release work and life pressure (10) Slow down the pace of life (4)
Hedonic experience	Shopping and eating (5) Recreational opportunities (7) Festivals or events (2) Adventurous experiences (4)	Shopping and eating (17) Recreational opportunities (12) Festivals or events (4) Adventurous experiences (12)
Self-development	Broaden horizon and increase knowledge (7) Transform way of thinking (1) Spiritual pursuit (2)	Broaden horizon and increase knowledge (11) Transform way of thinking (3) Study abroad (2) Spiritual pursuit (1)
Relationship enhancement	Spend time with family and friends (7)	Spend time with family and friends (6)
Visiting purpose	friends/relatives (5)	friends/relatives (2)

Note: Numbers in the brackets refers to mentioned frequencies during the interview. And the highlights point to the significant differences of motivation characteristics.

The excerpts of the answers about these two motivations from the interviews are shown in the following **Table 9**.

Table 9 - Excerpts Comparison of Interviewees' Answers of The Two Similar Motivation

	Social Reform Generation	Only-Child Generation
Seek for novelty	- "I am willing to know other cultures and customs, and it is exciting to see different natural landscapes." (Interviewee 1, female, born on 1969, SRG) - "Through traveling overseas, we could know about other cultures and customs, the way of living of the local people; also, (we could) experience the local life." (Interviewee 13, female, born on 1974, SRG)	- "Traveling abroad is exciting, and the experience is very different from traveling domestically. We could feel freer as we are involved in a different environment, and everything seems novel to me, the streets, the people and the food." (Interviewee 4, male, born on 1992, OG) - I like traveling, as I want to go out to see the world, meet other people, and experience different cultures. And also I want to see the natural scenery in other places." (Interviewee 32, born on 1996, OG)
Rest & relaxation	- "I really like traveling, because I like freedom, and want to relax from daily work pressure. I prefer those destinations that are more quiet so I could slow down the pace of life." (Interviewee 39, male, born on 1967, SRG) - "I love to travel, as I don't need to deal with my work, and could have fun ..." (Interviewee 11, male, born on 1969, SRG)	- "I want to get relaxation in different places, instead of keeping stay at where I live and work all the time." (Interviewee 34, male, born on 1989, OG) - "Traveling for me is to relax, escaping from the daily pressure that comes from work and family." (Interviewee 18, born on 1990, OG)

However, regarding the desire for **hedonic experiences**, it seems that **Only-Child Generation** is more likely to be motivated by it when comparing with Social Reform Generation. Owing to the accumulation of wealth of parents and the influence of the one-child policy, there exists a social phenomenon that younger Only-Child Generation is being spoiled to some extent, so that they tend to spend more, being more hedonism-oriented and materialistic, and try to engage in conspicuous consumption as to construct their self-identity (Hung *et al.*, 2007). Moreover, as Sparks and Pan (2009) examined, the younger Chinese outbound tourists (under age 35) are more “showy” and adventurous than those whose age are above 35. Besides, it is indicated in Chung, Chen and Lin’s study (2016) that this younger generation is particularly motivated by fun, and entertainment and they also long for thrilling and exciting adventures.

- “I love traveling everywhere ... I am favor of mysteries and adventures, so those nations, like Egypt, are on my list.” (Interviewee 24, female, born on 1994, OG)
- “I would like to tell others that I travel overseas again, kinda show off. Also, I could know other cultures, as well as to experience the local life. And I could buy cosmetics (international brands) cheaper when shopping outside our country.” (Interviewee 12, female, born on 1995, OG)
- “... the overseas destinations are different, and I think that I should travel to more countries or regions when I am still healthy and fit enough to enjoy traveling.” (Interviewee 17, female, born on 1969, SRG)

In this case, these two generations are actually quite different in this sense, as Only-Child Generation now becomes more likely to spend more on “having fun”. As for them, traveling is part of the experience-oriented lifestyle. And Social Reform Generation focuses more on novelty seeking, as they don’t have that much travel opportunities for traveling overseas during their youth, so they now tend to visit more overseas destinations when they are still in good health.

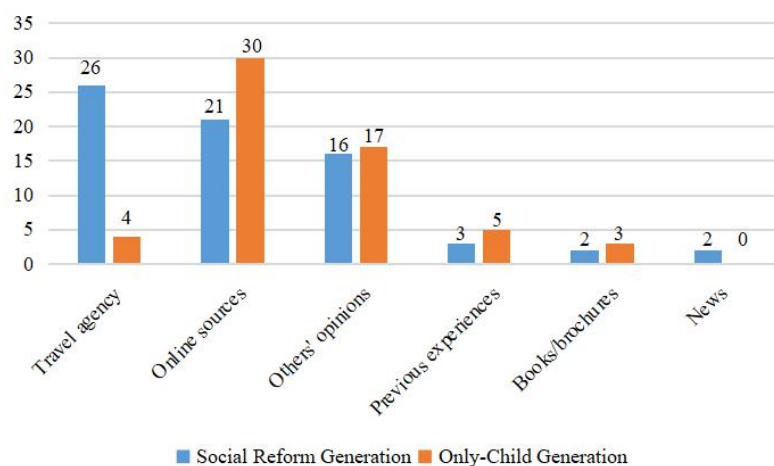
Thus, **Hypothesis 1 is partially supported, as Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation are similar in travel motivation** for seeking novelty, hedonic experiences, and rest/relaxation. Yet, in particular, Only-Child Generation is more hedonism-oriented and more likely to have adventurous experiences.

Also, they are similar in traveling for visiting friends or relatives, as in Chinese culture, relationship is a very important concept (Yau, 1988; Kwek and Lee, 2010). With the gradual openness of China, Only-Child Generation is considered to be the first group that are more likely to seek education in other countries, and now this has been being a common phenomenon for self-development and they thus become an important group for outbound tourism (Gardiner and Kwek, 2017).

4.2.3 Information Source

Information search is part of the decision-making or pre-decision necessity, which has a prominent impact on tourists' decisions and behaviors, for reducing the cognitive dissonance, perceived risks and uncertainty (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005; Choi *et al.*, 2012). When analyzing, it is interesting to know about what Chinese outbound tourists usually use when planning a vacation, and also during the trip.

Figure 8 - Frequency Comparison of Information Sources Between the Two Generations



As could be seen in **Figure 8**, **Social Reform Generation** mainly rely on sources, like **travel agency**, **online sources** and **others' opinions**, while **Only-Child Generation** rely more on **online sources** and also **others' opinions**. This is somewhat similar to Gardiner, King and Grace's study (2014) that informational referents (mass media and interpersonal referents) plays a significant role on the travel decision making of Generation X (basically corresponding to Social Reform Generation) and Millennial (corresponding to Only-Child

Generation). Furthermore, Sparks and Pan (2009) found out that reference groups is influential in Chinese's travel decision making, due to the tradition of socialization (word of mouth) in Chinese culture.

Obviously, **Hypothesis 2 is supported that Social Reform Generation is particularly rely on the offered information from travel agency**, which confirms the study of Li *et al.*, (2013) that Generation X rely more on professional advice (e.g., travel agents). It might be due to the fact that this cohort prefer to travel in package tour, so as to reduce their concerns about uncertainty when stepping outside their comfort zone, worrying about the potential risks, emergency and the language barrier. Kim *et al.*, (2015) also found that, as Chinese stress family obligation and relationship harmony a lot, they tend to avoid uncertainty to a greater extent. Besides, this generation mainly search for the introduction about the destination, when many of them don't know about other specific websites that younger tourists use a lot; considering this reason, they are prone to rely more on travel agency for direct information instead of searching by themselves when they are not as familiar as using the internet like the younger. Excerpts for supporting this hypothesis:

- “Usually I go to the travel agency for some brochures, or ask others who have been to for some suggestions or anything that I should pay attention to. Besides, I also search a bit information through online sources, like Baidu, Ctrip, and Qunar, but actually I don't use them a lot.” (Interviewee 1, female, born on 1969, SRG)
- “Usually I use Baidu, sometimes I know the destination from news, and also from my friends who have visited. But, we would go to the travel agency for some more materials when we decide to take an outbound trip in group.” (Interviewee 12, male, born on 1969, SRG)
- “Firstly, I ask relatives or friends; secondly, I may ask the travel agency. Then, I may search online, like using Baidu, where I mainly search about the destination, its environment, attractions, and the location.” (Interviewee 40, male, 1973, SRG)
- “... In our generation, we don't know how to use the internet very well, and are not familiar with using it to search travel-related information.”

(Interviewee 10, female, born on 1972, SRG)

Also, according to **Figure 8**, and considering the sample size, it could be said that, **Only-Child Generation rely a lot on online sources**, as every interviewee from this cohort in this research usually use the internet for searching needed information. Due to the development and revolution of the information technology, this generation become more tech-savvy, relying heavily on the internet, and further shape a life-long propensity towards learning from more diverse sources. As stated, many of the popular websites are blocked in Mainland China, so the online information sources that people use in daily are different from most of the other countries or regions. Thus, there is a concise summary of the sources as follow (**Table 8**), which are what Chinese outbound travelers mainly use and also the mentioned frequency of the exact channels obtained from the interviewees.

Table 10 - Frequency Comparison of Online Sources between Two Generations

Online sources	Mentioned frequency	Mentioned frequency
	Social Reform Generation	Only-Child Generation
Online search engine	Baidu (19)	Baidu (15)
Online travel agency (OTA)	Ctrip.com (11) Qunar.com (2) Others (3)	Ctrip.com (21) Qunar.com (8) Others (7)
User generated content platform	Mafengwo (2)	Mafengwo (16) Qyer (2)
	Mao Tu Ying (1) (TripAdvisor in China)	Mao Tu Ying (4) (TripAdvisor in China)
Social media	Wechat (1)	Sina Weibo (8) Wechat (8) The Little Red Book (8) Instagram (1)
Other online sources		Dou Yin (2)

		Zhihu (2)
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Note: Numbers in the brackets refers to mentioned frequencies during the interview.

Though **Social Reform Generation** also use the internet for travel information, they mainly use Baidu, the biggest search engine in Mainland China (functions like Google), and use less those channels specifically for travel information and social media when comparing with Only-Child Generation. As what is discussed above, they tend to mainly search the introduction about the places, such as its attractions so as to make a destination choice, afterwards, they tend to choose to travel in tour group.

However, as **Only-Child Generation** prefer travel independently, they need to search a number of **online information**, making many decisions before and during the trip, which is consistent with Huang and Lu's work (2017) that the internet is the most favored information source of this generation. Also, the younger are willing to share their experiences online, mainly on social media as a way to improve their self-image and social status (Sparks and Pan, 2009), that is why social media is used more as one of the online information channels among them. Given that, **Hypothesis 3 is supported in this research that this generation rely more on online information sources than Social Reform Generation.** Interview examples from this cohort are:

- “Mainly the internet, searching travel notes and learn about their experiences. I would try to know more about others’ experiences and their recommendations. Usually I use Ctrip, Qunar, Mafengwo, or ask others. Sometimes, I also go to the travel agency to compare the prices.” (Interviewee 33, female, born on 1994, OG)
- “I mainly use the internet. I would like to see the reviews, and some recommendations for references. About the exact channels, I use Baidu, Ctrip, Qunar, Tuniu, and now a very popular app called “Dou yin”, and I think now people tend to use mobile apps more.” (Interviewee 34, male, born on 1989, OG)

Also, as being discussed, **both Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation sometimes also ask for others’ opinions** during the information search process. Due to the

collectivist culture, and the emphasis on interpersonal relationship, Chinese adhere to social norms, and are more consistent with the social group with which they identify (Hsu *et al.*, 2006). Also, Li (2016) indicated that Chinese independent outbound tourists heavily rely on the opinions of other tourists who have previously been to the destinations, which points to Only-Child Generation in this case. Interview excerpts from both generations are:

- “My friends and clients often recommend to me, talking about their experiences, which make me also want to travel there. I did use the internet for information, or ask the travel agency.” (Interviewee 52, female, born on 1973, SRG)
- “I would like to listen to others’ opinions, but I have my own judgement and would not trust 100%.” (Interviewee 1, female, born on 1969, SRG)
- “I would use them (others’ opinions) as references, and I mainly focus on those evaluations and reviews online. I think I pay a lot attention on this kind of things when making my travel plan; especially if I decide to travel overseas, these are important.” (Interviewee 6, female, born on 1993, OG)
- “Though I do usually search for some others’ experiences and suggestions online, I would compare a lot to make sure that the information that I want to know is credible.” (Interviewee 10, male, 1996, OG)
- “(I mainly search for) those reviews, and the travel notes, I mean those which are not lengthy, with some valuable recommendations and evaluation of the activities, and food, etc.” (Interviewee 20, female, born on 1993, OG)

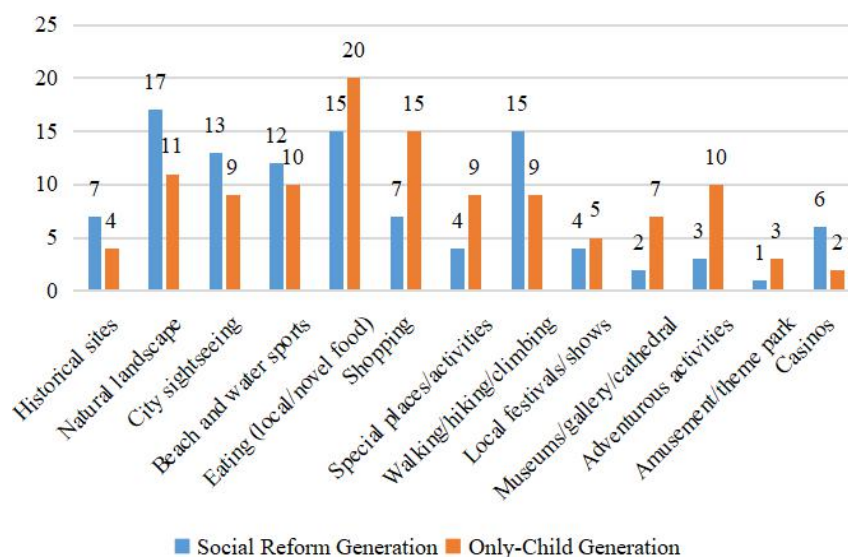
It is indicated that Only-Child Generation tend to use more diverse online information sources, and they focus a lot on the travel notes, reviews, and ratings, as these could offer them suggestions and some notices, which is similar to Xiang, Magnini and Fesenmaier’s finding (2015) that, Millennial is more active in travel planning, and use more diverse information sources, especially online channels and e-word-of-mouth. As March and Woodside (2005) also demonstrated, excitement and adventure seekers are more likely to search for more information so as to participate more activities, and Only-Child Generation is exactly the generation that is more adventuresome.

Therefore, **Hypothesis 4 is partially confirmed** that these two generations both rely on

word of mouth (WOM) information, and they tend to not trust all the information but based on their own judgement after comparison. However, there exist difference between them. **While Social Reform Generation mainly focus on offline WOM, Only-Child Generation is more dependent on both online and offline WOM.**

4.2.4 Preferred Activities

Figure 9 - Frequency Comparison of Preferred Activities Between the Two Generations



According to **Figure 9**, Social Reform Generation prefers to see natural landscape, visit the city, go to the beach, look for local/novel food, and walk around or go hiking/climbing. Only-Child Generation favors more on natural scenery, go to the beach, enjoy eating and shopping and also some adventurous activities.

In summary, these two generations are quite similar in preferred activities while traveling overseas, as they both mainly prefer to see natural landscape, go to the beach, enjoy eating local or novel food during the trip. However, **Hypothesis 5 is partially supported while their preferences on shopping is different.** It could be seen that **Only-Child Generation prefer shopping more**, as they tend to spend more and consider that they could buy international brands at a good price than in China, for example, interviewee 12 (female, born on 1995, OG) said that “I could buy cosmetics cheaper when shopping outside our country”. Huang and Petrick (2010) also supported that shopping is an important activity for Generation Y. Also, though they are similar, it seems that Social Reform Generation favor natural scenery

more than city sightseeing, when comparing with Only-Child Generation.

Chinese are known for its food culture, and they do pay a lot attention on eating in daily life. Due to the increased exposure of western cuisine and other ethnic food, Chinese tourists now are willing to look for local or special food that are different in taste, which enables them to experience the local life while knowing their eating habits; however, this sensory activity might influence their travel experience while visiting other countries that have much different food culture (Chang *et al.*, 2010). They might critique the quality and taste, but they are still curious and would like to try to some extent (Li *et al.*, 2011). Some supporting examples are that:

- “I would like to look for the local food, or some special ones.” (Interviewee 40, male, born on 1972, SRG)
- “Even though others talk about something is bad tasting, I still want to try it myself.” (Interviewee 23, male, born on 1991, OG)
- “(I’d like to) try different food or find some good restaurant to eat, this is so important for me.” (Interviewee 27, female, born on 1993, OG)

As previously explored, Only-Child Generation is more hedonism-oriented and more likely to participate adventurous activities, which is also consistent with the finding in this part (as seen in **Figure 9**). Also, they desire to see things that are not available in China, or go places that are distinctive or unique; some are interested in some special museums, some want to take good pictures or have a more unique travel experience.

- “It depends, but I am quite interested in some things like, scuba diving, sky diving, which are challenging and adventurous, and also basically, sightseeing, but big cities are not that appealing to me.” (Interviewee 10, male, 1996, OG)
- “I would search for something special in the destination that could offer me some unique experience.” (Interviewee 7, male, born on 1994, OG)
- “I am not interested in museums, but I’d like to go to visit some special ones, those with different concepts” (Interviewee 15, female, born on 1995, OG)
- “I do like those activities that are quite unique or offer me good experiences, and I think this aspect is one of the crucial things during my decision-making.” (Interviewee 21, male, born on 1996, OG)

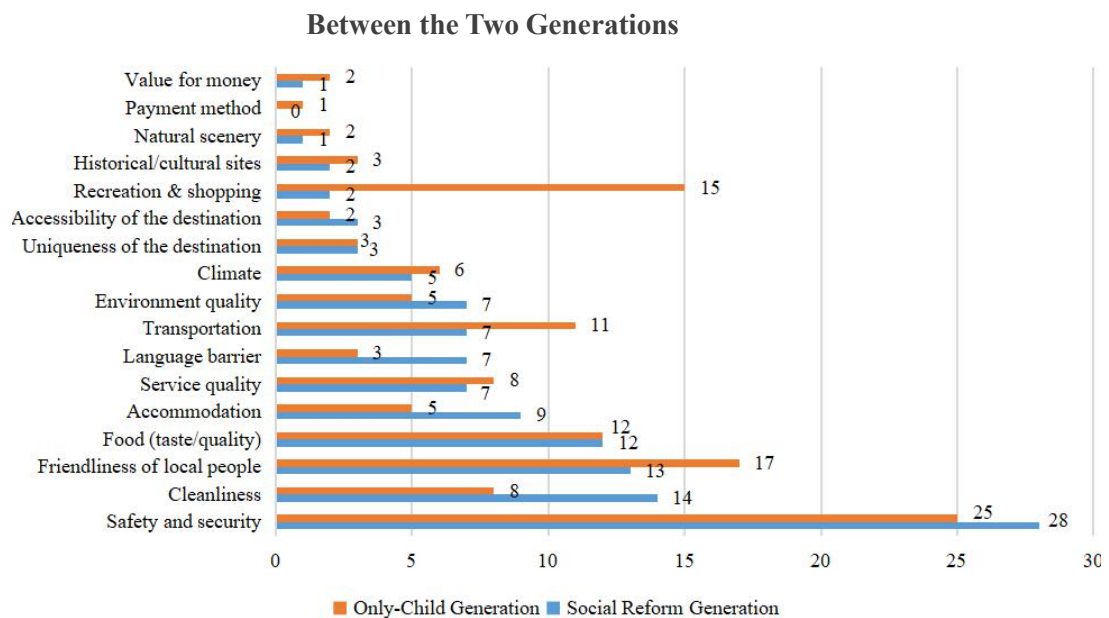
- “I prefer to experience the culture and the local vibe ... try some adventurous activities and take photos.” (Interviewee 28, male, born on 1995, OG)

Besides, it is indicated that Only-Child Generation desire for more diverse and special experiences (e.g. adventures), as Social Reform Generation mainly visit the attractions, no matter natural or historical ones, or go sightseeing around the city.

4.2.5 Destination Evaluation Criteria

As seen in **Figure 10**, Social Reform Generation concerns more about safety and security, cleanliness, friendliness of local people and food; while Only-Child Generation more on safety and security, friendliness of local people, food, recreation and shopping opportunities. So **Hypothesis 6 is partially supported that these two generation are similar in considering the major importance of personal safety, and food experience in the destination, but also friendliness of local people.**

Figure 10 - Frequency Comparison of Destination Evaluation Criteria



More importantly, **safety and security** is most important to both **Social Reform Generation** and **Only-Child Generation**, with a much higher frequency among all mentioned attributes. It has been previously examined that all generations consider safety and security as the most important criteria when evaluating destinations (Li *et al.*, 2013). Also, it

is demonstrated that perceived risk is one of the key factors impacting the decision to visit a destination (e.g., Sharifpour *et al.*, 2014). Moreover, Chinese cultural tradition is collectivism-oriented because of the Confucian values; they stress family obligation and relationship harmony, which lead to their avoidance of uncertainty to a greater extent (Kim *et al.*, 2015). Thus, Chinese place emphasis on personal safety and security in daily, and they concern more when traveling, especially when they are in a much more different environment (China Tourism Academy, 2018; Sparks and Pan, 2009). Supporting interview excerpts are as follow:

- “I care about my personal safety and security. Some news report robbery or terrorist attacks ... And, while traveling, whether it is safe to outside to look for some local food at night.” (Interviewee 50, male, born on 1974, SRG)
- “Safety is the most important, and the risk of natural disaster, like the volcano eruption in Bali island; if I want to travel overseas, and plan to go to an island, I would not choose Bali” (Interviewee 53, female, born on 1968, SRG)
- “My safety is important. I really want to go to Morocco after some friend’s share their experience, and I think it is a unique destination that is worth to visit; but, I also heard that it is not a very safe travel destination, so I have not decided whether I would visit there or not.” (Interviewee 5, female, born on 1980, OG)
- “I think about safety first, because I am worried about this due to those news talking about some horrible incidents, and the high crime rate, social disruption, etc.” (Interviewee 54, female, born on 1996, OG)

Besides, the **friendliness of local people**, **food** and **service quality**, are also considered important for both generations during the travel, especially the former one, as many of them mentioned “the attitude of local people towards foreigners like us” or “whether local people is friendly to us”. As other researchers indicated, Chinese tourists expect more respect from the locals and service providers, and there should be no racial discrimination against them (Li *et al.*, 2011). What’s more, Only-Child Generation pays special attention to friendliness of people, as being explored by Huang and Lu (2017). Also, because of their desires for tasty food as a belief, food is a significant consideration and could negatively influence the

evaluation towards the destination, as they would like to try new things but might complain about the taste and not get used to the local food (Li *et al.*, 2011). For example, interviewee 48 (male, born on 1978, SRG) said that “I would definitely look for some Chinese restaurants because usually the local food of the destination is not that acceptable to me”.

In addition, it is worth to mention that **recreational and shopping opportunities** plays an important role in evaluating a destination for **Only-Child Generation**, but indicating a lack of importance for Social Reform Generation, which is opposite to Huang and Lu’s finding (2017) that recreation opportunities is important for both generations. As being discussed before, Only-Child Generation becomes more likely to spend more on “having fun”, as they are motivated for hedonic experiences, thus, they would pay more attention on this attribute than Social Reform Generation.

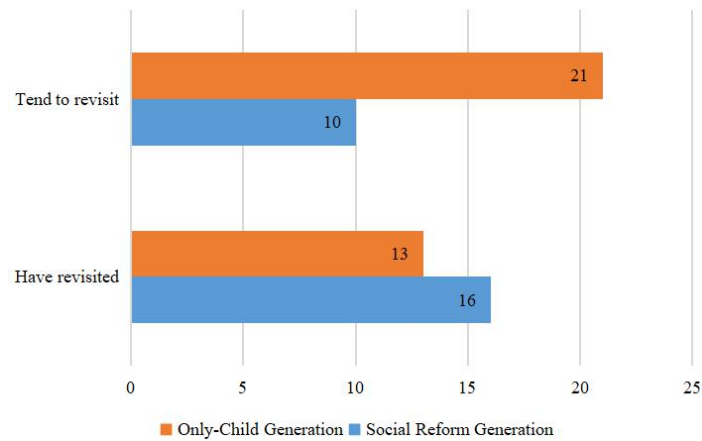
Surprisingly, language barrier is not an important consideration for Social Reform Generation. As they prefer to travel in package tour, there would not exist many communication problems. Interviewee 11 (female, born on 1972, SRG) answered that “as we usually travel in group, or my children could communicate with foreigners, language is not a consideration”; and interviewee 37 (female, born on 1970, SRG) said that “since I would participate a tour group, so this is not a big problem”.

Thus, **Hypothesis 6 is partially supported that Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation are similar in considering the major importance of personal safety, and food experience, but also friendliness of local people.**

4.2.6 Post-visit Behavioral Intentions

As indicated, positive post-visit behavioral intentions mainly refer to the following actions: revisit the same destination, recommend the place to others, or say positive things about the destinations (Castro *et al.*, 2007; Chen and Tsai, 2007).

Figure 11 - Frequency Comparison of Intention to Revisit Between the Two Generations



As shown in **Figure 11**, about half of interviewees from each two generation have revisited overseas destination (including Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan). However, apparently, **Only-Child Generation** is **more likely to revisit** another country or overseas regions than Social Reform Generation. Though now they might be constrained by financial condition and therefore revisit less than Social Reform Generation, they are actually more willing to visit the same destination again. Nevertheless, also due to financial condition, those interviewees who do not tend to revisit from this cohort said that “I have thought about it (revisiting a destination), but I have not yet. However, as I don’t have that much personal savings, I think I tend to go to new places, instead of visiting the same destination if I have the opportunity” (Interviewee 6, female, born on 1993, OG). In other words, they would consider it when they accumulate wealth gradually, as they are still the younger generation. Excerpts that indicate their intentions to revisit are as follow:

- “I did. Travel to a place just once is never enough, I tend to revisit, particularly those places that impress me.” (Interviewee 19, female, born on 1994, OG)
- “I have not revisited yet, but I would like to travel to the same destination because there are still other places that I could discover, and also, if I have a pretty good and satisfied experiences, then I would also consider visiting again.” (Interviewee 36, male, born on 1993, OG)
- “Not yet, but I am willing to if I really like it. I want to go to Thailand again now, because I really like the food there.” (Interviewee 54, female, born on 1995, OG)

Regarding Social Reform Generation, indeed, they didn't have the same opportunities to travel abroad in their youth age like Only-Child Generation, due to the tourism policy and economic condition at that time (Sofield and Li, 1998; Egri and Ralston, 2004). Also, it is not that easy and convenient for them to travel overseas, considering those reasons mentioned previously (e.g., safety/uncertainty concern and language barrier). Thus, they tend to travel to those destinations they have not been to instead of revisiting, as they already enter into their middle age. Here are the following excerpts quoted from Social Reform Generation:

- “I rarely visit the same destination, since I don't travel a lot, not to mention traveling overseas. So for me, I prefer to visit to new places than traveling to the same one.” (Interviewee 1, female, born on 1969, SRG)
- “I tend to visit other destinations that I have not been to, because there are so many places that we could discover.” (Interviewee 11, female, born on 1972, SRG)
- “I have revisited Thailand, and Vietnam twice; I think it depends on whether there is something attractive to me.” (Interviewee 12, male, born on 1969, SRG)
- “Yes, I did (revisit). But actually I prefer to visit new places.” (Interviewee 58, male, born on 1969, SRG)

In addition, it could be seen that tourists from these two generations would like to visit the same destination when they have a satisfying/impressive experience, or they consider there are still many novel/interesting places that are worth a visit. It has been demonstrated that the willingness to return to a place is impacted by the level of satisfaction (Chen and Tsai, 2007), the perceived value, and past behavior.

Table 11 - Frequency Comparison of WOM Intention between the Two Generations

WOM Intention	Mentioned frequency	Mentioned frequency
	Social Reform Generation	Only-Child Generation
Intention to recommend	Have recommended ... (8)	Have recommended ... (8)
	Would recommend if asked (6)	Would recommend if asked (11)

Intention to share travel experience	Talk with others (10) Share on Wechat “Moment” (9)	Talk with others (7) Share on Wechat “Moment” (22) Share on other online channels (3)
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As seen in **Table 11**, **both generations are not active in making recommendations**, they tend to recommend to others when being asked. Also, regarding their **intention to talk with others**, they usually talk/discuss with friends or family, but not very often, as they are not prone to talk about their experiences very proactively either. Actually, people ask because that others’ opinions is also a crucial information source, as word-of-mouth and interpersonal interactions have important impact in the decision making process of potential consumers (Ye *et al.*, 2011; Filieri, Alguezaui and Mcleay, 2015; Luo and Zhong, 2015), which is also same for Chinese tourists, as being discussed in the previous “information source” part. A positive word of mouth action is also a convincing source of information for prospective visitors (Yoon and Uysal, 2005). For example, interviewee 18 (female, born on 1990, OG) said that: “I like sharing experiences with my relatives, and friends, sometimes I recommend them when they asked about some good places, and restaurants that they must go. I think it is because they might also want to experience it, and would consider my opinions more credible than those found online, since I have already had the experiences”.

Furthermore, it is indicated that **Only-Child Generation is more active in sharing** their travel experiences **online** (e.g., texts, photos and videos), as they are more tech-savvy and rely a lot on internet, especially Wechat in daily, for socializing, for sharing, for recording life experiences, or for showing off to some extent, which is concluded from their answers regarding their daily life in the beginning of the interview. Wechat, is a multi-purpose app that being the most widely-used by a huge number of Chinese mobile users, and it is much more than a way for instant messaging, but also performs a wide range of functions.

In fact, Chinese tourists like posting on Wechat “Moments”, sharing their life while others could “like” and “comment” it. As shown, most interviewees from Only-Child Generation mentioned that they did share on Wechat “Moments” after the trip, when Social Reform Generation is not that active, which is consistent with Sparks and Pan’s study (2009)

that the younger are willing to share their experiences online, mainly on social media as a way to improve their self-image and social status, which enables them “having face” through sharing overseas travel experiences in this case. Excerpts about their intention to spread word-of-mouth are as follow:

- “Sometimes I talk with my friends, but I only recommend to them when they ask; sometimes I share on Wechat “Moments”, like everyone does. (Interviewee 4, male, born on 1992, OG)
- “I recommended to my friend once about a good restaurant when I know she is going to visit there; usually I don’t make recommendations, maybe just post some photos on Wechat “Moments”.” (Interviewee 15, female, born on 1995, OG)
- “I think I only post some photos or some texts about the experiences on Wechat Moments.” (Interviewee 51, female, born on 1993, OG)

Instead, Social Reform Generation don’t rely on their mobile phone a lot, and tend to not share very often about their life, as they don’t use the internet that much as younger generation. For instance, Interviewee 11 (female, born on 1972, SRG) answered that “Sometimes I share photos on Wechat “Moments”, to share the joy, but not very often. Usually after the trip, my friends or relatives and I would talk about my experience”. And Interviewee 60 (male, born on 1973, SRG) said that “Sometimes I talk about the trip with my friends, but I don’t share proactively”.

To sum up, **Hypothesis 7 is supported that Only-Child Generation is more likely to revisit and share experiences online than Social Reform Generation.** In other words, the former generation is more likely to have positive future behavioral intentions. It’s consistent with previous study that this generation is more prone to revisit and share experiences online than other elder cohorts (Gardiner and Kwek, 2017; Huang and Lu, 2017). Also, a positive relationship between satisfying experiences and willingness to recommend has already been examined and verified by Bigné *et al.* (2001). It is also suggested that the likelihood to return to a place and to recommend is both directly and indirectly influenced by destination image, regarding its perceived value and level of satisfaction of the experience (Castro *et al.*, 2007).

In summary, there exist similarities and differences between Social Reform Generation

and Only-Child Generation, as they were impacted by similar life belief and economic, societal development in the last ten years, but grew up under a quite different historical, political and social background when they were young, which is consistent with previous related study regarding the influences of generational characteristics on travelers' behaviors (e.g., Beldona, 2005; Glover, 2010; Gardiner *et al.*, 2013). Furthermore, related marketers should pay attention on these generational differences to target consumers and come up with the suitable strategy when doing promotion and advertising. Additionally, analysis findings are summarized in **Table 12**, for clarifying the examination results of the proposed hypothesis.

Table 12 - Summary of the Research Findings

Topics	Findings
Preferred travel pattern	Though Social Reform Generation have taken more outbound trips, they actually prefer domestic travel , since they concern about personal safety and language barrier, and they tend to travel in tour group . But Only-Child Generation seems more likely to take outbound trip , and travel independently .
Travel motivation	H1: Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation are similar in travel motivation for seeking novelty and hedonic experiences. (partially supported) They are both mainly motivated by novelty seeking, hedonic experiences, and rest and relaxation. However, to be more specifically, Only-Child Generation is more hedonism-oriented and is more willing to have adventurous experiences.
Information search	H2: Social Reform Generation rely more on travel agents than Only-Child Generation. (supported) This cohort prefer to travel in tour group, to reduce their concerns about uncertainty, potential risks, and language barrier. Also, they are not as familiar as using the internet like the younger, and tend to gain information from travel agency directly. H3: Only-Child Generation rely more on online information sources than Social Reform Generation. (supported) Only-Child Generation prefers to travel independently, and they are more tech-savvy, relying heavily on the internet, and further shape a life-long propensity towards learning from more diverse sources (e.g., social media). H4: Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation are similar in relying on word-of-mouth information. (partially supported) Chinese are more consistent with the social group with which they identify and rely on the opinions of others. However, while Social Reform Generation mainly focus on offline WOM, Only-Child Generation rely on both online and offline WOM.

Preferred activities	H5: Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation are similar in preferred activities, like historical attractions, shopping and local life experiences. (partially supported) They both mainly prefer to see natural landscape, go to the beach, enjoy eating local/novel food, but Only-Child Generation prefer shopping more, and desire for more diverse and special experiences (e.g. adventures).
Destination evaluation concerns	H6: Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation are similar in considering the major importance of personal safety, recreational and shopping opportunities, environmental quality and food experience in the destination. (partially supported) They both concern about personal safety, food experience, and also friendliness of local people, but Only-Child Generation prefer shopping more when comparing with Social Reform Generation.
Post-visit behavioral intentions	H7: Only-Child Generation is more likely to revisit and share experiences online than Social Reform Generation after visitation. (supported) This cohort is younger and have more travel opportunities, and they have less concerns about the inconvenience and language barrier. Besides, they are more tech-savvy and rely a lot on internet, especially Wechat, sharing their life. In other words, this cohort is more likely to have positive future behavioral intentions.

5. Conclusion

This research explored the thoughts and travel behaviors of outbound tourists from two Chinese generations (Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation). The studied behaviors are travel motivations, information search, activity preferences, destination evaluation concerns and future behavioral intentions. The findings show that there exist significant differences among generations, but also highlight some important similarities, as these two cohorts were impacted by similar life belief and economic, societal changes in last ten years, but they actually grew up with quite different life events in their formative year. Thus, this study contributes to literature by providing in-depth insights into how generational characteristics could influence travelers' behaviors (e.g., Glover, 2010; Gardiner *et al.*, 2013).

Furthermore, all seventh proposed hypothesis were supported by analysis results to different degrees.

Firstly, about travel motivation, these two generations do not differ significantly in seeking novelty, hedonic experiences, and relaxation, which support the previous study (e.g., Huang and Hsu, 2009; Li *et al.*, 2011; Li and Cai, 2012). Specifically, Only-Child Generation is more hedonism-oriented, adventuresome and tend to spend more for having fun, which is consistent with past study that this cohort is more materialistic and showy, and try to engage in conspicuous consumption to construct their self-identity (Hung *et al.*, 2007; Sparks and Pan, 2009; Chung *et al.*, 2016). Besides, Social Reform Generation focuses more on novelty seeking, as they didn't have that much travel opportunities during their youth, so they tend to visit more destinations when still in good health. In addition, with the openness of China, Only-Child Generation is the first group that inclines to study abroad for self-development and therefore likes traveling overseas (Gardiner and Kwek, 2017).

Then, as for information search, the next 2 hypothesis proposed that Social Reform Generation relies more on travel agents, while Only-Child Generation more on online sources, which supports the finding of Li *et al.* (2013) that Generation X (corresponds to SRG) relies more on professional advice (e.g., travel agents). Based on the analysis, Social Reform Generation prefers to travel in package tour, to reduce their concerns about potential risk, and language barrier. What's more, as indicated, information search plays a role in tourists' decision-making, for reducing cognitive dissonance, and perceived risks (Sirakaya and

Woodside, 2005; Choi *et al.*, 2012). In the context of China, Kim *et al.* (2015) found out that, as Chinese stress family obligation, they tend to avoid uncertainty to a greater extent.

Additionally, this cohort is not that familiar with the internet like the younger, thus they tend to acquire information from travel agency directly. Whereas, Only-Child Generation prefers to travel independently, and are reliant on the internet, using more diverse sources (e.g., user-generated content platform). This is not surprising given that they grew up with the development and revolution of the internet and social media.

The next hypothesis proposed that both generations are similar in relying on word-of-mouth information. Indeed, Chinese adhere to social norms, being more consistent with the social group with which they identify. The collectivist culture and emphasis on interpersonal relationship in China might explain the strength of social influences in their travel decision making (Sparks and Pan, 2009). However, while Social Reform Generation mainly focuses on offline WOM, Only-Child Generation relies on both online and offline WOM, so this hypothesis is partially supported. As for offline WOM, usually they ask family and friends for opinions, which confirms Beerli and Martin's study (2004) that these two reference groups could influence tourists' perceptions about the destinations, and therefore the intentions to travel.

In respect of preferred activities, the finding reveals that these two generations both like to see natural landscape, go to the beach, and enjoy eating local/novel food. However, the fifth hypothesis is partially supported because their preferences on shopping is different. As shown, Only-Child Generation likes shopping more than Social Reform Generation does when traveling overseas. In addition, they desire for more diverse and special experiences (e.g. adventures). Also, it's ascertained that Chinese pay a lot attention on eating, which enables them to experience the local life knowing other eating habits, though they might not like the taste (Li *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, as previously explored, Only-Child Generation is more hedonism-oriented and is more likely to participate adventurous activities. Besides, they desire to see special things and go to distinctive places, for taking pictures or having a unique experience.

Regarding the evaluation criteria, 17 factors were identified according to respondents' considerations about overseas travel. The sixth hypothesis is partially supported, as the three

most concerned attributes of both cohorts are: safety/security, friendliness of local people and food experience; and Only-Child Generation prefer shopping more than Social Reform Generation does, which is opposite to Huang and Lu's finding (2017) that recreation opportunities is important for both cohorts. The finding also reinforces that personal safety and security is a strong concern for Chinese, which might could be explained by the collective nature and family emphasis of Confucianism. It's also been examined that all generations consider safety/security as the most important criteria when evaluating destinations (Li *et al.*, 2013). Particularly, Social Reform Generation are highly safety conscious and less adventuresome; they prefer domestic trip and package tour, and tend to not go to places that exist more potential risks and uncertainties, which verifies previous research that perceived risk might influence the intention to visit (Sharifpour *et al.*, 2014). In other words, safety and security assurance is important when marketing to Chinese tourists.

Regarding the concerns of friendliness of people, food and service quality, especially the former one, as indicated, Chinese expect more respects from the locals and service providers (Li *et al.*, 2011), particularly the younger (Huang and Lu, 2017). As mentioned, cuisine is a key concern for Chinese (Li *et al.*, 2011). Surprisingly, language barrier is not that important for Social Reform Generation, because as they prefer to travel in group, there would not exist many problems to worry about.

About the post-visit behavioral intention, Only-Child Generation is more likely to revisit. Though this cohort is now being constrained by financial consideration, they are indeed younger and have more travel opportunities; besides, they concern less about the inconvenience and language barrier. As for Social Reform Generation, they didn't have the same travel opportunities in their youth age, due to the tourism policy and economic condition at that time (Sofield and Li, 1998; Egri and Ralston, 2004). Also considering their preference on domestic travel, they tend to travel to new destinations, as they already entered into their middle age. Furthermore, though these two cohorts both rely on others' opinions, they actually are not active in making recommendations, unless being asked; but they sometimes talk with friends or family. In addition, Only-Child Generation like sharing online, as they use the internet a lot, especially Wechat, as stated in Sparks and Pan's study (2009) that the younger are more willing to share online, mainly on social media to improve self-image,

which enhance “face”. In other words, this cohort is more likely to have future intentions and the last hypothesis is supported, which is consistent with previous study that they are more prone to revisit and share experiences online than other elder cohorts (Gardiner and Kwek, 2017; Huang and Lu, 2017). Thus, this cohort has greater potentials for the future market, as they love traveling and are still accumulating their wealth.

More importantly, tourists would like to revisit when they have a satisfying experience, or they consider there are still novel/interesting places that are worth a visit, which supports the past literature that the willingness to return is impacted by level of satisfaction, perceived value, and past behavior (Bigné *et al.*, 2001; Chen and Tsai, 2007). It is also similar to the finding of Castro *et al.* (2007) that the likelihood to return and to recommend is both directly and indirectly influenced by destination image, regarding its perceived value and level of satisfaction of travel experiences.

In conclusion, China has become the largest emerging tourist markets, especially concerning its great potential, though little attention has been paid to Chinese travel behaviors, let alone related studies from generational perspective; thus, this study is valuable. Furthermore, it is of great significance for marketers to take into account the impacts of generational differences, to predict the future behaviors of target Chinese customers, to attract them and come up with the appropriate marketing strategy.

6. Implications

6.1 Academic implications

This study supports the previous research that each generation shapes a unique personality that determines their values, attitudes, preferences, and behaviors, due to the different defining moments in their formative year; besides, there also exist some important similarities among them, which might be influenced by the overlapping time period, though each generation is in different life stage (e.g., Schewe and Meredith, 2004; Huang and Petrick, 2010; Li *et al.*, 2013). As demonstrated, people from different countries experience some unique epochal events and might have distinctive lifestyle (Pennington-Gray *et al.*, 2003; Pendergast, 2010), which is verified in this study, as Chinese people indeed think and behave

differently in some ways when comparing with consumers from other markets, due to the specific Chinese cultural tradition, and Confucian values. What's more, as there is a lack of related research, the present findings provide empirical support for the study regarding Chinese tourists' thoughts and travel behaviors.

In addition, theoretically, this study provides empirical support for the theory of Tourism Consumption System by (Woodside and Dubelaar, 2002), indicating that the travel-related variables are interdependent, as they could affect the others to some extent. For example, the current findings confirm that demographic characteristics could have an impact on information search, and travel motivation could influence the choices of activities; while the satisfaction level of experiences would impact the evaluation of destination, which directly influence the post-visit behavioral intentions.

It's also suggested the value of generational analysis as a segmentation criteria in tourism research, since marketers not only could understand the current situation, but also predict future tendencies. As Castro *et al.* (2007) ascertained that one of the major challenges for marketers is to study their target segment, knowing what they think and how they behave, which call for continuous attentions on related research.

6.2 Marketing implications

It is crucial for marketers and service providers to know the influences of Confucian values on Chinese, such as, what are they, and how they could have that impact, so as to generate the communication plan to draw their attentions, to engage them through appropriate channels, to meet their needs and expectations by differentiated products, and to satisfy them by the travel quality. As concluded, though these two generations are similar to some degrees, there are some important differences that worth attention.

For evoking customers' travel motivation, as these two generations are quite similar in this aspect, marketers could emphasize the possibility of novelty seeking and hedonic experiences in that destination or utilize particular value items in their communication campaigns. For instance, it is necessary to focus on the distinctiveness of its culture and local experiences. Beyond that, to further attract Only-Child Generation, the opportunity for shopping, eating and adventures is needed to be mentioned.

Besides, marketing messages should be spread through the right sources that the targets mainly rely on. As the results show, there is a clear generation gap between these two cohorts in their information search behavior. The tourism products and information is crucial for marketing Social Reform Generation, and online information for Only-Child Generation. The influences of word of mouth is important to all generations, which is emphasized in Chinese traditional values.

However, it is indicated that traditional travel intermediaries is challenged by social media, as now younger customers tend to search for information online. In addition, according to the online source usage of the respondents, marketers should pay attention to the message dissemination on the favorable channels used by the target segment. In general, they should take good advantage of the biggest search engine in China (Baidu), and the top online travel agency (Ctrip), by adjusting and monitoring the information about touristic offerings. When specifically targeting Only-Child Generation, other sources like the popular user-generated content platform (Mafengwo) and social media (Sina Weibo, Wechat and The Little Red Book) should be also taken into account. It is critical to note that this generation pay a lot attention on others' evaluations and reviews. Besides, both generations tend to not trust all the information but based on their judgement after comparisons. Thus, related monitoring is needed to improve the perceived image and then consumers' travel experiences.

It is also noted that the rapidly expanding tourism industry requires more innovative and differentiated products for Chinese outbound tourist market. Tourism professionals should build programs regarding diverse preferred activities, such as city sightseeing, natural scenery, dining/food tour, etc; and particularly recreation opportunities for younger generation, including shopping and adventure activities.

For attracting and satisfying the customers, it is also critical to pay attention on the criteria that could influence their travel and post-visit intentions. Among them, safety and security guarantee is very important when delivering messages in the promotion. Also, service quality in the destination should not be ignored but to improve. Another challenging attribute to focus is the cuisine that suits Chinese eating habits and palate. Better or familiar food offerings with good quality is a way to win the heart of them.

Furthermore, destinations should build and maintain a good relationship with customers;

they should ensure the experiences so that customers would be willing to spread positive word of mouth, which is influential for its credibility. In particular, it is important to note that Only-Child Generation is more likely to have positive future behavioral intentions, including revisiting and sharing experiences both online and offline, which indicate their influences and market potentials.

In conclusion, this study not only provides the understandings of the two Chinese generations' travel preferences and behaviors, but also a foundation for further research in other similar Asian countries.

7. Limitation and Future Research

While this research provides insights about the preferences and behaviors of outbound tourists from two Chinese generations, there are also some limitations that deserve attentions, which could be further improved in the future study.

As demonstrated, the research on Chinese tourists is immature, so there is relatively less supportive literature review in the context of China for the current study, which call for more reliable researches probing the related tourism topics. Besides, the studied behaviors could be reduced to 2 or 3 variables so as to delve into more specifically and observe more insights and details instead of being too general.

Due to the large population in China, the proportion of each generation is actually massive, so the sample range could be narrowed down to one generation, to improve the validity and reliability of the data. Or, it would be also interesting to explore the characteristics and behaviors concerning different subgroups within a generation time-span, as Pendergast (2010) stated that there are some units included in the same cohort, though it is also less discovered so far. Moreover, future study could be specifically researched on Chinese outbound tourists who visited a particular nation, which could enable that overseas destination to understand its actual customers for collecting valuable market intelligence and generating suitable communication plan.

It has also been suggested that some epochal events are unique to a nation, owing to its historic, economic or political changes, so there exists distinctiveness in different generations (Pennington-Gray *et al.*, 2003); and cross-cultural studies are considered valuable to advance

understanding of generational cohorts. So, further research could consider examining how culture and nationality could have the impact on tourists' characteristics and behaviors comparing the generations from different nations.

About the chosen methodology, this qualitative approach might be limited in some aspects (Wimmer and Dominick, 2000). For example, it might be lack of a great number of data to support, and could be less generalizable due to its small sample size, non-random sampling and sometimes the interviewer's bias. In other words, this study still lack of the fertile ground for generational analysis and generational segmentation marketing. Thus, mixed approach of both qualitative and quantitative method may give better leverage and could help to profiling generations more precisely.

Additionally, some respondents from Social Reform Generation seemed a bit uncomfortable when interviewing, as they are not very used to being asked by strangers though a prior warm-up chat was included to build rapport. It is because that this generation is more conservative than the younger. So, some of the answers might not be as detailed as Only-Child Generation, which may influence the findings. For future study, it is better to conduct on-site interviews, to reduce their potential anxiety.

What's more, as nowadays customers are becoming complicated and challenging to explore (Gardiner *et al.*, 2013), longitudinal research to capture the trends is critical, so as to further delve into their changing attitudes, preferences and behaviors.

Since the next generation (so-called Generation Z) is coming of age, it will be necessary if the tourism industry to study them next, and continue to adapt strategy effectively (Cohen *et al.*, 2014). Also, as social media has become an important marketing communication channel, how it could influence travel decisions among Only-Child Generation and the following cohort requires further examination.

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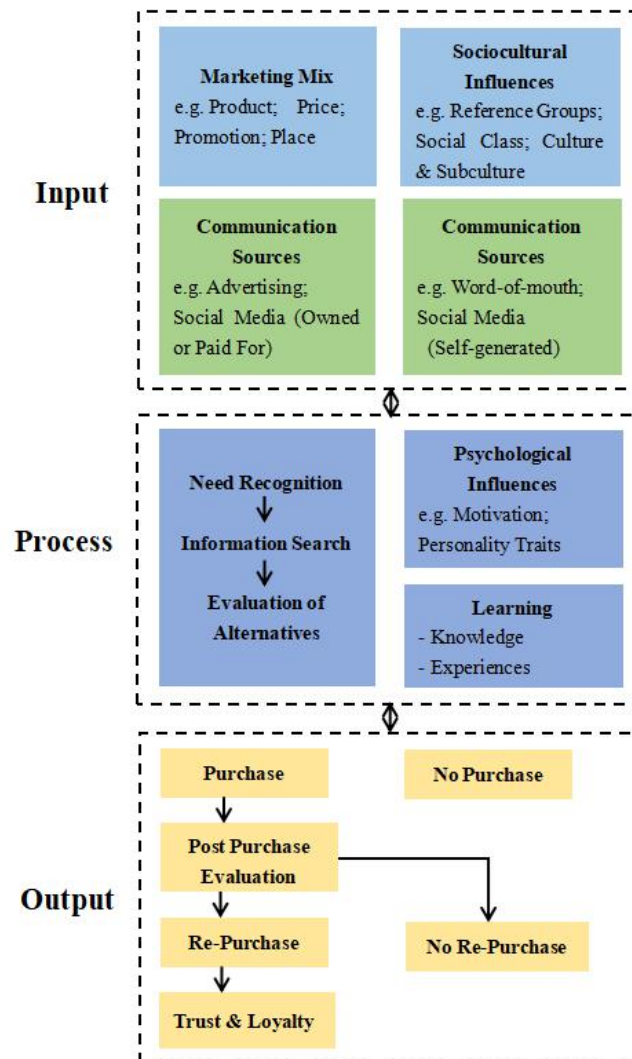
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Appendix

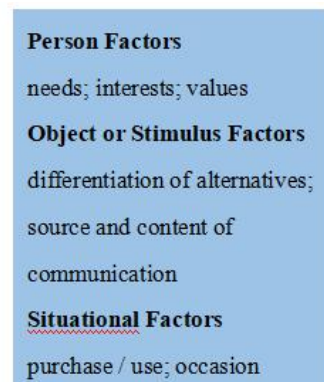
1) Figures and Tables

Figure 1 - Consumer Decision-Making Model



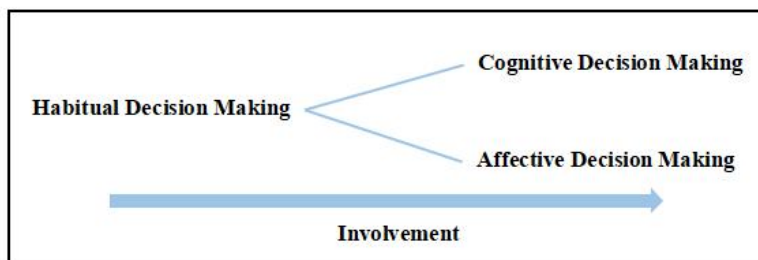
Source: Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015)

Figure 2 - Antecedents of Consumer Involvement



Source: Solomon (2015)

Figure 3 - Involvement and Decision Making



Source: Solomon (2015)

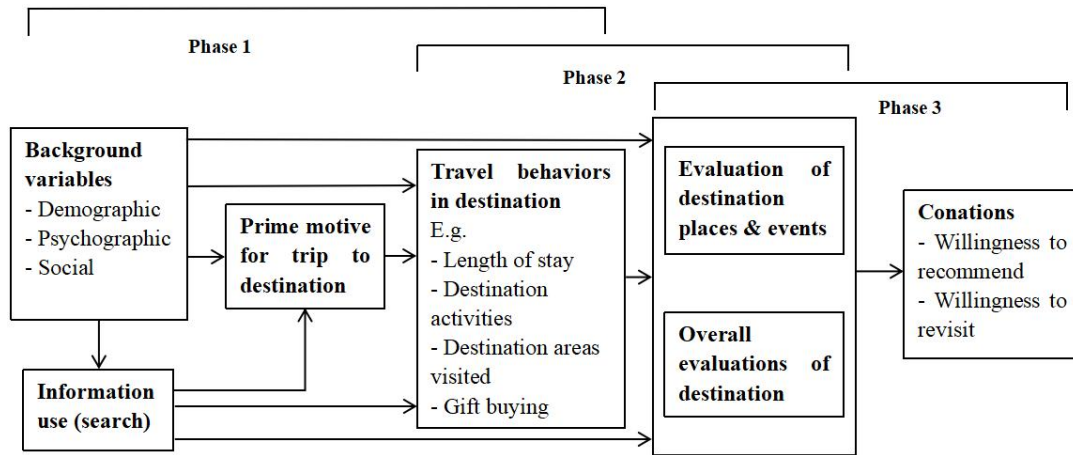
Table 1 - Comparison of Consumer Behavior in General and in Tourism Context

	Consumer behavior in general	Consumer behavior in tourism
Decision-making	Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015) Consumer decision-making model includes three stages: input, process and output. Sirakaya and Woodside (2005); Smallman and Moore (2010) “Grand models” are commonly accepted in examining consumer behavior. Martin and Woodside (2012) - Stages: 1) need recognition; 2) information search; 3) alternatives evaluation; 4) product choice and purchase; 5) post-purchase evaluation. Smallman and Moore (2010) - Consumption frequency: more frequent - relatively lower consumer involvement	Smallman and Moore (2010); Martin and Woodside (2012) Travel decision-making is more complex, including many sub-decisions (planned/unplanned); perceived risk is higher. Sirakaya and Woodside (2005); Morgan and Pritchard (2012) - Characteristics: intangibility; inseparability; heterogeneity; perishability Martin and Woodside (2012) Stages: 1) travel decision; 2) pre-trip planning (e.g., travel party, destination, and booking); 3) on-site experiences (e.g., activities & evaluation); 4) post-trip evaluation and future intentions. Smallman and Moore (2010) - Consumption frequency: less frequent - relatively higher consumer involvement
	Sirayaka and Woodside (2005); Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015) Decision making process is affected by both personal or non-personal factors (e.g., word-of-mouth or external marketing stimuli) and is not perfectly rational.	

Motivation	Li and Cai (2012: 475) It is defined as “<i>a state of need that drives individuals toward types of action that are capable of satisfying those needs</i>”.	
	Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015) One of the most influential theory in consumer research is the hierarchy of needs proposed by Maslow (1943). Gnoth (1997) Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory is too general to allow for any particular degree of specificity.	Crompton (1979); Chon (1990); Prebensen <i>et al.</i> (2012) “Push” and “pull” model specifically in tourism: - Push: personal desire for novelty seeking, escape/relaxation, self-exploration/development, relationship enhancement, etc. - Pull: perceived value of the destination, including historic attractions, value for money, recreation facilities, etc.
Information search	Sirakaya and Woodside (2005); Choi <i>et al.</i> (2012) It is an ongoing process includes pre- and post-purchase stages, for reducing the cognitive dissonance, and uncertainty. Fodness and Murray (1999) - Internal: individuals’ previous experiences and past information searches, etc. - External: promotional sources (e.g. advertisements) and unbiased channels, like books, word-of-mouth and movies, etc. Munar and Jacobsen (2012) Electronic social networks and online information platforms have a tremendous impact on consumer behaviors now.	
	Sirakaya and Woodside (2005) As for tangible manufactured consumption, information search may include pre-purchase trial or observation of	Smallman and Moore (2010); Martin and Woodside (2012) People may engage in more extensive search due to higher risks. Xiang and Gretzel (2010); Luo and Zhong (2015)

	others.	Customers are likely to use reference groups for travel decisions. Choi <i>et al.</i> (2012) After the destination choice and purchase, post-purchase information search is more detailed and destination-specific.
Perception	Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015: 114) It maybe influenced by personal factors (e.g, expectations) and marketing messages, which leads to different intentions.	
	Solomon (2015) - Sensation is an important element, which is the response to five basic stimuli: sights, sounds, smells, taste and textures. - Stages of perception: exposure, attention and interpretation.	Cohen, Prayag and Moital (2014) - Researches mainly explore tourist' cognition, then the affective and conative ones. - Perception plays a role in destination image, satisfaction and perceived service quality. Beerli and Martín (2004); Stylos <i>et al.</i> (2016) Perceptions that forms after travel is more realistic and complex.
Future behavioral intentions	Chen and Tsai (2007) It refers to customers' subjective judgment for future behavior and the likelihood to act.	
	Schiffman and Wisenblit (2015) - re-purchase the products; recommend to others or say something positive (word-of-mouth)	Castro <i>et al.</i>, (2007); Chen and Tsai (2007) - revisit the same destination; recommend to others or say something positive (word-of-mouth)

Figure 4 - Relationships Among Decision and Behavior Variables of Tourism Consumption System



Source: adapted from the TCS proposed by Woodside and Dubelaar (2002)

Table 2 - Key Characteristics of the Three Generations.

Generations	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y (Millennial)
- Year of birth (Schiffman and Wisenblit, 2015) - Age in 2018	1946 – 1964 1964 - 1982 (formative years)	1965 - 1979 1983 - 1997 (formative years)	1980 - 1996 1997 - 2014 (formative years)
Epochal events (Schewe and Meredith, 2004; Lehto <i>et al.</i> , 2008; Pendergast, 2010; Li <i>et al.</i> , 2013)	The Civil Rights Movement The Women's Liberation Movement The Vietnam War President John F. Kennedy's Assassination First Moon Landing	Energy Crisis The End of the Cold War Fall of the Berlin Wall Watergate Scandal Advent of Television September 11, 2001 Terrorist Attack	Dissolution of the Soviet Union The Stock Market Crash of 2008 Emergence of the Information Age (e.g., founding of Google) Revolution and Widespread Use of Communications (e.g., Social networks)
Core values (Pennington-Gray <i>et al.</i> , 2003; Pendergast, 2010; Li <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Gardiner <i>et al.</i> , 2014)	optimism, individual consciousness, self-exploration, self-actualization, youthfulness, work, more concern with health and wellness	independence, diversity, practicality, entrepreneurship, ambitiousness, self-confidence, cautiousness, desire for work-life balance, peer-orientation, flexibility, and technology-savvy	high adaptability, self-confidence, achievement-orientation, sheltered, sociability, diversity, creativity, flexibility, most tech-savvy, broader connection, and desire for freedom (from pressure)

Table 3 - Similarities and Differences Among The Three Generations

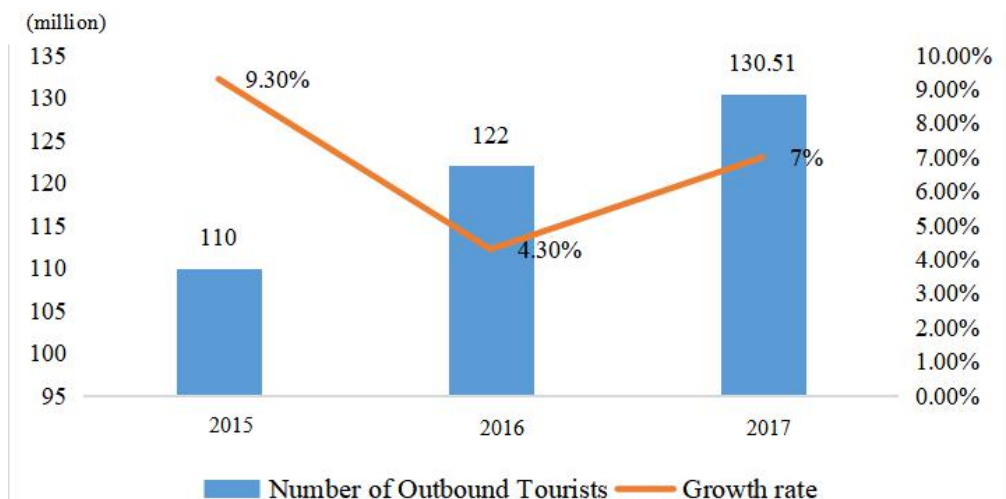
	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y
Motivation (Lehto <i>et al.</i> , 2008; Gardiner <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Chung, Chen and Lin, 2016)	- novelty and cultural experience - hedonic experiences - new adventures - family time away from home	- novelty - having fun - unique experiences - work-life balance	- novelty - having fun - unique experiences - exciting adventures
	<i>Seek for novelty and hedonic experiences; Curiosity</i>		
Information search (Huang and Petrick, 2010; Li <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Gardiner <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Xiang <i>et al.</i> , 2015)	- advertising - online sources (least) - professional advice (travel agents) - word-of-mouth (offline)	- television advertising - online sources (less) - rely on professional advice - word-of-mouth (mainly offline)	- rely on online sources - word-of-mouth (online & offline) - use more sources than others, especially online channels
	<i>Rely more on advertising, professional advice and word-of-mouth</i>		
		<i>Rely on word-of-mouth and use more online sources</i>	
Activity preferences (Pennington-Gray <i>et al.</i> , 2003; Lehto <i>et al.</i> , 2008; Huang and Petrick, 2010; Li <i>et al.</i> , 2013)	- cultural-related experience - historical places (more) - local food - spiritual pursuits	- environmental excursions - shopping - historical places - festivals	- environmental excursions - shopping - historical places - festivals, concerts and dance

	- outdoor activities in nature-based setting	- local food - natural scenery sights	- local food - city sightseeing
		<i>Enjoy excursions, shopping, historical places, and local life (more diverse)</i>	
Destination evaluation concerns (Li <i>et al.</i> , 2013; Gardiner <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Huang and Lu, 2017)	- safety and security - recreational opportunities - cultural/historical sites - environmental quality - cleanliness - food - friendliness of people - accommodation/transportation - service quality - language	- safety and security - recreational opportunities - cultural/historical sites - environmental quality - cleanliness - food - shopping opportunities - natural scenery	- safety and security - recreational opportunities - cultural/historical sites - environmental quality - cleanliness - food - shopping opportunities - friendliness of people
		Except for those common factors in three generations, shopping opportunities is particularly important for Generation X and Generation Y.	
	<i>Concern about safety, recreational facilities, attractions, environmental quality, cleanliness and food.</i>		
Future intentions (Gardiner and Kwek, 2017)			- most prone to revisit and share experiences online

Table 4 - Key Characteristics of the Three Generations in China

Generations	Lost Generation	Social Reform Generation	Only-child Generation
Year of birth	1949 – 1966	1967 - 1978	1979 - 1996
Coming of age	1967 - 1984	1985 - 1996	1997 - 2014
Age in 2018 (Egri and Ralston, 2004; Huang and Lu, 2017)	52 – 69	40 – 51	22 - 39
Epochal events (Egri & Ralston, 2004; Hung, Gu and Yim, 2007)	Great Leap Forward The Cultural Revolution Maoist Ideology	Cultural Revolution Economic Reform and Openness Asian Financial Crisis Evolution of technologies (e.g., Baidu)	One Child Policy China’s Entry into WTO Revolution of the Internet Social media (e.g., Weibo, WeChat)
Core values (references same as “Epochal events”)	Conservatism; self-enhancement; frugality; caring about politics; pessimism; bonding with peers; hard-worker	Open-mindedness; entrepreneurship; materialism; intelligence; independence; accumulating personal wealth; balance of work and life	Individualism; creativity; confidence; hedonism; materialism; optimism; competitiveness; adventurousness; desire for freedom; tech-savvy
Travel characteristics (Huang and Lu, 2017; CTA, 2018)	Tend to travel in group; engage more in cultural local experiences and natural scenery attractions	Travel more and tend to go with family; concern about the quality of experience	Tend to go abroad and travel independently, spend more for fun and revisit; love sharing experiences online

Figure 5 - Number of Chinese Outbound Tourists from 2015 to 2017.

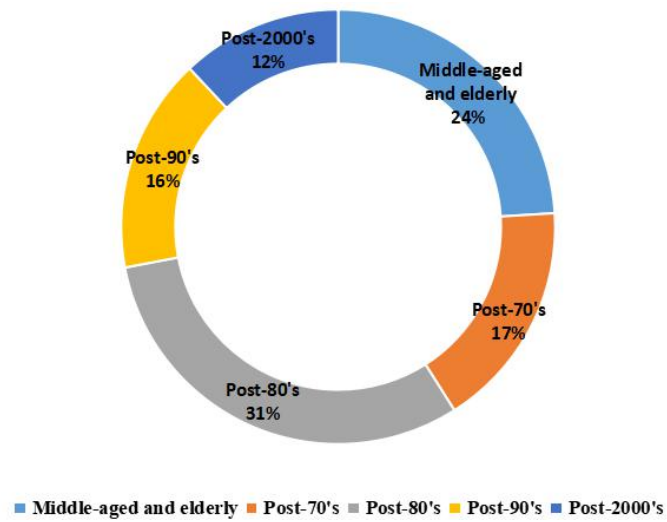


Source: China Tourism Academy (CTA, 2018)

Table 5 - Most Used Websites and Types of Travel Information in China

	Sources	Types of information
Online search engine	Baidu	Most-used information search engine, like Google.
Online travel agency (OTA)	Ctrip.com Qunar.com Fliggy.com	Providers of travel products and services, including a variety of bookings, and customized vacation packages, etc.
User generated content platform	Mafengwo Qyer	Mainly used by independent travelers for sharing and browsing travel notes, and Q&A; also provide travel products and services
	Mao Tu Ying (TripAdvisor in China)	Platform with tourism rating and reviews of a variety of aspects, such as hotels, restaurants, attractions, etc.
Other general information platform	Wechat	Instant messaging and payments purposes; sharing and disseminating information.
	Zhihu	Q & A platform that is increasingly important in daily information search.
	Sina Weibo	A popular social media platform (micro-blog) where people share and get information.

Figure 6 - Proportion of the Age Periods of Mainland Chinese Outbound Tourists in 2017



Source: China Tourism Academy (CTA, 2018)

Table 6 - Demographic Characteristics of The Interviewees (*N* = 60)

Variable	Percentage (%)	Variable	Percentage (%)
Gender		Marital status	
Male	48.3	Married	60.0
Female	51.7	Single	40.0
Birth year		Other	0.0
1966-1978	50.0	Education	
(Age: 40-51)		High school or below	43.3
1979-1996	50.0	Technical/Vocational school	8.3
(Age: 22-39)		Bachelor's degree	45.0
Occupation		Master's degree	3.3
Civil servant	1.7	Other	0.0
Businessperson	6.7	Monthly income (RMB)	
Manager/Executive	15.0	0-5000	33.3
Professional/Technical	5.0	5001-8000	23.3
Clerk/White-collar	41.7	8001-10000	5.0
Student	8.3	10001-15000	25.0
Retired person	0.0	15001-30000	3.3
Housewife	13.3	30001 and above	10.0
Other	8.3		
Employment status			
Work full-time	60.0		
Work part-time	0.0		
Self-employed	13.3		
Unemployed	26.7		
Retired	0.0		
Other	0.0		

Table 7 - Travel Behavior Pattern of Outbound Travel

	Percentage (%)	Percentage (%)
Variable	Social Reform Generation	Only-Child Generation
Preference of travel type		
Domestic travel	50.0	13.3
Outbound travel	20.0	63.3
Both	30.0	23.3
Travel pattern		
Independent travel	13.3	86.7
Package group tour (total)	73.3	13.3
Package group tour (partial)	13.3	0.0
Other	0.0	0.0
Numbers of outbound trips		
1 - 5	43.3	60.0
6 - 10	36.7	30.0
11 and above	20.0	10.0

Figure 7 - Frequency Comparison of Outbound Travel Motivation

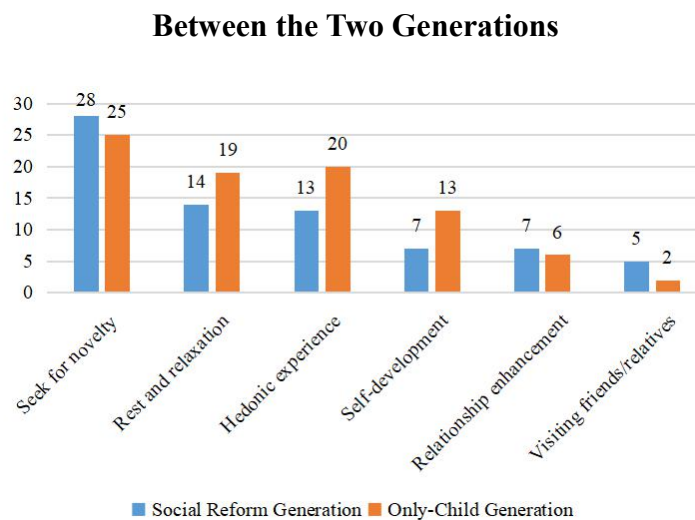


Table 8 - Travel Motivation Characteristics Between The Two Generations

Travel motivation	Mentioned frequency	Mentioned frequency
	Social Reform Generation	Only-Child Generation
Seek for novelty	Visit new places (20) Know other culture & customs (22) Have some local experience (4) Know others' way of living (8) Meet people and socialization (3)	Visit new places (18) Know other culture & customs (24) Have some local experience (5) Know others' way of living (12) Meet people and socialization (8)
Rest and relaxation	Rest and relax (12) Release work and life pressure (8) Slow down the pace of life (1)	Rest and relax (13) Release work and life pressure (10) Slow down the pace of life (4)
Hedonic experience	Shopping and eating (5) Recreational opportunities (7) Festivals or events (2) Adventurous experiences (4)	Shopping and eating (17) Recreational opportunities (12) Festivals or events (4) Adventurous experiences (12)
Self-development	Broaden horizon and increase knowledge (7) Transform my way of thinking (1) Spiritual pursuit (2)	Broaden horizon and increase knowledge (11) Transform my way of thinking (3) Study abroad (2) Spiritual pursuit (1)
Relationship enhancement	Spend time with family and friends (7)	Spend time with family and friends (6)
Visiting friends/relatives	(5)	(2)

Note: Numbers in the brackets refers to mentioned frequencies during the interview. And the highlights point to the significant differences of motivation characteristics.

Table 9 - Excerpts Comparison of Interviewees' Answers of The Two Similar Motivation

	Social Reform Generation	Only-Child Generation
Seek for novelty	- "I am willing to know other cultures and customs, and it is exciting to see different natural landscapes." (Interviewee 1, female, born on 1969, SRG) - "Through traveling overseas, we could know about other cultures and customs, the way of living of the local people; also, (we could) experience the local life." (Interviewee 13, female, born on 1974, SRG)	- "Traveling abroad is exciting, and the experience is very different from traveling domestically. We could feel freer as we are involved in a different environment, and everything seems novel to me, the streets, the people and the food." (Interviewee 4, male, born on 1992, OG) - I like traveling, as I want to go out to see the world, meet other people, and experience different cultures. And also I want to see the natural scenery in other places." (Interviewee 32, born on 1996, OG)
Rest & relaxation	- "I really like traveling, because I like freedom, and want to relax from daily work pressure. I prefer those destinations that are more quiet so I could slow down the pace of life." (Interviewee 39, male, born on 1967, SRG) - "I love to travel, as I don't need to deal with my work, and could have fun ..." (Interviewee 11, male, born on 1969, SRG)	- "I want to get relaxation in different places, instead of keeping stay at where I live and work all the time." (Interviewee 34, male, born on 1989, OG) - "Traveling for me is to relax, escaping from the daily pressure that comes from work and family." (Interviewee 18, born on 1990, OG)

Figure 8 - Frequency Comparison of Information Sources Between the Two Generations

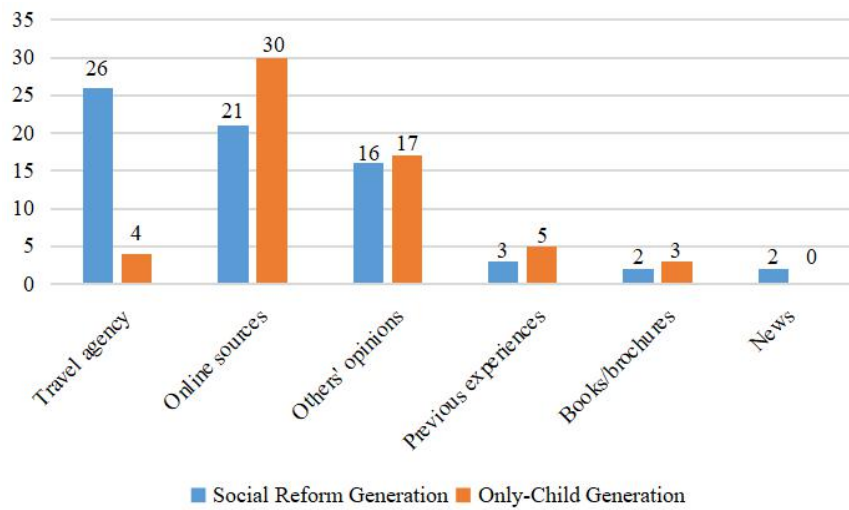


Table 10 - Frequency Comparison of Online Sources between Two Generations

Online sources	Mentioned frequency	Mentioned frequency
	Social Reform Generation	Only-Child Generation
Online search engine	Baidu (19)	Baidu (15)
Online travel agency (OTA)	Ctrip.com (11) Qunar.com (2) Others (3)	Ctrip.com (21) Qunar.com (8) Others (7)
User generated content platform	Mafengwo (2)	Mafengwo (16) Qyer (2)
	Mao Tu Ying (1) (TripAdvisor in China)	Mao Tu Ying (4) (TripAdvisor in China)
Social media	Wechat (1)	Sina Weibo (8) Wechat (8) The Little Red Book (8) Instagram (1)
Other online sources		Dou Yin (2) Zhihu (2)

Note: Numbers in the brackets refers to mentioned frequencies during the interview.

Figure 9 - Frequency Comparison of Preferred Activities Between the Two Generations

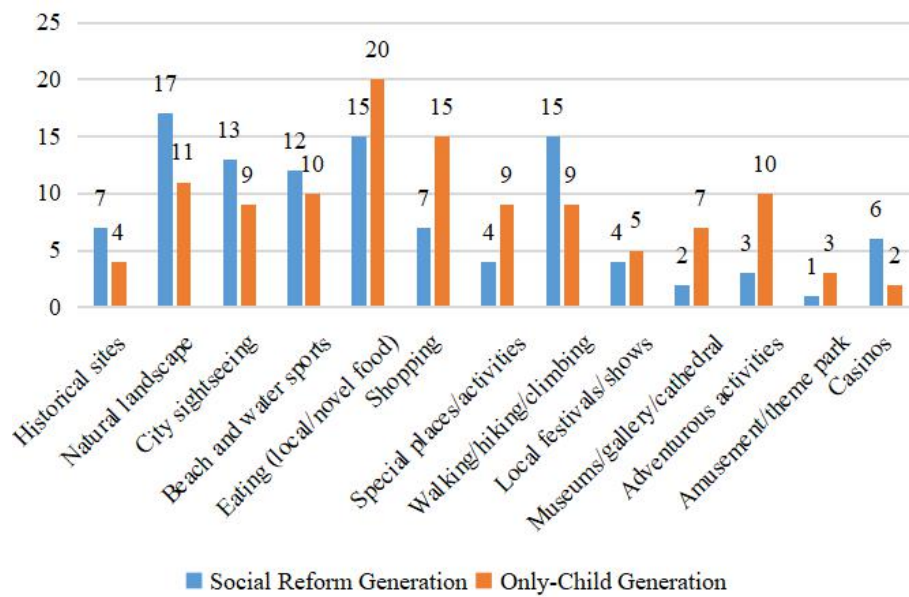


Figure 10 - Frequency Comparison of Destination Evaluation Criteria Between the Two Generations

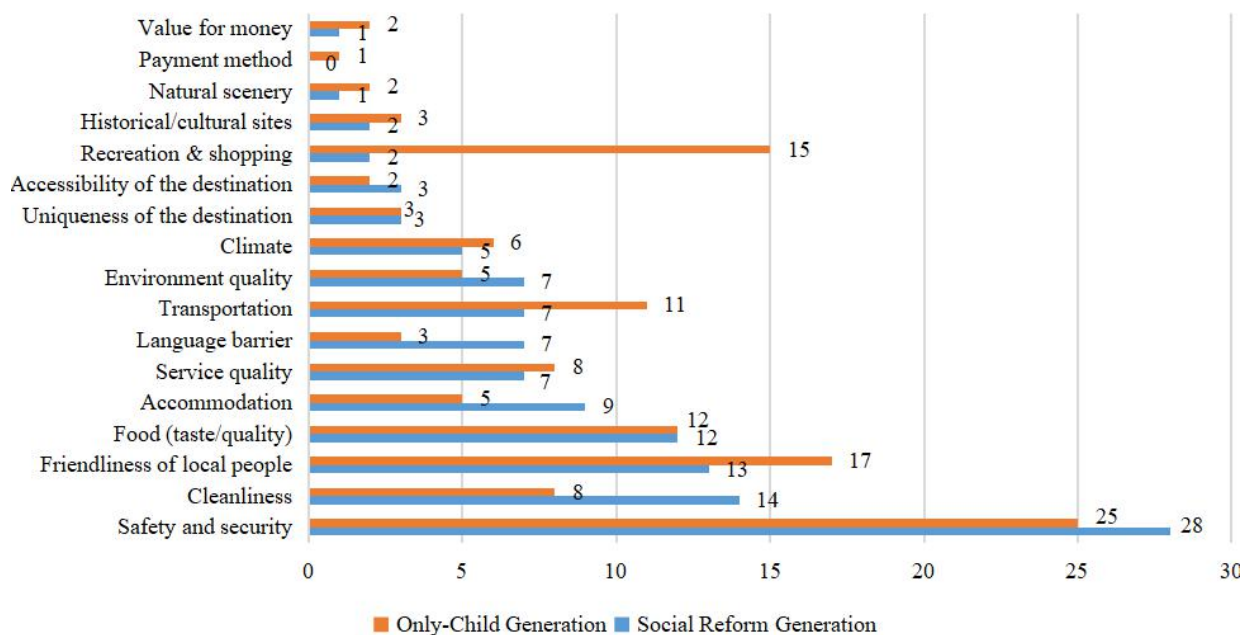


Figure 11 - Frequency Comparison of Intention to Revisit Between the Two Generations

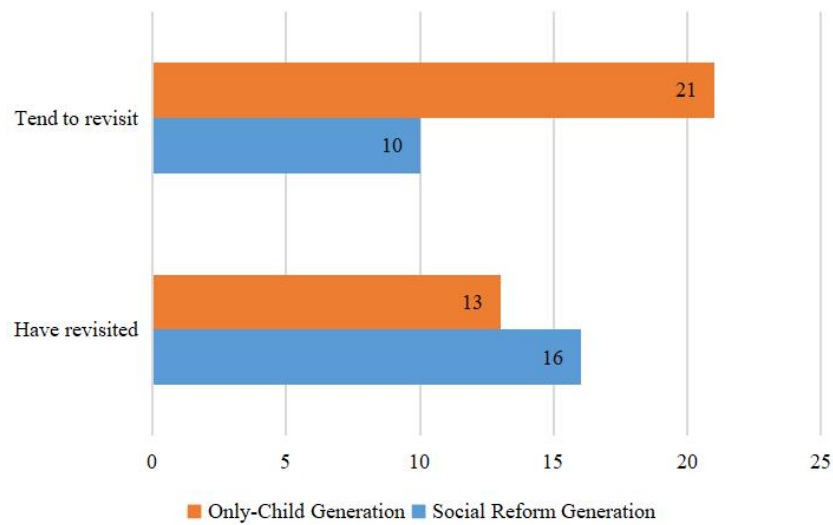


Table 11 - Frequency Comparison of WOM Intention between the Two Generations

WOM intention	Mentioned frequency	
	Social Reform Generation	Only-Child Generation
Intention to recommend	Have recommended ... (8)	Have recommended ... (8)
	Would recommend if asked (6)	Would recommend if asked (11)
Intention to share travel experience	Talk with others (10)	Talk with others (7)
	Share on Wechat “Moment” (9)	Share on Wechat “Moment” (22)
		Share on other online channels (3)

Table 12 - Summary of the Research Findings

Topics	Findings
Preferred travel pattern	Though Social Reform Generation have taken more outbound trips, they actually prefer domestic travel , since they concern about personal safety and language barrier, and they tend to travel in tour group . But Only-Child Generation seems more likely to take outbound trip , and travel independently .
Travel motivation	H1: Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation are similar in travel motivation for seeking novelty and hedonic experiences. (partially supported) They are both mainly motivated by novelty seeking, hedonic experiences, and rest and relaxation. However, to be more specifically, Only-Child Generation is more hedonism-oriented and is more willing to have adventurous experiences.
Information search	H2: Social Reform Generation rely more on travel agents than Only-Child Generation. (supported) This cohort prefer to travel in tour, to reduce their concerns about uncertainty, potential risks, and language barrier. Also, they are not as familiar as using the internet like the younger, and tend to gain information from travel agency directly.
	H3: Only-Child Generation rely more on online information sources than Social Reform Generation. (supported) Supported, as this cohort prefers to travel independently, and they are more tech-savvy, relying heavily on the internet, and further shape a life-long propensity towards learning from more diverse sources (e.g., social media).
	H4: Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation are similar in relying on word-of-mouth information. (partially supported) Chinese are more consistent with the social group with which they identify and rely on the opinions of others. However, while Social Reform Generation mainly focus on offline WOM, Only-Child Generation rely on both online and offline WOM.
Preferred activities	H5: Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation are similar in preferred activities, like historical

	attractions, shopping and local life experiences. (partially supported) They both mainly prefer to see natural landscape, go to the beach, enjoy eating local/novel food, but Only-Child Generation prefer shopping more, and desire for more diverse and special experiences (e.g. adventures).
Destination evaluation concerns	H6: Social Reform Generation and Only-Child Generation are similar in considering the major importance of personal safety, recreational and shopping opportunities, environmental quality and food experience in the destination. (partially supported) They both concern about personal safety, food experience, and also friendliness of local people, but Only-Child Generation prefer shopping more when comparing with Social Reform Generation.
Post-visit behavioral intentions	H7: Only-Child Generation is more likely to revisit and share experiences online than Social Reform Generation after visitation. (supported) This cohort is younger and have more travel opportunities, and they have less concerns about the inconvenience and language barrier. Besides, they are more tech-savvy and rely a lot on internet, especially Wechat, sharing their life. In other words, this cohort is more likely to have positive future behavioral intentions.
Post-visit behavioral intentions	H7: Only-Child Generation is more likely to revisit and share experiences online than Social Reform Generation after visitation. Hypothesis 7 is supported, as this cohort is younger and have more travel opportunities, and they have less concerns about the inconvenience and language barrier when traveling overseas. Besides, Only-Child Generation is more tech-savvy and rely a lot on internet, especially Wechat in daily, sharing their life and photos. In other words, this cohort is more likely to have positive future behavioral intentions.

2) Interview questions

Hello, my name is Rachel. And I am here for my Master thesis. This interview is designed to understand the thoughts and behaviors about the outbound tourists from two Chinese generations: Social Reform Generation (1967-1978), and Only-child Generation (1979-1996), and identify their similarities and differences. About the interview, the whole process is about 20 minutes, and would be voice recorded, but completely confidential, only for research purpose. Your answers would be analyzed during the following data analysis section, but no private information would be mentioned. Therefore, do you agree with doing this interview?

Part 1: Personal background information:

Gender: Birth year: Education level:
Employment status: Occupation: Monthly household income:
Marital status: Family structure:

Part 2: Warm-up questions:

Have you already made outbound trip for a vacation? (Including Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan)

When you want to search information, what sources do you usually use?

When you use the Internet in daily, usually what do you use it for?

Do you rely on your mobile phone in daily?

Could you tell me about your hobby?

What do you usually do in the weekend?

When you have a holiday break, what do you usually do and with whom do you spend most of the time?

Part 3: In-depth questions:

→ Travel pattern in general

1. Could you tell me about your attitude towards traveling?
2. Compared with domestic and outbound travel, which you do you prefer?
3. And why is that?

4. Talking about traveling, usually when do you travel and with whom?
5. What about your travel partner in most recent trips?
6. What type of your previous travel mainly is, independent or group travel/packaged tour (partial or exclusive), or other?
7. And why is that?
8. How frequent do you travel in the past 3 years?
9. How far in advance do you usually plan your travel?
10. Normally who made decisions when deciding things about where and when to go, what to do, etc.?

→ **Travel pattern specifically about outbound travel**

(Including Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan)

11. How do you think about specifically traveling outside Mainland China?
12. Have you taken an outbound trip in the past 3 years?
13. When do you usually travel abroad, and with whom?
14. How frequent do you travel abroad in the past 3 years?
15. What overseas destinations (countries/regions) have you already visited?
16. Which countries/regions did you visit in the past 3 years?
17. What type of your previous outbound travel mainly is?
18. And why is that?
19. Do you tend to visit multiple destinations or simply focus on a specific one?
20. And why is that?
21. How about the average length of your stay?

Part 4: Travel motivation

22. Why you want to travel abroad? / What motivate you to travel abroad?
23. What exact motives are they? (*push factors*) And could you tell me more about the detailed aspect?
24. What attributes would be appealing to you and influence your travel destination choice? (*pull factors*)

Part 5: Information search behavior

25. When you decide to travel abroad, would you recollect the previous experiences and past information searches also?

26. What kind of information source do you usually use when you decide to travel and also during the trip?

27. Could you please tell me about the online information sources you usually use?

28. How do you think about other people's opinions about a destination online and offline?

29. What exact websites or apps you use for searching tourism information?
(Asked if not mentioned before)

30. What kind of attributes would be appealing to you when you search tourism information online?

Part 6: Barriers to travel abroad and destination evaluation concerns

31. What are the barriers and constraints when you decide where to go and what to do?
Please list the ones that you care more about and please explain a bit.

32. During your trip, what do you pay more attention to? Please list them also.

Part 7: Importance of activities and preferences

33. Are the activities very important when you choose an overseas destination?
→ If not, then why not?

34. What activities do you prefer? / What are they and why you consider them that important?

→ Impulsive consumption and gift buying in the destination

35. What kind of unplanned consumption usually exist during travel, and why?

36. What do you think about buying gifts while traveling, is that important for you? →
If not, then why not?

Part 8: Post-visit behavioral intentions

- 37. Have you visited the same overseas destination before?
- 38. Why is that?
- 39. What about your future travel, do you tend to revisit a destination or not?
- 40. Have you ever shared about your experiences or your evaluation towards a destination? → If not, then why not?

Part 9: Future travel plan

- 41. If you plan to make outbound trip in the next 3 to 5 years, what destinations do you want to visit, any preferences?
- 42. What type of travel would you prefer to choose?
- 43. Could you explain the reason please?
- 44. Thank you for all that valuable information, is there anything else you'd like to add before we end?