

## Understanding the cruising experience of Chinese travelers through photo-interviewing technique and hierarchical experience model

Kam Hung

Associate Professor

School of Hotel and Tourism Management

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Phone: (852)34002258

Fax: (852)23629362

E-mail: [kam.hung@polyu.edu.hk](mailto:kam.hung@polyu.edu.hk)

Address: TH705, 17 Science Museum road, TST East, Kowloon, Hong Kong

**Acknowledgement:** *This research project (Project Number: 2015.A6.061.15D) is funded by the Public Policy Research Funding Scheme from the Central Policy Unit of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (Project No. PolyU155027/14B).*

### ABSTRACT

North America has long been the center of cruise business, followed by Europe. However, the increasing interest of Asian travelers in cruises and their affordability motivated destinations to actively develop cruise terminals to accommodate mega cruise ships. Cruise vacation appeals to the Chinese travel population as an attractive travel alternative. However, the mindset of Chinese travelers should be explored further, which is important in the effective design of targeted, attractive, and appealing cruise products. This study photo-interviewed 20 Chinese cruisers from four major cities in China to understand their cruising experience. The hierarchical experience model is proposed based on interview data. The study offers an alternative view of travel experience, which has theoretical and practical significance.

**Keywords:** Cruise tourism; experience; photo-interviewing; photo elicitation; hierarchical

experience model

## INTRODUCTION

The history of North American cruising industry can be traced back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century when Samuel Cunard traveled across the Atlantic with 63 passengers on a 1,154-ton steamship in 1840 (Gulliksen, 2008). Early cruises mainly functioned as transportation from point A to point B. However, this practice diminished because of the growth of airline services in the 1950s (Gulliksen, 2008). Since then, carrying leisure travelers as an alternative revenue source has become a lucrative business strategy for many cruise lines, such as Princess Cruises (established in 1965), Norwegian Cruise Line (established in 1966), Royal Caribbean International (established in 1969), and Carnival Cruise Lines (established in 1972).

Cruise tourism is a thriving business in North America and Europe, but its development in Asia is still at its infancy. The double-digit growth rate in Asian cruise market indicates that cruise has become a new way of travel in Asia and China contributes to the majority of cruise passenger growth (Cruise Lines International Association [CLIA], 2014a; 2016a). Given the potential of cruise business in Asia, many Asian cities have been actively developing cruise business by constructing cruise terminals to accommodate mega cruise ships. For instance, Hong Kong reconstructed the Kai Tak airport as a new mega cruise terminal in its effort to become the leading cruise hub in Asia Pacific. Several new cruise terminals were established in other Asian cities in recent years. These cruise terminals include Tianjin Cruise Terminal, which was established in 2009, Shanghai Wusongkou International Cruise Terminal in 2011, Singapore Cruise Centre in 2012, and Shenzhen Prince Edward Bay Cruise Homeport in 2016. Cruise tourism has become an alternative that provides new experience to tourists and has the potential

of becoming one of the main attractions of a destination. However, the lack of understanding exhibited by Asian consumers toward the cruise tourism market may lead to inappropriate products, marketing strategies, and cruise development policies. Western business models may not be appropriate in Asia, as shown in various examples, such as Hong Kong Disneyland, where the design, operation, and management had to be modified to meet the needs of Asian customers. Therefore, understanding the mindset of Asian customers is vital to the development of cruise tourism in Asia.

China quickly emerged as a key player in the Asian cruise market with 770,000 cruise travelers from 2012–2015. This number represents 66% of annual passenger growth in China (CLIA, 2016a). With the surging interest of Chinese in cruise tourism, China is actively developing ports to accommodate such interest and to gauge market potential. The increasing importance of China in cruise tourism is revealed by not only the increasing number of ports being built in the nation but also the rising number of cruise calls in China and the formation of China Cruise and Yacht Industry Association in 2006. The recent 2016–2017 China Cruise Industry Development Report stated that China has become the second largest cruise market in the world with an exponential increment of cruise travelers in the past ten years. In 2015, the top ten ports in China received 629 cruise calls which represent a 35% increase from the previous year, with 2.5 million Chinese traveling outbound on cruises, representing a 43.9% increase from the previous year. The China cruise market is expected to continue to grow at an average rate of 40% every year. The number of Chinese cruise travelers is expected to reach as many as 5 million in 2020 and 10 million in 2030, eventually ranking China as the top player in the cruise tourism market.

Chinese consumers are eager to experience new products for their enjoyment, and

traveling for leisure is one such new experience. The interest of the Chinese people in experiencing travel can be reflected in the high visibility of Chinese travelers in domestic tourism destinations and international arenas. Therefore they represent a lucrative market to businesses and destinations with high volume of tourists from the mainland Chinese market. The large population base and consumption power of China should, therefore, influence cruise companies and their decisions. The following questions should then be explored: how to integrate cruise vacations into the mindset of Chinese consumers and how to cater for their needs on board. To gain a deep understanding of Chinese consumers' decision-making when choosing their travel products, it is important to understand what they desire from a cruise vacation. This study aims to interpret the cruising experience of mainland Chinese travelers to understand what cruise tourism means to them and what leads to a memorable cruising experience.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Pine and Gilmore (1998) proposed a theory of experience economy that explains a trend of economic center from companies that sell actual commodity, followed with the provision of service, to the staging of a memorable experience for their customers. One important aspect of this theory is the assumption that experience is an economic offering instead of extension of consumption of goods or service. They suggested that creating a memorable and personalized experience could bring economic benefit and differentiate the position of a company among competitors. Four types of customer experience were concluded in accordance with customer involvement tourism events or services and the connection between customers and events or services. Experience with a low level of connection and participation, such as watching a TV show, was termed entertainment because customers are passively receiving information and such

experience is not closely related to them. By contrast, high levels of both dimensions lead to an escapist experience, such as acting in a play. Of these two types, a high level of participation and low level of connection is described as educational experience. A high level of connection and low level participation was concluded as esthetic experience. Immersive theatre is an example of such experience, wherein audiences are part of the scene and immersed in the play, but are not required to actively influence the performance.

In terms of tourism, the concept of experience has been examined by scholars many years before Pine and Gilmore's experience economy. In the 1970s, a polemic of tourist experience mainly focused on the nature of tourism or touristic experience (Uriely, 1997). On the one side of the polemic, scholars (Broostin, 1964; Turner and Ash, 1975; cited in Uriely, 1997, p. 982) argued that modern people seek for superficial act instead of authentic tourism experience. On the opposite side, which is primarily represented by MacCannell (1973; cited in Uriely, 1997, p. 982), they criticized such point of view and believed that modern tourism is a "meaningful modern ritual which involves a quest for the authentic." Cohen (1979) attempted to address this polemic from a sociological perspective and proposed five different tourism experiences based on individual social "center," an absolute reality for individuals, and the individual attitudes toward such an experience. However, despite the successful creation of a theoretical structure of tourism experience, Cohen did not explain the importance of tourism experience and the outcome of enhancing such an experience. In the 1970s and 1980s, tourism experience was more related to the motives of starting a trip rather than the outcome of travel.

Following Pine and Gilmore's definition of experience, later experience literature continued to develop the definition of tourism experience. Schmitt (1999, p. 57) defined experience as "a result of encountering, undergoing or living through things" and to "provide

sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral and relational values that replace functional value.”

Lewis and Chambers (2000; cited in Walls, Okumus, Wang and Kwun, 2011, p.11) considered experience as a general outcome of customer purchase, which is a combination of service, goods, and environment. Andersson (2007) regarded tourism experience as an outcome or linkage of tourism production and consumption. Oh, Fiore, and Jeoung (2007) discussed Pine and Gilmore’s definition of experience and concluded a slightly different result; they concluded that, from a customer’s prospective, experience is “enjoyable, engaging, memorable encounters for those consuming these events.” Mossberg (2007) believed that experience involves customers in different ways, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual.

Early tourism experience literature is characterized by defining and exploring the nature of touristic experience, whereas recent literature is geared toward measuring customer experience and its connectivity with other factors. The use of the term “experiential marketing” by Schmitt (1999) signifies the beginning of the new era of marketing with emphasis on overall understanding of customer needs and experience. Schmitt (1999) proposed a strategic framework for marketing experience, namely, strategic experiential modules (SEMs). He suggested that customers are rational and emotional animals who emphasize the experience they gain during a consumption. Additionally, consumption should be a holistic experience rather than focusing on individual parts. This definition means experiential marketers would aim for a specific experience, such as “grooming in the bathroom,” and consider the commodities or service that could enhance this experience instead of emphasizing individual items in the context, such as shampoo or perfume (Schmitt, 1999, p. 58). Based on this definition, he proposed five components of SEM, namely, sense, feel, think, act, and relate. Sense is related to creating sensory experience to “differentiate companies and products and to motivate customers and to

add value to products” (Schmitt, 1999, p. 61). Feel is referred to as creating affective experience to strengthen the links between positive mood and the products. Think module pertains to the creation of a problem-solving experience that triggers customers’ creativity to create “convergent and divergent thinking” (Schmitt, 1999, p. 61). Act module is related to the actual physical involvement of customers. Relate is a general module that contains all modules, but mainly focuses on concepts outside the customers themselves. Yuan and Wu (2008) examined the relationships between and among three of the marketing strategies outcomes of Schmitt (i.e., sense, think, feel), perceived service quality, emotional value, functional value, and customer satisfaction under a context of F&B service, namely, Starbucks. They concluded that experiential marketing strategies can induce customer satisfaction by increasing experiential value.

Several tourism models were proposed by scholars to demonstrate the means and ends of tourism experience. Aho (2001) proposed a model of experience process in tourism and argued that tourism experience should include the stage of awakening; this stage entails triggering the interest to visit a certain place should be considered the start of an experience process. Interest is strengthened through information gathering and visiting decision is made, which is the second stage. After an actual visit, travelers would evaluate the experience and store physical factors, such as photos, social factors, people to remember, and mental factors, such as impressions of local views, which are the third, fourth, and fifth stage in this model. Travelers would then reflect on the stored factors about the visit and experience they gained, which would enrich their lives. Oh, Fiore and Jeoung (2007) proposed measurement scales for tourism experience based on experience economy theory. Besides discovering measurement instruments for the four types of experience of Pine and Gilmore, they also found a connection between experience and other factors related with tourism; these factors are arousal, memory, overall quality, and satisfaction.

Other scholars applied the measurement or their models to further examine the relationships under different contexts. Mehmetoglu and Engen (2011) examined the relationship under the context of music festival in Norway and suggested that escapism and esthetic experience affect customer satisfaction. Kim, Woo, and Usyal (2015) investigated the relationship among experience, quality of life, and revisit intention among elderly people; they suggested that a satisfying trip experience is positively connected with the quality of life thereby increasing the chance of revisiting.

Quan and Wang (2004) suggested that tourism experience should consists of two parts; one is “peak experience,” which is different from tourists’ daily lives; the other is “supporting consumer experience,” such as food and beverage. They argued that both aspects of tourism experience could be contrasted with intensifying and extending the routine life experience of a tourist. They also used food consumption during travels to prove that both parts are connected, interchangeable, and important in forming tourism experience. Andersson (2007) examined the production and consumption of experience in a tourism setting; this study suggested that the value of experience is the “function of the individual need for basic, social and intellectual experiences in order to stimulate the arousal level at the time the experience take place” (Andersson, 2007, p. 52). Walls, Okumus, Wang, and Kwun (2011) outlined a conceptual model of consumer experience in tourism and hospitality setting; they suggested that consumer experience is influenced by individual characters, situational factors, human interaction and physical experience elements. They also identified two axes of experience, namely, emotive to cognitive and ordinary to extraordinary.

The review of literature suggests that early experience literature is characterized by conceptualizing experience and establishing a ground work for further studies (e.g., Pine and

Gilmore, 1998; Schmitt, 1999; Aho, 2001; Quan and Wang, 2004). Latter studies focus on the development of measurement scale and finding and testing the affecting and ending constructs of tourism experience (Oh, Fiore and Jeoung, 2007; Yuan and Wu, 2008; Kim, 2014; Kim, Ritchie and McCormick, 2012). However, these studies have minimum customer involvement in scale development procedures. The development of measurement items is either based on the conceptualization papers from early publications (e.g., Oh, Fiore and Jeoung, 2007; Yuan and Wu, 2008) or student samples in testing measures that limits the representation of study findings (Kim, 2014; Kim, Ritchie and McCormick, 2012). The settings of empirical studies are either monotonous, such as bed and breakfast (Oh, Fiore, and Jeoung, 2007) and coffee shops (e.g., Yuan and Wu, 2008), or generic, which refers to all types of travel (e.g., Kim, 2014; Kim, Ritchie and McCormick, 2012). Cruise tourism and all-inclusive land based tourism, which integrates multiple functions in one place with a specific unifying theme, has not yet been explored among Chinese travelers. The investigation of such tourism experience is not only crucial for the development of cruise tourism, but also beneficial as a reference point for other types of tourism. Unlike other travel modes, cruise tourism has the reputation of producing consistent high satisfaction among travelers. The report on American and Canadian travelers suggests that 89% of cruisers are highly satisfied with their cruise experience and 86% cruisers plan to take another cruise vacation (CLIA, 2014b). The understanding of what contributes to the experience of Chinese cruisers on their cruise vacation and how their cruising memorable experience can be formed is important to the cruise industry and other land-based tourism that struggle to satisfy tourism experience and repeated visits.

Although some studies addressed travel experience in the cruising context, they did not report the source of experience measures with their use of secondary data, which resulted in

questionable measurement (Li and Kwortnik, 2016). These studies modify measure from elsewhere, such as recreation (Huang and Hsu, 2010), or test experience measure from the bed-and-breakfast industry (Oh, Fiore, and Jeoung, 2007) in the cruising context with self-validation concerns given that the measure was modified and verified with one dataset. The term of experience has been defined loosely in cruising studies with some reference to the perceived value (Yi, Day, and Cai, 2014) whereas others use novelty to represent cruising experience (Chua et al, 2015). In addition, the United States remains a popular research context for cruising studies given its prominent role in cruise tourism (e.g., Han, Jae, and Hwang, 2016; Liu, Pennington-Gray, and Krieger, 2016; Hwang and Han, 2014; Kang et al., 2016; and Hung and Petrick, 2011, 2012). Nevertheless, given the rising significance of Asia in cruise tourism, some investigations on cruising in the Asian context have also emerged in recent years (e.g., Yi, Day, and Cai, 2014; Juan and Chen, 2012; Wang et al., 2014; Chen, 2016; and Sun, Feng, and Gauri, 2014). However, quantitative methods such as surveys are predominantly used in these investigations. Models and hypotheses were developed based on Western literature, and measurements were adopted from past studies in these quantitative inquiries. Such strategy is risky because of our limited understanding of cruise tourism in Asia and of the cultural differences between the East and the West. By utilizing the photo-interviewing technique, the present study identifies key characteristics of memorable cruising experiences among mainland Chinese cruisers.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Photo-interviewing, which is commonly known as photo elicitation, was developed by John Collier (1957) in his seminal work, "Photography in anthropology: A report on two experiments." In the first experiment, he utilized photography to establish a typology for

understanding the distribution of affluence and poverty. In the second experiment, he conducted interviews with and without the use of photographs with Acadian informants to understand the Acadian acculturation process. Photographs helped solicit informant memories, improve clarity of conversations with graphical clues, act as an opener of conversation, and yield precise and rich data compared with traditional interview. By comparing two methods, Collier (1957, p. 853) stated, *“An interview can empty the outer mind of its more absorbing preoccupations, so that it may require time for new feelings to gather. It appeared that photographs stimulated a restoration of expression. The imagery opened doors of memory and released emotions about forgotten circumstances...”* His later writings about photo-interviewing (1979; 1987) further consolidate this method in visual anthropology.

Most human communication is nonverbal (Knapp, 1980; Mehrabian, 1971) and visual images can help informants explicitly convey their information (Zaltman, 1997); thus, interviews with the aid of photos/pictures were used in this study to gain a full picture of the research topic. Photo-interviewing has several advantages over photography and interview standalone methods. These advantages include triggering informants' memories and improving the dynamics of interviews (Prosser and Schwartz, 1998), yielding unpredictable answers (Collier, 1979), bridging cultural differences between informants and researchers (Collier and Collier, 1986), complementing narratives to convey the meaning of an experience (Weade and Ernst, 1990), decreasing power imbalance between the researcher and informant (Packard, 2008), and providing a platform for facilitating conversations with contextual clues (Folkestad (2000, p. 3).

Tourism experience is often subjective in nature. Single analysis of photographs produced during travel limit the scope of our understanding of the subjective experience of tourists given that the voice of tourists is not heard. The interpretation of meanings conveyed in photographs

mainly depend on researchers' analytics. In-depth interview remains a popular research tool in qualitative studies, but the richness of data often depends on the openness of informants and their willingness to share information with scholars. The phrase "A picture is worth a thousand words" vividly suggests the usefulness of photography in human communication. Therefore, the effectiveness of interviews in understanding informant mindset can be further enhanced with the utilization of photography, wherein travel experience and stories can be shared and elaborated with the support of visual clues.

The development of photo-interviewing is a breakthrough in the use of photography in research as photographs were often used as data source instead of a tool to stimulate narratives. The applications of photo-interviewing can be found in a wide range fields including health (e.g., Hurworth, Clark, Martin and Thomsen (2005), education (e.g., Taylor, 2002), and children research (Schänzel and Smith, 2011). Despite the usefulness of photo-interviewing in qualitative inquiries, the method remains underused, especially in tourism and hospitality. This finding is contradictory to the nature of tourism, wherein photography is a major activity of travel for recording memorable tourism experience. With the convenience and advancement of modern technology, photography becomes a norm not only during travel, but also in daily life. Understanding the meanings associated with photos and beyond can help scholars reconstruct tourist experience.

Most photo-interviewing studies use the photographs provided by informants. This technique is also called native image-making (Wagner, 1979) or native photography (Blinn and Harrist, 1991). The photographs may either be taken by informants with instructions provided by researchers or submitted after their experience without prior knowledge of study purpose. The former approach is most commonly seen in literature (e.g., Folkestad, 2000; Schänzel and Smith,

2011; Blinn and Harrist, 1991), but the latter approach was adopted to maintain the purity of experience. However, the disadvantage of this technique is that participants may not record their experience with photos without knowing the study purpose, thereby resulting in information loss (Loeffler, 2004). In this study, informants were contacted after their cruising experience to minimize influence on their experience with advance knowledge of research purpose.

Patton (2002, p. 244) indicated that “there are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry.” The sample size of qualitative studies varies from only one to many depending on various factors including data saturation, the reachability of target sample, and available time and resources. In this study, 20 interviews were conducted in four first-tier cities in mainland China, namely Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen, on the basis of economic income and city competitiveness. Five qualified informants were recruited from each city to ensure a representative sample. The total of 20 samples is considered adequate given its relatively large sample size and data saturation.

Qualifying participants are at least 25 years old to exclude students and underaged individuals from the study and to include potential cruisers. The participants all have an above-average income to include financially viable consumers in the sample. Because cruising is considered a luxury activity, target customers are often high-end consumers. The exact financial profile of Asian cruisers is unknown, and a common income requirement is unnecessary because of different living standards in various cities. Therefore, only an above-average income requirement was set in each city. The interviews were conducted in four first-tier cities in China. The population statistics of each city reveals a near 50–50 gender distribution. Therefore, 50–50 gender distributions were used to select the target respondents. Finally, all participants have taken a cruise vacation within the past 12 months.

A renowned consultancy company with office branches located in the four targeted cities was employed to connect with the qualified samples. This tactic is deemed effective in recruiting qualified informants at local levels. The company recruited qualified members from their database and network. The researcher visited each city physically to conduct interviews in a designated venue prearranged by the company. Each informant was asked to provide background information including their city of residence, age, gender, income, and cruising history to ensure the cohesiveness of samples to the predetermined sampling criteria. To enhance the representativeness of the sample, those who work in cruise-related businesses were also excluded. All participants must provide a photo of them on a cruise ship to verify the authenticity of their cruise travel prior to reaching a sample recruitment decision. The consultancy company hired in the study is not intended to substitute the role of a researcher in data collection. Rather, it is used to facilitate the logistics and ensure the representation of study samples with the enforcement of stringent sampling criteria. Given that qualified samples are dispersed across the country, this tactic is deemed to be more effective than relying on the researcher's sole effort in finding the qualified samples. All the interviews were personally conducted by the researcher without exception.

The qualified candidates were asked to provide photos that are most representative of their cruising experience. Enlarged hard copy of each photo (in A4 size) was made available to facilitate discussion in the interviews. Besides sharing the context and feelings represented by each photo, questions were also asked during the interviews in a flexible manner to stimulate sharing of cruising experiences. Participants were encouraged to describe the content of their experience and feelings and/or not being represented by the photos provided. The interviews were voice-recorded, and the average duration of interview was 63 minutes. Twenty cruisers participated in the interviews and their average age was 41 years old. Among the participants, nine of them have higher diploma, 10 of them are bachelor's degree holders, and one has a

postgraduate degree. In terms of marital status, two are single, four are married without kids, and 14 are married with kids. The average age of their kids is 11 years old. The specific respondents' profiles are provided in Table 1.

-----  
Table 1  
-----

Two types of photography analysis are mentioned in literature; in direct analysis, photos are analyzed as data source, whereas in indirect analysis, the narratives stimulated by photos are used as key data source (Taylor, 2002). The latter approach is commonly adopted in photo-interviews (Cederholm, 2004). The interviews were transcribed verbatim prior to importing them into NVivo 11 for further analysis, wherein photographs were used only as a reference. Following Creswell's (2007) data analysis spiral, data were first repeatedly read to familiarize the researcher with the content and obtain an initial feeling of the data structure. Memoing, classifying, and interpreting were conducted while reading to make sense of the data and drive meaningful patterns. Finally, the results were described, explained, and visualized. The following section presents the aggregated results derived from all interviews. Quotes from some informants are provided to further illustrate the findings.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study reveals some interesting findings about the experience of Chinese travelers with cruise vacation. For most Chinese travelers, cruising is a new travel mode that has not yet reached its full capacity among Chinese population. The exploration of travel alternative to cruise arena contributed positively to the travel experience of Chinese cruisers. The informants

vividly described their appreciation to their cruise vacations, wherein “happy,” “relaxing,” and “impressive” are the most commonly referred terms in expressing their feelings toward cruising experience. Their feelings are resulted not only by the magnificent facilities and activities of cruise, but also by the service provided on board, the freedom to do or not to do anything, their interaction with crew members, and their cultural experience on board and on the land. Most informants are impressed by the size, design, décor, cleanness, varieties of entertainments/food, and pampering service they received on the cruise. The massive and magnificent design of cruise created a “wow” effect among cruisers, especially first timers. Some signature facilities were frequently mentioned by informants including the North Star on the “Quantum of the Seas,” which allows passengers to ascend over 300 feet above sea level to enjoy 360° view. For instance, Ms. Chen from Shanghai mentioned: *“This is a special feature only available on this cruise. You can have a glance at the whole cruise from the sky. The cruise is very beautiful and colorful.”* Mr. Jia from Beijing also noted: *“Many people tried the North Star. It is very new. I wanted to see how tall the ship can be. I feel fun as it can bring people to such a high latitude.”* Other signature facilities also mentioned in interviews include swimming pool, robot cocktail maker, parachute on the deck, surfing, water slide, and Swarovski crystal staircase. The event “Dinner with Captain” is also impressive to respondents, along with shows and performance on the cruise and welcoming ceremony. The narratives reflect that the level of newness and novelty enjoyed in a fun and yet comfortable environment were greatly appreciated by Chinese cruisers.

Informants also enjoyed the convenience of traveling in a cruise without worrying about schedules. In fact, it was most mentioned by informants when stating their reasons to travel with cruise. Chinese people tend to join group tours when traveling to foreign countries because of government policies and their lack of proficiency in foreign languages. The hectic travel

schedule with group tour appears a vivid contrast to the relaxation of cruise vacation where travelers are allowed to do whatever they want and whenever they want. Respondents also appreciate total freedom during cruise vacation with no rules and a fixed schedule to follow. Informants mentioned the abundant performance, activities, 24-hour bar services, and the choice of restaurants/room service. The informants enjoyed being pampered on the cruise. Ms. Zhou from Shanghai noted:

*“You can eat anytime you want. There is no fixed schedule. There are several restaurants for you to choose. You can find snacks easily if you are hungry. You can take the food to your room if you want. The servers would collect the plates from your room after you finish eating.”*

For those who traveled with family, their satisfaction toward cruise usually depends on the experience of their travel companions such as their kids or parents. The narratives of care takers convey their relief from taking care of everyone’s needs during travel with the activities and provisions fitting everyone’s need on board. For instance, Ms. Zhou from Shanghai mentioned:

*“I took my parents with me on my family cruise vacation. If I choose other types of travel, I would feel very tired visiting different places and taking care of my kids and parents. Cruise is more relaxing with a designated room without hurrying to anywhere. It is very suitable for traveling with elderly and kids as they can do whatever they want without me accompanying them. I was sleeping, eating and playing on the cruise. It was very relaxing.”*

The conversations with other informants also revealed the satisfaction of care takers when seeing their kids and family enjoyed the cruise. The full scale of facilities and activities, as well as attentive service, took away the caretakers’ worries of not meeting everyone’s needs. Chinese

travelers have similar cruising experience as their American counterparts. Freedom, escape, and relaxation have been reported in past literature (Hung & Petrick, 2011) as major cruising motivations of Americans.

With the advancement of telecommunication, social connection becomes an inseparable part of life with the boost of social media. Cruising provides an opportunity for people to get away from their usual social environment. Ms. Xi from Shanghai said: *“I purposely did not buy Wi-Fi as I wanted to stay disconnected with the reality during my vacation. I have been so busy. I do not want anyone to find me.”* As informants did not subscribe to telecommunication due to expensive fees, traveling in isolation with regular living environment and social circles turns out to be an enjoyable experience for most cruisers. They enjoyed the pure fun and fully immersive experiences on their cruise vacation and appreciate the simplicity of life in comparison with the busy schedule in normal living. Mr. Fang from Shanghai commented: *“I feel relaxed on the cruise. The air is fresh, and the environment is friendly. Everyone is from different countries. It is like a big family on the cruise despite the language differences. I do not need to think or worry about anything on the cruise other than having fun.”* Cruising differs from other types of travel in the sense that it is a floating resort which is isolated from land by water. The sense of isolation physically, technologically, and mentally produces a feeling of remoteness and detachment from normal living, which may maximize its positive influence on vacation recovery. In their study smartphone (dis)connectedness and vacation recovery, Kirillova and Wang (2016, p. 157) found that “quality of work and non-work social presence are positive moderators in the relationship between destination restorative qualities and vacation recovery.” Future studies could explore if cruising experience and vacation recovery differ between smartphone frequent and light users with/without subscription to Wi-Fi services in a close environment like cruise ship. The

appreciation of disconnection of the Chinese cruisers is contradictory to the emphasis of connectivity during cruise travel in the 2016 Cruise Industry Outlook (CLIA, 2016b), wherein staying connected while traveling has been made as a priority by the cruise industry. Further studies on the preference of Chinese cruisers for connectivity and its impact on their cruising experience are necessary.

Cruise vacation provided cruisers with a chance to contemplate themselves and find their inner self. Self-reflection is often reported among the informants who found their inner peace, worthiness, and happiness via the close contact with nature and local people. Ms. Xie from Guangzhou mentioned:

*“It is just beautiful. Those who live here (Bahamas) should be very happy as they are so close to the nature...I saw a woman hugging her kids in Bahamas and telling them how much she loves them. I was very moved as they were very appreciative of life even though they do not seem to be rich from the cloth they wear...”*

The informants are from four major cities of China where fierce competition and fast pace of living are often depicted. The contrast between their living environment back home and simplicity experienced on cruise vacation results in their appreciation toward life. Cruise is a remedy for them to recover from the stress they experience at home. Seeing the simple lifestyle of others both on land and on board, some respondents realized that happiness can be easily achieved. Mr. Liu from Beijing noted: *“My wife and I usually would order two cocktails and sit in the bar to listen to songs and music. This feeling was wonderful. My mom also did the same. She even danced with other old men when she’s invited...I felt relaxed and happy as life became very simple.”* The narratives reflected the informants’ admirations toward simple living and their dissatisfaction toward the hostile and competitive living environment back home. The length of

the effect of holiday remains unknown until after the vacation is over. A longitudinal study with tracking respondents' feelings may be conducted to understand the long term effect of cruise vacation on travelers. The finding also corresponds to the observation in a well-known Chinese novel "Fortress" (围城) written by Zhongshu Qian (钱钟书) (1947), in which the author used a metaphor, "People living outside the fortress want to explore the world inside the fortress while people living inside the fortress want to escape from the fortress" (城外的人想冲进去, 城里的人想逃出来); this metaphor was used to describe the phenomenon of "single persons want to get married while married people admire those being single." This metaphor is broadly used later in Chinese society to describe the phenomenon that people usually want to escape their mundane environment and pursue things differently from their daily lives. Whether this philosophy is true in the case of cruise tourism should be tested in comparison with other types of land based tourism.

During cruise vacation, Chinese travelers displayed their appreciation of foreign cultures, not only on board but also on land. Their cultural experiences are mainly gained from the constant comparisons of social behavior between foreign passengers and Chinese passengers, foreign environment and Chinese environment, foreign serving staff and Chinese staff, and domestic cruise and international cruise. First, Chinese passengers are accused that they lack social etiquettes, which may result in unpleasant influence on other passengers' cruising experience. Some misbehaviors were reported among Chinese cruisers in contrast to praises of good social manners of passengers from other countries. Second, the narratives of informants reveal the substantial pressure and stress that Chinese people encounter in their normal life. They mentioned their disappointments with the change of lifestyle and landscape in their own living environment and appreciate the natural environment in overseas. For instance, Mr. Fang from

Shanghai mentioned: *“We live in a contemporary society with fast living pace and high work pressure. There are high raised buildings wherever we go in my city. It’s very depressing. The story is completely different on the cruise with amazing views of sky, ocean, and stars. I cannot ask for a better view.”* Ms. Xi from Shanghai also mentioned: *“I feel relaxing when I see the blue ocean. The wind and smell of the ocean are very comforting. Many oceans in China are yellowish. It is a great feeling to be able to see the blue sky and ocean. The air is also more fresh here than in Shanghai.”*

Third, the informants prefer the relaxing, genuine, and pleasant life and work attitude of foreign staff in contrast to their dislike of the mechanic serving style of Chinese staff. They appreciated the attentive and interactive attitude of foreign crew members and are impressed by the high-standard service quality received on board, especially when crew members go the extra mile to satisfy their needs. For instance, Ms. Deng from Beijing mentioned: *“I feel that the foreigner servers are very enthusiastic, friendly and attentive. For example, when I was taking photos at the check-in or check-out counters of customs on the cruise, the customs officers would join me in taking photos. Unlike the standard and mechanic service in China, their services are very genuine, natural, and heartwarming.”* The exposure to new service environment is an eye-opening experience for Chinese travelers. Mr. Yu from Shanghai had embarkation experience in both domestic and international homeports. He compared the different services he received from foreign and domestic service members:

*“The service on the oversea cruise ship is much better than the domestic cruise. When I embarked in Shanghai, most servers are Chinese. I felt like I am owing them money when requesting for their service. The foreign servers are much pleasant in serving you even though they may not understand what you say. I feel that the foreign servers provide good*

*service because they have the genuine interest in helping customers. On the contrary, domestic servers take it as only a job and treat passengers in a standard way.”*

In comparison with novice cruisers, experienced cruisers tend to choose embarkation from a home port in a foreign country instead of a Chinese home port to gain more in-depth cultural exposure by meeting people from other countries and fully immerse themselves in a foreign environment. While such a desire to learn and experience other cultures is similar to American cruisers in Hung and Petrick's (2011) study, the desire of Chinese cruisers to learn other cultures is speculated to be stronger than their American counterparts given that cruise vacation is a relatively new phenomenon in Asia. Cross-cultural comparison studies should be conducted to understand the differences between Chinese and foreign cruisers.

Despite their satisfaction toward cruising, Chinese cruisers also look for authentic Chinese food, language assistance, hot drinking water and in-room laundry amenities, which reveals their mixed feelings for similarities and differences during travel. On the one hand, Chinese travelers prefer their cruise experience to differ from their normal forms of travel. On the other hand, they prefer cruise companies to provide them the service with considerations of Chinese elements. Such a dilemma is also reflected in their eagerness to go on another cruise vacation to resume the great cruising experience, but they do not want to go on the same cruise ship or with same itinerary as previous cruise vacation. The optimal distinctiveness theory (Brewer, 1991), wherein people often desire for both similarities and differentiation in their negotiation of social identities is in line with this dilemma. Further investigation will need to be conducted in exploring the optimal state of Chinese travelers in cruise vacation.

Cruise vacation is nonetheless imperfect. Some defects have also been reported by respondents, such as limited time on land for excursion, brief experience of local culture, lack of

language assistance on some cruise ships, irresponsible tour guides, and unclear instructions. However, respondents generally think that these are not fatal to their cruising experience and their high satisfaction toward their cruise travel remain. Further studies on understanding the factors that lead to an overriding experience of travelers despite service failures will be interesting. Comparisons between customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction in case of service failure will contribute to the body of service literature and practice.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study explored the meaning of cruising to Chinese travelers with the use of photo-interviewing technique. The results vividly convey a hierarchical structure of cruising experience of Chinese cruisers as shown in Figure 1. The first level is the *initial experience* of cruising, wherein passengers have direct contact with various features of cruise travel. Cruisers are impressed not only by the physical attributes of cruise ship, but also its convenience, pampering service, and close contact with nature as well as their exposure on the land. The physical, technological, and mental disconnect from the real world are also included in the cruising experience.

-----  
Figure 1  
-----

The totality of various features of cruise vacation is fundamental to establish an advanced level of cruisers' sentiments, wherein they found that cruising is fun, comfortable, and has certain level of newness/novelty comparing to other types of travel. This level of experience is called *levitated experience*. In this hierarchy, cruisers enjoy total freedom at doing whatever and

whenever they want. The sense of freedom derived from the abundant dining options and different activities and entertainments among which doing nothing is perfectly fine. Cruising is a stress reliever in the sense that travelers feel much relaxed during their cruise vacation. This finding is especially true for care takers who usually need to worry about the well-being of others during travel. The sense of detachment due to the disconnect with mundane environment turns out to be a positive contributor to their immersive cruising experience. Cultural learning and appreciation are derived from their constant comparisons of the level of foreignness and Chineseness on the aspects of passengers, serving crews, living environments, and cruise ships. This vivid contrast advances their cultural learning and appreciation both on board and at land. Via land excursion, Chinese cruisers also appreciate the simplicity of life, which is greatly missed in their daily life.

In the ultimate level of cruising experience, cruisers have a chance to contemplate on their lives during travel in which they found their inner peace, self-worthiness, and happiness of life. However, the derivation of *ultimate experience* should not be regarded as autonomous as not every cruiser would go through all experience levels. Different cruisers may have different levels of experience depending on their psychological and emotional conditions, their encounters during the trip, and their observations and reflections during travel. Therefore, customer satisfaction may be generated at any level of the experience hierarchical model. The development of the hierarchical experience model coincides with the Benefit Chain of Causality model developed by Tinsley and Tinsley (1986), wherein a hierarchical process was suggested for production of leisure benefits. This model postulates that psychological needs, which are gratified through leisure participation are intermediary benefits in a chain of benefits associated with leisure behavior rather than the end products of a leisure experience (Driver, Tinsley and

Manfredo, 1991).

The hierarchical experience model of cruising provides an alternative view for the understanding of travel experience. In past literature, experience was commonly interpreted from the horizontal point of view in which the constitution and dimensions of experience are the foci of investigations. Although the four experience dimensions of Pine and Gilmore (1998) remain a useful structure for understanding the concept of experience, this horizontal view of experience treats it as a static concept without considering the interplay of experiential components and the evolvement of travel experience. Data from this present study reveal a vertical view of experience in which three levels of cruising experience are identified. Whereas the horizontal view of experience focuses more on exploring the spectrum of travel experience, the vertical view pinpoints the depth and interactions of these experiences. However, this study did not explore how individuals in cruise vacations who are likely to attain a particular level of experience formulate different cruising experiences, if those at the high levels of hierarchical experience model are more satisfied with cruising than those at lower levels, and how the cruising experience may differ from other land-based travel experiences with reference to the hierarchical experience model.

Experience-based management is advocated in the study for the consideration of the cruise industry, other land-based tourism facilities, and hospitality sectors. The sharing of respondents reflects their various experiences and feelings during travel. However, this information may be too scattered to be useful for practitioners. With the hierarchical experience model, practitioners can target the level of experience they aim for their customers to achieve and invest their efforts. In a controlled environment such as cruising, experience-based management may be easier than other land-based tourism facilities because of the nature of

multiple service providers on land. Further study of travel experience with land-based tourism is necessary to validate the hierarchical experience model.

In conclusion, Asia is a new arena where the new synergy of cruising tourism is displayed. China plays a crucial role in this movement due to its vast interest in cruise travel, its large traveler base, and its recent investment in developing cruise tourism. However, our understanding of the Chinese mindset in cruise tourism is limited due to the lack of research in this area. Although some attention has been given to the Asian cruise market in recent years, the investigations are mainly quantitative in nature with the direct application of Western concepts and measurements to these inquiries. This approach is incompatible with the initial stage of cruise development in Asia and our undeveloped understanding of Chinese cruisers. This qualitative study does not make any presumptions in the investigation. Instead, with the use of the photo-interviewing technique, this present study proposes a different perspective to understand consumption experience in the context of tourism.

## REFERENCES

- Aho, S. K. (2001). Towards a general theory of touristic experiences: Modelling experience process in tourism. *Tourism Review*, 56(3/4), 33-37.
- Andersson, T. D. (2007). The tourist in the experience economy. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 7(1), 46-58.
- Blinn, L., and Harrit, A. W. (1991). Combining native instant photography and photo-elicitation. *Visual Anthropology*, 4, 175-192.
- Brewer, M. B. (1991). The social self: On being the same and different at the same time. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 17 (5), 475-482.

- Cederholm, E. A. (2004). The use of photo-elicitation in tourism research—framing the backpacker experience. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 4 (3), 225-241.
- Chen, C. A. (2016). How can Taiwan create a niche in Asia's cruise tourism industry? *Tourism Management*, 55, 173-183.
- Chua, B., Lee, S., Goh, B., and Han, H. (2015). Impacts of cruise service quality and price on vacationers' cruise experience: Moderating role of price sensitivity. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 44, 131-145.
- Cohen, E. (1979). Rethinking the sociology of tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 6, 18-35.
- Collier, J. (1957). Photography in Anthropology: A report on two experiments. *American Anthropologist*, 59, 843-859.
- Collier, J. (1979). Visual anthropology, in J. Wagner (ed.), *Images of Information*. Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, California.
- Collier, J. (1987). Visual anthropology's contribution to the field of anthropology. *Visual Anthropology*, 1 (1), 37-46.
- Collier, J. and Collier, M. (1986). *Visual Anthropology*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Cruise Lines International Association (2014a). *Asia Cruise Trends 2014 Edition*. Retrieved on April 25, 2017, from the World Wide Web [https://www.cruising.org/docs/default-source/research/asiacruisetrends\\_2014\\_finalreport-4.pdf?sfvrsn=2](https://www.cruising.org/docs/default-source/research/asiacruisetrends_2014_finalreport-4.pdf?sfvrsn=2)
- Cruise Lines International Association (2014b). *2014 North American Cruise Market Profile*. Retrieved on April 25, 2017, from the World Wide Web

[https://www.cruising.org/docs/default-source/research/clia\\_naconsumerprofile\\_2014.pdf?sfvrsn=2](https://www.cruising.org/docs/default-source/research/clia_naconsumerprofile_2014.pdf?sfvrsn=2)

Cruise Lines International Association (2016a). *Asia Cruise Trends 2016 Edition*. Retrieved on April 25, 2017, from the World Wide Web <https://www.cruising.org/docs/default-source/research/clia-2016-asia-cruise-trends-report-.pdf?sfvrsn=0>

Cruise Lines International Association (2016b). *2016 Cruise Industry Outlook*. Retrieved on June 12, 2017 from the World Wide Web [https://www.cruising.org/docs/default-source/research/2016\\_clia\\_sotci.pdf](https://www.cruising.org/docs/default-source/research/2016_clia_sotci.pdf)

Driver, B. L., Tinsley, H. E. A., and Manfredi, M. J. (1991). The paragraphs about leisure and recreation experience preference scales: results from two inventories designed to assess the breadth of the perceived psychological benefits of leisure. In P. J. Brown, & G. L. Peterson (Eds.). *Benefits of leisure* (pp. 263-286). State College, PA: Venture Publishing, Inc.

Folkestad, H. (2000). Getting the picture: Photo-assisted conversations as interviews. *Scandinavian Journal of Disability Research*, 2 (2), 3-20.

Gulliksen, V. (2008). The cruise industry. *Society*, 45, 342-344.

Han, H., Jae, M., and Hwang, J. (2016). Cruise travelers' environmentally responsible decision-making: An integrative framework of goal-directed behavior and norm activation process. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 53, 94-105.

Huang, J., and Hsu, C. H. C. (2010). The impact of customer-to-customer interaction on cruise experience and vacation satisfaction. *Journal of Travel Research*, 49(1), 79-92.

Hung, K. and Petrick, J. F. (2012). Testing the effects of congruity, travel constraints, and self-efficacy on travel intentions: An alternative decision-making model. *Tourism Management*, 33, 855-867.

- Hung, K. and Petrick, J. F. (2011). Why do you cruise? Exploring the motivations for taking cruise holidays, and the construction of a cruising motivation scale. *Tourism Management*, 32 (2), 386-393.
- Hurworth, R., Clark, E., Martin, J. and Thomsen, S. (2005). The use of photo-interviewing: three examples from health evaluation and research. *Evaluation Journal of Australasia*, 4 (1&2), 52-62.
- Hwang, J., and Han, H. (2014). Examining strategies for maximizing and utilizing brand prestige in the luxury cruise industry. *Tourism Management*, 40, 244-259.
- Juan, P., and Chen, H. (2012). Taiwanese cruise tourist behavior during different phases of experience. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 14 (5), 485-494.
- Kang, J., Manthiou, A., Kim, I., & Hyun, S. S. (2016). Recollection of the sea cruise: The role of cruise photos and other passengers on the ship. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 33 (9), 1286-1308.
- Kim, J. H. (2014). The antecedents of memorable tourism experiences: The development of a scale to measure the destination attributes associated with memorable experiences. *Tourism Management*, 44, 34-45.
- Kim, H., Woo, E., and Uysal, M. (2015). Tourism experience and quality of life among elderly tourists. *Tourism Management*, 46, 465-476.
- Kim, J. H., Ritchie, J. B., & McCormick, B. (2012). Development of a scale to measure memorable tourism experiences. *Journal of Travel Research*, 51 (1), 12-25.
- Kirillova, K. and Wang, D. (2011). Smartphone (dis)connectedness and vacation recover. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 61, 157-169.
- Knapp, M. (1980). *Essentials of Nonverbal Communication*, N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

- Li, Y., and Kwortnik, R. (2016). Categorizing cruise lines by passenger perceived experience. *Journal of Travel Research*, 1-16.
- Liu, B., Pennington-Gray, L., and Krieger, J. (2016). Tourism crisis management: Can the extended parallel process model be used to understand crisis responses in the cruise industry? *Tourism Management*, 55, 310-321.
- Loeffler, T. A. (2004). A photo elicitation study of the meanings of outdoor adventure experiences. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 36 (4), 536-556.
- Mehmetoglu, M., and Engen, M. (2011). Pine and Gilmore's concept of experience economy and its dimensions: An empirical examination in tourism. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 12(4), 237-255.
- Mehrabian, A. (1971). *Silent Messages*, Belmont, CA: Wadworth.
- Mossberg, L. (2007). A marketing approach to the tourist experience. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 7(1), 59-74.
- Oh, H., Fiore, A. M., and Jeoung, M. (2007). Measuring experience economy concepts: Tourism applications. *Journal of travel research*, 46(2), 119-132.
- Packard, J. (2008). 'I'm gonna show you what it's really like out there': the power and limitation of participatory visual methods. *Visual Studies*, 23 (1), 64-77.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). UK: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Pine, B. J., and Gilmore, J. H. (1998). Welcome to the experience economy. *Harvard business review*, 76, 97-105.
- Prosser, J., and D. Schwartz. 1998. Photographs within the sociological research process. In *Image-based Research*, edited by J. Prosser, 115–30. London: Falmer.

- Qian, Z.S. (钱钟书) (1947). *Fortress (围城)*. Shanghai: Shanghai Dawn Publishing Company (上海晨光出版公司).
- Quan, S., and Wang, N. (2004). Towards a structural model of the tourist experience: An illustration from food experiences in tourism. *Tourism Management*, 25(3), 297-305.
- Schänzel, H. A. and Smith, K. A. (2011). Photography and children: Auto-driven photo-elicitation. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 36 (1), 81-85.
- Schmitt, B. (1999). Experiential marketing. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 15(1-3), 53-67.
- Sun, X., Feng, X., and Gauri, D. K. The cruise industry in China: Efforts, progress and challenges. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 42, 71-84.
- Taylor, E. W. (2002). Using still photography in making meaning of adult educators' teaching beliefs. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 34 (2), 123-139.
- Tinsley, H. E. A. and Tinsley, D. J. (1986). A theory of the attributes, benefits and causes of leisure experience. *Leisure Sciences*, 8, 1-45.
- Uriely, N. (1997). Theories of modern and postmodern tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(4), 982-985.
- Walls, A. R., Okumus, F., Wang, Y. R., and Kwun, D. J. W. (2011). An epistemological view of consumer experiences. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 30(1), 10-21.
- Wagner, J. (1979). Introduction: Information in and about photographs. In *Images of Information: Still Photography in the Social Sciences*, edited by J. Wagner, 11–22. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Wang, Y., Jung, K. A., Yeo, G. T., and Chou, C. C. (2014) Selecting a cruise port of call location using the fuzzy-AHP method: A case study in East Asia. *Tourism Management*, 42, 262-270.

- Weade, R and Ernst, G (1990). Pictures of life in classrooms, and the search for metaphors to frame them. *Theory to Practice*, 29, 133–40.
- Yi, S., Day, J., and Cai, L. A. (2014). Exploring tourist perceived value: An investigation of Asian cruise tourists' travel experience. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 15 (1), 63-77.
- Yuan, Y. H. E., & Wu, C. K. (2008). Relationships among experiential marketing, experiential value, and customer satisfaction. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 32(3), 387-410.
- Zaltman, G. (1997), Rethinking Market Research: Putting People Back In. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34 (November), 424-37.

### ***Highlights***

- Photo-interviewing technique is effective in understanding travel experience
- Various levels of cruising experience of Chinese travelers were identified
- The Hierarchical Experience Model was proposed as an alternative model to understand travel experience

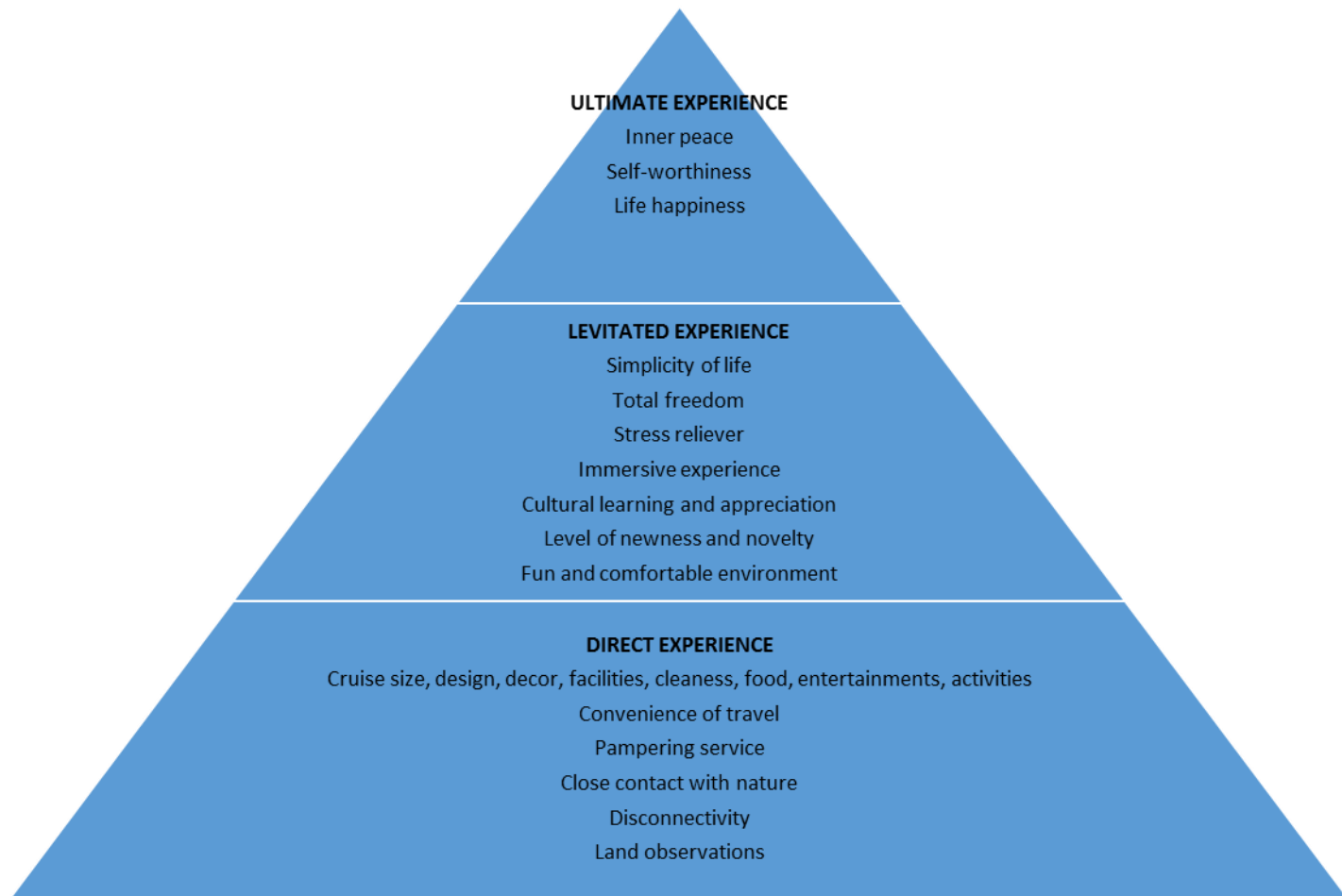


FIGURE 1. HIERARCHICAL EXPERIENCE MODEL

TABLE 1 RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

#	Name	City	Gender	Age	Occupation	Education	Marital Status	Age of child (years)	Homeport city of the most recent cruise	Cruise taken in the most recent travel
1.	Ms. Deng	Beijing	F	44	Manager	Bachelor	Married with kid	14	Milan, Italy	MSC
2.	Mr. Sun	Beijing	M	45	Manager	Bachelor	Married without kid	--	Miami, USA	Norwegian
3.	Ms. Li	Beijing	F	41	Self-employed	Bachelor	Single	--	Tianjin, China	Costa
4.	Mr. Wang	Beijing	M	37	Supervisor	Postgraduate	Married with kid	3	Tianjin, China	Royal Caribbean
5.	Mr. Jia	Beijing	M	37	---	Bachelor	Married with kid	6	Tianjin, China	Royal Caribbean
6.	Ms. Zhou	Shanghai	F	33	---	Higher diploma	Married with kid	4	Shanghai, China	Royal Caribbean
7.	Ms. Cheng	Shanghai	F	42	Supervisor	Bachelor	Married with kid	14	Shanghai, China	Royal Caribbean
8.	Mr. Fan	Shanghai	M	54	Self-employed	Higher diploma	Married with kid	24	Los Angeles, USA	Carnival
9.	Mr. Yu	Shanghai	M	35	Manager	Bachelor	Married without kid	--	Singapore	Star Cruises
10.	Ms. Xi	Shanghai	F	41	Manager	Higher diploma	Married without kid	--	Shanghai, China	Princess
11.	Ms. Xie	Guangzhou	F	35	---	Bachelor	Married with kid	7	Miami, USA	Royal Caribbean
12.	Mr. Wang	Guangzhou	M	35	General Manager	Bachelor	Married with kid	5	Seattle, USA	Holland-America
13.	Ms. Hu	Guangzhou	F	45	Interpreter	Higher diploma	Married with kid	16	Tianjin, China	Royal Caribbean
14.	Mr. Chu	Guangzhou	M	41	Manager	Higher diploma	Married with kid	10	Guangzhou, China	Star Cruises
15.	Ms. He	Guangzhou	F	46	Manager	Higher diploma	Single	--	Tianjin, China	Royal Caribbean
16.	Ms. Jiang	Shenzhen	F	41	Supervisor	Bachelor	Married with kid	5	Shenzhen, China	Princess
17.	Mr. Cai	Shenzhen	M	36	General Manager	Bachelor	Married with kid	2	Hong Kong	Victoria
18.	Ms. Wei	Shenzhen	F	30	Manager	Higher diploma	Married without kid	--	Xiamen, China	Star Cruises
19.	Mr. Yang	Shenzhen	M	55	Self-employed	Higher diploma	Married with kid	25	Xiamen, China	Star Cruises
20.	Mr. Yang	Shenzhen	M	45	Self-employed	Higher diploma	Married with kid	13	Guangzhou, China	Star Cruises