Young adult children travel with parents: Insights on conflicts and the causes

Abstract: Contrary to prior research, this study investigates the darker side of the parents-children holiday to examine travel conflicts in family trips with 18 to 30-year-old adult children and their causes in adult children's eyes. Three-step analysis of interviews and netnography reveal five types of parent- adult children conflicts in pre- and during-travel stage, namely, travel choice and consumption, travel involvement level, schedule, and unreasonable parental behavior. These conflicts are caused by intergenerational differences and personal characteristics. The findings enrich our understandings of the needs and wants of different generational family travelers which can support businesses to design family travel products better.

Keywords: family travel, young adult children, younger senior parents, intergenerational conflict

1. Introduction

Family travel receives growing attention from the literature (Li, Wang, Xu, & Mao, 2017). However, there is limited study in traveling with young adult children. In China, filial duty is highly treasured (Wang, Yi, Wu, Pearce, & Huang, 2018), young adult children tend to have stronger desires to reinforce bonds with parents and respond to the demand of filial duty (Watne, Brennan, & Winchester, 2014). Now, these desires are being implemented in behaviors such as traveling with parents, which leads to an emerging travel market in China (Wang et al., 2018).

A family holiday is always imagined as a happy time, joy, and bliss (Durko & Petrick, 2013; Lehto, Choi, Lin, & MacDermid, 2009). The less happy aspect has not yet received much attention (Gram, Therkelsen, & Larsen, 2018). However, travel is a complex decision-making process (Woodside & King, 2001), requiring the joint participation of tour members (Wang, Hsieh, Yeh, & Tsai, 2004). The rapid development of the economy in China causes family members to grow up in different eras embedded by distinctive culture and social environments, making children and parents form inconsistent beliefs and core values. These may lead to disagreements in their joint travel decision-making. Unlike young children-parents travel, adult children-parents holiday is no longer completely dominated by parents. Hence, the level for disagreements may 'progress' when children are becoming more independent (Watne et al., 2014), causing family trips with adult children to tend to be more conflict-prone.

"Why don't you want to travel with your parents anymore?" asked by a user on Zhihu.com, the most popular online question-and-answer community in China. Many adult users shared their conflicts with parents on family trips, proving that adult children-parents travel is not always harmonious. It generates more stress and disagreements at times (Gram, 2005). Hence, this study stands in strong contrast to prior researches, offers an insight about the dark side of a family holiday to explore parents-children conflict in family trip from young adult children's perspective by answering two questions: (1) What conflicts may arise when young adult children travel with their parents? (2) What are the causes behind these conflicts? Conflicts in this study mean disagreements and contradictions, explicit or implicit, between children and their parents (Susan, Norma, & Weena, 2003).

2. Literature review

2.1 Intergenerational relationship

2.1.1 Family intergenerational relationship: solidarity and conflict

Intergenerational relation is a complex phenomenon (Hogerbrugge & Komter, 2012) because the experience of a parent-child relationship is invariably influenced by the needs and expectations of each family member (Tanskanen, 2017). Identifying the ambivalent feelings, in particular, solidarity and conflict, is a common practice to conceptualize the complex parents-children relations (Dykstra, 2006). Bengtson and Roberts (1991) proposed an intergenerational solidarity concept but was questioned as failing to disclose the simultaneous occurrence of positive and negative feelings in family life (Steinbach, 2008; Vern, Roseann, & Beth,2002). Thus, Vern et al. (2002) developed a solidarity-conflict model to capture the ambivalent feelings in family life.

According to classical sociological theory, the coexistence of harmony and conflict is unavoidable in family ties (Vern et al., 2002; Dykstra, 2006). Although the family is programmed for love, mutual support, and happiness, there is a high probability for family members to have conflicts (Dykstra, 2006, Susan et al., 2003). Researches from different countries have shown that parents and children are likely to experience conflicts over the material and personal issues (Gaalen, Dykstra, & Komter, 2010; Schwarts & Ayalon, 2015). Nevertheless, conflict in parent-children relations should not be equated with poor quality (Gaalen et al., 2010; Dykstra, 2006), because the process of generating conflicts and resolving them has a positive function in improving family relationship (Rook, 2001).

Conflicts in parents-adult children relationships are more widespread than commonly assumed. Adult children, in particular younger adult children, experience more ambivalence toward their parents (Fingerman & Birditt, 2004; Kiecolt, Blieszner, & Savla, 2011). Various researches have studied parents-adult children conflict over living habits, over communication approaches, over career choice, and over caregiving (Susan et al., 2003; Willson, Shuey, & Elder, 2003; Ma, Desai, George, Filippo, & Varon, 2014). The common causes behind conflicts identified by the aforementioned studies including taste and value dissimilarity (Gilligan Suitor, & Pillemer, 2015), knowledge levels difference (Ma et al., 2014), and personal characteristics (Dekovic, 1999). However, whether they can be applied to tourism is virtually unknown, because family travel has mainly generated an optimistic discussion in the literature.

2.1.2 Intergenerational relationship in Chinese families

Harmony is the highest value criterion of Confucian culture. Chinese people possess strong values on intergenerational harmony, "harmony brings wealth" ("家和万事兴") is a popular saying in China. Unlike the intergenerational relationship in Western cultures, there are stronger interdependence and mutual obligation between parents and children in Chinese families (Song, Li, & Feldman, 2008). The core value of Chinese family unity is filial piety (Song et al., 2008). It emphasizes the devotion of children to parents and the subordination of individual interest to family harmony (Guo, Chi, & Silverstein, 2012). Adult children tend to show more filial piety to parents (Wang et al., 2018). When adults get married and have children, their parents will provide more assistance to grandchildren; they live together in multigenerational households. In this extended family system, older parents tend to occupy positions of authority, they have more control over resources, and family decision-making maybe more toward parents.

However, with the rapid modernization and socioeconomic progress, Chinese traditional family system has undergone significant transformations, some of the above descriptions may no longer apply in contemporary Chinese society (Song et al., 2008). A significant number of young adults migrate out and settle in more developed cities for more education and job opportunities (Gruijters, 2017). They emphasize

more on individualistic goals, whereas parents have decreased control over resources and diminished economic status in families (Song et al., 2008). The two generations perform different resistance to the ongoing rapid social changes, triggering more intense intergenerational conflicts (Guo et al., 2012). However, intergenerational conflicts have been studied in Western societies (Susan et al., 2003; Ma et al., 2014), leaving a large research gap in the intergenerational conflicts of Chinese families.

2.2 Family travel

Family travel is an essential builder of family well-being (Watne et al., 2014). Travelport (2020) reported that almost a quarter (23%) of air travel bookings are made by families. Family is one of the most significant segments in the global tourism market (Lehto et al., 2009). Existing literature mainly focuses on a family trip with teenagers (Jamal, Aminudin, & Kausar, 2019; Wu, Wall, Zu, & Ying, 2019), largely ignore families with adult children. However, this particular travel segment deserves more attention because its decision-making progress is different from that of teenagers. Teenager-parents travel is generally initiated by parents, who always consider family holidays as compensation for children due to their frequent absences in children's daily life (Li et al., 2017). Whereas family trips with adult children are usually put forward by adult children, who are motivated by desires to express filial piety (Watne et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2018). They tend to feel obligated to offer money and free time to take parents to travel while parents are still able and healthy (Watne et al., 2014).

Moreover, children's role in family travel decisions changes along with their increasing ages (Li et al., 2017). The older the children, the higher the impact on family travel decisions (Watne et al., 2014). Both parents and adult children are willing to sacrifice to maintain relations and enjoy togetherness (Lehto, Lin, Chen, & Choi, 2012). However, it does not mean the absence of intergenerational conflicts, because adult children have developed their decision-making subprocesses and shaped independent decision-making units to 'take over' some roles, conflicting with the original decision roles in family travel (Watne et al., 2014).

Family travel involves compromise and conflict at times (Li et al., 2017; Gram et al., 2018). As family system theory suggests that the family system is made up of different family members, each with their own needs (Lehto et al., 2009). Although the assessment of family travel decision-making conflict has begun recently, they mainly concentrate on spousal conflicts (Bronner & Hoog, 2008; Rojas-de-Gracia, Alarcon-Urbistondo, & Casado-Molina, 2019; María & Pilar, 2016). Considering the unclear division of decision roles in family trips with adult children, the disagreement between parents and adult children in decision-making may be more profound.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data collection

Two data collection methods were used in this study: netnography and semi-structured interviews. Netnography is a common qualitative research method in tourism studies (Li et al., 2017). Mafengwo.com, the largest Chinese travel user generate comments (UGC) sites, and Zhihu.com, the most popular online question-and-answer community, were selected to collect data. Both websites are recognized as qualified online communities that provide research topic-relevant segment, descriptively rich data, and frequent interactions between users (Wang et al., 2018; Wu & Pearce, 2014). To select the blogs that suit research purposes, one of the authors, who is a native Mandarin speaker and a user of Mafengwo and Zhihu for years, immersed herself in reading blogs about adult children-parents travel conflicts. It was noted that the study only selected online bloggers who look to be in their 20s and 30s. Due to the open-access to bloggers' profile

information, and the high frequency of self-disclosure in blogs (i.e., images, education), it is easy to judge the posters' age spans (Wang et al., 2018). If blog posters did not present all information, the researcher contacted them by sending online messages. Through this interaction, almost all missing profile information was obtained (Wu & Pearce, 2014). Consequently, 68 relevant blogs were identified and retained for data analysis.

The second data collection method is a semi-structured interview. Samples were purposefully selected based on the criterion that each participant should have attended one or more family travel with parents and who must be a young unmarried adult aged between 18 and 30. This age designation was chosen to ensure the interviewees were born in a critical period of society's transition in China from tradition to modernity and have developed their core values. Meanwhile, their parents are young seniors who still have certain decision-making abilities. Disagreements and contradictions in their decision-making may be more obvious. The marital status restriction is to limit the findings to the conflicts between parents and children, preventing other obligations from confounding the intergenerational conflicts (Yeh & Bedford, 2004).

The interview was conducted in mainland China, and interviewees were recruited through colleagues, friends, and relatives to invite the people who are eligible to participate in the interview (Heimtun, 2019). The sample collection lasted for six months from October 2019 to March 2020. Twenty one-on-one interviews had been conducted until theoretical saturation was reached (Hoare, Butcher, & Obrien, 2011). Each interview lasted around 50 minutes on average. The interviews are concerned with the conflicts between the participants and their parents in family travel. The respondents were asked to recall their most recent family trip to identify the nature, causes, and feelings of conflicts with their parents. At the end of the interview, interviewees' demographic information was collected (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographic profile of samples

Demographic		Netnographic (N=68)		Interview (N=20)	
		Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	20	29.41	5	25
	Female	48	70.59	15	75
Travel companion	Mother	24	35.30	3	15
	Father	4	5.88	1	5
	Parents	40	58.82	16	80
Travel form	Independent travel	63	92.65	18	90
	Package travel	5	7.35	2	10
Destination	Outbound	51	75.00	4	20
	Domestic	17	25	16	80

3.2 Data analysis

Data analysis begins with a thorough reading of all texts to familiarize researchers with the data (Li, Xu, & Chen, 2020). Then an indexing method was used to organize the data, disaggregate the mass of texts into related categories, allowing researchers to analyze and code data systematically (Hsu, Cai, & Wong, 2007). Based on grounded theory, a manual coding approach was conducted following a three-stage coding procedure (i.e., open, axial, and selective coding) from the most concrete events to the most abstract processes (Decrop & Snelders, 2005). The initial open-coding phase involved generating concepts. To get concepts as many as possible, salient information categories were identified through line-by-line reading. Constant

comparison between additional data and previously coded were performed throughout the process (Wang et al., 2018). After concepts were generated, axial coding was carried out, different types of connections between concepts were established, and meaningful higher-level structural categories—the abstraction of data—were obtained (Song, Sparks, & Wang, 2016). Finally, at the selective coding level, researchers tried to incorporate connections in broader theoretical propositions (Decrop & Snelders, 2005), and identified more abstract themes. Concepts, abstractions, and themes were refined several times in the course of theoretical development (Song et al., 2016).

The texts were read and decoded based on Chinese, and some texts were translated into English for the citation of quotes during the manuscript-writing process (Li et al., 2020; Li et al., 2017). To ensure the reliability and trustworthiness of the coding, triangulation was adopted (Wang et al., 2018). The first and second researcher coded independently and compared the results thoroughly, for the items and codes where there was disagreement, two coders constantly discussed and negotiated with each other until the agreement was reached. Further, the results were reviewed by the third researcher, multiple runs of decoding, and several reclassifications rounds were undertaken before the final structure was determined (Hsu et al., 2007).

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1 Types of intergenerational conflicts in travel

Four major parents-adult children conflicts were identified; namely, travel choice and consumption, travel involvement level, schedule, and unreasonable parental behavior. All conflicts either occurred in the pre-travel or during-travel stage. Specifically, travel choice and consumption conflicts occurred in both stages the other three types of conflicts only occurred during- travel stage. These conflicts are not completely independent   each other multiple travel conflicts occurred in all interviewees' family trips.

4.1.1 Travel choice and consumption

The participants were unable to reach a consensus with their parents on four issues in the pre-travel stage: destination selection, the duration of travel, travel mode choice, and what to carry for the trip. Specifically, their parents generally prefer a short trip to near destinations, and an all-inclusive package tour. A daughter shared,

"Whether to participate in a package tour is the most common conflict between my parents and me. I prefer independent travel, but my parents prefer group travel because they think it's safer and cheaper." *(informant 12)*

Besides, parents usually bring heavy luggage from home rather than purchasing at the destination. Children usually express strong opposition to this, a lady from Qingdao shared,

"Whenever my mother goes on a trip, no matter how far away, she always prepares a lot of food in advance and then take it to travel. I think it's so troublesome, carrying such a heavy load would make the whole journey tiring, I'd rather pay more to buy on destination." *(informant 7)*

This conflict type also occurs in the during-travel stage. Five "on the spot" frustrations were identified, namely, food, accommodation, activities, attractions, and souvenir consumption. The conflicts over food and accommodation were described in two ways. First, some interviewees located the conflicts in the budget. They complained that their parents prefer "cheap" hotels and food, which contradicts with their emphasis on the comfort and quality of the hotel, as well as the taste and variety of food. Second, the types of

accommodation and meals may be the disturbing parts of the parents-children relationship. Most interviewees said they prefer B&B, but their parents prefer traditional hotels. Similarly, they prefer local flavor snacks that are worth to wait in long lines for them, while parents look for conventional, home-style meals. A son reported,

"I am more inclined to eat local specialties, such as the roast mutton in Xinjiang, and the midnight barbecue in Lanzhou. But my parents still prefer to eat normal rice and vegetables no matter where they go. It made me unhappy." (Informant 6)

The options for attraction and activity were also the subthemes of this conflict type. Parents inclined to select traditional, well-known, and cultural/historical attractions of the destination, but adult children appeared to be more willing to expand horizons through exploring new, emerging, and non-mainstream attractions. Meanwhile, adult children were more likely to be adventurers who sought challenging activities, entertainments, and nightlife activities on vacation (Li, Li, & Hudson, 2013). However, parents always looked for traditional sightseeing activities, and opposed their children's involvement in nightlife activities, as they believed it was risky. A typical comment is,

"When I arrived at a destination, I liked to see its night scenery, but my parents were against. They thought we were in a strange city and it was not safe for a single girl to go out alone. I felt very unreconciled since I have come here but couldn't see the night scene." (Informant 7)

In addition, souvenir consumption was another frequent conflict. Adult children claimed their parents couldn't resist buying souvenirs once they were in the gift store. They argued that souvenirs could be bought online and didn't need to be purchased at the destination due to the higher price and increased burden. A lady from Shanxi offered a classic quote,

"My mother spent 20,000 yuan buying a latex mattress in Guilin, Guangxi. I strongly suspected it was not worth 20,000 yuan. Hence, I firmly opposed her, but she insisted on buying it, this made me very angry." (Informant 10)

4.1.2 Travel involvement level

Some interviewees noted that their parents had limited enthusiasm for participating in tourism activities. They do not appear to enjoy activities, sometimes even abandon tourist activities halfway, which have been arranged before the trip. A son complained about his father that,

"We have planned to climb the mountain, but when we arrived there, he did not want to climb but just sat at the foot of the mountain to wait for us. Besides, we planned other activities, such as hiking, he wasn't fully involved either; it was a wet blanket for my mother and me because of his absence." (Informant 9)

Photography involvement is another conventional conflict in family trips with adult children. Many interviewees complained that their parents were too fond of taking pictures on the trip. They felt impatient when their parents kept asking them to take pictures. A son described his parents that,

"I don't understand why my parents love taking pictures so much. More than a thousand photos were taken on each trip. It wouldn't matter if they just took pictures by themselves, but I would feel very angry if they always ask me to take photos for them, particularly when I was admiring the scenery." (Informant 15)

The involvement of an information search was also a common conflict in family travel. Parents are less likely to use the Internet to seek tourism information or purchase travel-related services when the trip involves their adult children. Hence, adult children become the main actors of the information search. Some

interviewees complained their parents showed no gratitude, understanding, or even recognition for their hard work. However, this conflict is found to be implicit because adult children are reluctant to express their inner feelings to parents. The potential reason may be children are willing to be subject to authoritative filial piety (Hazel, 2005), which accentuates submission and hierarchy, and has been associated with indebtedness to parents, impulse control, and inhibition of self-expression (Yeh & Bedford, 2004). A daughter observed,

"Information seeking is completed totally by myself. It is very stressful for me because each of them puts hope on me. If I don't do well, the whole journey will be unhappy or tired, but even if I do well, they will not say, "you are great," they take it for granted." (Informant 12)

4.1.3 Schedule

The schedule of travel is an essential trigger for conflicts on a family trip. This finding is consistent with Li, Mccabe, and Li (2017), who discover that younger travelers prefer a relaxing schedule with more free time but fewer tourism attractions, while senior travelers prefer a tight schedule with more scenic spots. A man from Chengdu in his 27 shared,

"My parents almost want to see all attractions of the destination, but I prefer a relaxing travel schedule. I want to slow down to experience the culture of the destination. If the schedule is tight, I will feel tired so that I won't have fun." (Informant 6)

Young people nowadays prefer flexible schedules; they tend to stay up late, wake up late. While their parents use to go to bed early and get up early. Thus, when they travel together, the difference between their rest time schedules may trigger conflict. A female participant complained about her father,

"I won't go to bed until 1:00 AM and get up at ten. However, his habit is to go to bed at 7:00 PM, and get up at 5:30 AM, even when he is traveling! My god! Every time I travel with him, he would wake me up very early! I feel extremely uncomfortable!" (Informant 3, Netnography)

4.1.4 Unreasonable parental behavior

Unreasonable parental behavior may result in conflict. Some interviewees mentioned that their parents sometimes break the public order, making them angry and embarrassed. These behaviors include crossing the street without following traffic lights, waiting for public transportation without lining up, refusing to follow tour guides on a package tour, and littering carelessly in scenic spots. A young adult female in her 28s offered,

"My father spit in the scenic spot! I don't think this is something my dad should do. It was so embarrassing that I stopped him immediately and forcibly!" (Informant 7)

4.2 Integrating the conflict and its causes

The causes of parents-adult children conflicts in children's eyes can be fell into two groups, namely, intergenerational differences and personal characteristics. The integration of conflicts and their causes is shown in figure 1. Each type of conflict may result from different intergenerational differences, whereas personal characteristics influence the overall frequency and level of conflicts. Intergenerational differences stimulate parents-children conflicts that have been verified in the previous study (Susan et al., 2003). As children grow older, they build their definitions of vacation with their expectations and motives, which may differ from those of their parents (Decrop & Snelders, 2005). Personal characteristic factors include characteristics of parents, and characteristics of children, which has also been regarded as essential triggers

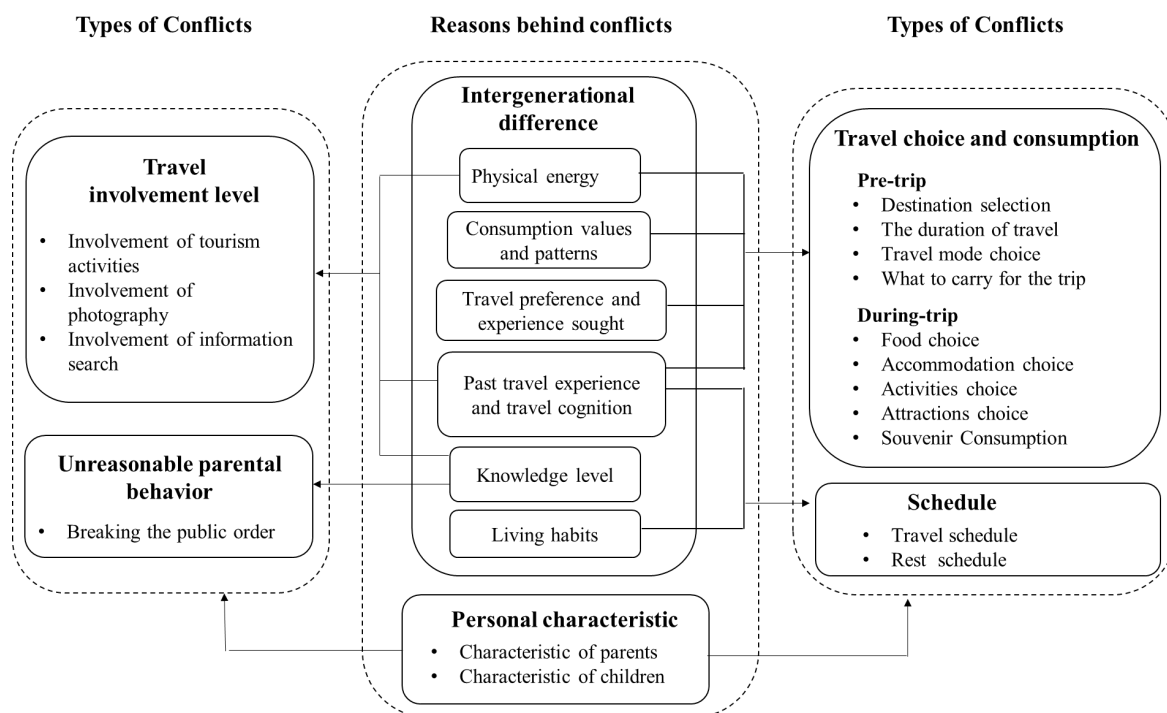of parent-child conflicts (Dekovic, 1999).

Figure 1. Integrating the conflicts and their causes

4.2.1 Intergenerational differences

4.2.1.1 Consumption value and pattern

Consumption value was defined as the consumers' perceived attribute of importance to a product or service (Awuni & Du, 2016); it resulted from an individual's growth environment (Moore-Shay & Berchmans, 1996). Research has shown that consumers value could predict and explain their consumption patterns (Li et al., 2013; Choe & Kim, 2018). For those individuals who experience similar events then exhibit identical consumption patterns (Elisa, Losada, & Carlos, 2016). Parents' generations had experienced a period in their life when resources were limited. They, therefore, formed a thrifty spending habit throughout their lifetime (Wang et al., 2018). They were price value-oriented and conservative in consuming non-essentials, including traveling. However, adult children grew up in an era where the resources were relatively abundant. Emotional value-oriented hedonic consumption patterns and desires for consumption experiences are typically their characteristics (Leask, Fyall, & Barron, 2014). The difference between their price sensitivity may trigger conflicts.

Parents appear to prefer a short trip to a close-to-home destination and refuse to spend too much on accommodation and foods during the travel because their thrifty habits focus them on cutting down the vacation budget. These consumption patterns contradict adult children's, ultimately resulting in conflicts (Jennings, Cater, Lee, Ollenburg, & Lunny, 2010).

4.2.1.2 Travel preference and experience sought

Travel preference is one of the elements of travelers' attitudes and perceptions; it can be recognized by where travelers go and what travelers do (Yong & Leo, 2005). Significant differences in travel preference

among generations have been confirmed in previous studies (Li et al., 2013; Lehto, Jang, Achana, & O'Leary, 2008). These tend to create parents-children conflicts in family travel decision-making. The younger group is 'experience seeker' (Leask et al., 2014) who prefer in-depth tours, seek physical stimulation, and immediate gratification (Fiona & Virginia, 2015). However, parents are more sedate traditional and pursue static sightseeing activities (Lehto et al., 2008). They are nostalgia prone and health-oriented, prefer travel activities that contain nostalgic and health-preserving values. These differences, consequently, generate disagreements on the selection of destination, attraction, and activity in their joint travel decision-making.

The younger generation is considered to be more likely than the older to seek novel experience while on vacation (Lehto et al., 2008). They are open-minded and more comfortable with change and diversity. Due to long rooted in traditional values, parents are more conservative-minded to be satisfied with the behaviors they have always had. This difference, to some degree, generates conflicts over accommodation and food type in family travel. The younger generation prefers to try local novel cuisine and accommodation, whereas parents prefer to choose conventional food and accommodation.

4.2.1.3 Past travel experience and travel cognition

Young adults and parents are two groups who grew up in different tourism development phases in China. Parents in this study were born between 1960s and 1970s when the tourism industry in China was in its infancy (Fiona & Virginia, 2015). Travel in that period purely means sightseeing; this determines the shallow level of travel cognition of parents. However, young adults were mainly born in 1990s when the improved economic position, lifestyles, and political events all put the travel industry in China at an advantage. Travel no longer refers to sightseeing, but a variety of experience activities. Tourism, in adult children's view, has been a lifestyle (Tsaura & Yen, 2018). Thus, their cognitions of travel have changed a lot from their parents.

The backward travel cognition makes parents think that tourism is just to visit scenic spots, other experiences (i.e., eating and living) don't matter at all. Hence, the selection criterion of lodging and meals for parents is relatively low just to meet the needs of residing and appease the hunger. However, adult children highlight the interconnectivity of the entire visit experience (Jennings et al., 2010). They are willing to pay more for high-quality room and board service. Moreover, the limited travel experiences of parents make them recognize traveling as a hard-earned activity. To make the trip worthwhile, they prefer a tight schedule and a high frequency of photography, focus on visiting attractions and taking photos as much as possible in limited time.

4.2.1.4 Knowledge level

Knowledge in this study refers to not only the travel related knowledge but also the ability to apply mobile technology and the sense of social responsibility. Young adults grow up in a time where the Internet is embedded in all aspects of their lives. They are described as "tech-savvy" who engage in online information search before making a purchasing decision (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). Hence, adult children tend to be responsible for the travel information search. Conflicts may arise if their efforts are not acknowledged by their parents.

Young adults have become a civilized generation who has keen civilization standard consciousness, environmental awareness, and social morality sense. According to the theory of intergenerational values change, the individual's fundamental values are formed by the socioeconomic conditions of one's childhood, and adolescence (Egri & Ralston, 2004). Parents in this study were born in a less-civilized period with limited educational opportunities; they, therefore, have limited knowledge of social responsibility and environmental

protection. Their less-civilized behaviors during the trip, such as breaking traffic rules, littering and spitting, may result in adult children's antipathy and disagreements.

4.2.1.5 Physical energy

Physical energy is considered as another element leading to parent-child conflicts regarding travel choice and activity involvement. It negatively correlates with an individual's propensity to travel long distances (You & O'Leary, 2000). Parents who have less physical energy than adult children are unwilling to visit long-distance destinations and travel for a long duration. Besides, they tend to have a diminished propensity to pursue the high involvement level of activities and even give up attending scheduled activities because of physical exhaustion at times. This may make the adult children who spent more efforts to prepare the trip and value family time dissatisfied, resulting in conflicts between parents and adult children.

4.2.1.6 Living habits

Almost all interviewees claimed that they had experienced sleep schedule conflicts with parents during the trip because of their different living habits. They tend to stay up late and get up late, which contradicts their parents' sleeping schedule. "Nightbird" is young adults' typical characteristics, keeping late hours as their daily routine habit. Upholding traditional habits is associated with the parents' generation; they tend to go to bed early and get up early to maintain a regular sleep schedule, even if they are on vacation.

4.2.2 Personal characteristic

Personal characteristics can be divided into two aspects: characteristics of parents (i.e., parenting style, temperament) and characteristics of children (i.e., filial piety). An ineffective parenting style might contribute to parents-children conflicts. If parents are perceived by the children as uncaring and unsupportive, the conflict will be more common (Dekovic, 1999). Otherwise, if parents are perceived as tolerant and warm, the conflict may be less likely to occur. Such as the informant 1, a Jinan girl, said that she seldom had conflicts with parents on family trips, because her parents show great tolerance and support to her. Another characteristic of parents leads to conflicts in the family trip is temperament. Since impulsivity could contribute to parents-children conflicts (Dekovic, 1999), parents who easily become angry at minor annoyances and have trouble controlling their impulses would elicit overt conflict more frequently.

The filial piety of adult children is also examined as an independent contributor to conflicts. Just as Chinese traditional belief "benevolent parents and filial children" (Wang et al., 2018), the more children emphasize filial piety, the fewer parents-children conflicts will occur. That's because filial beliefs play a particular role in decreasing the self-centered attitude of children, which then reinforces their obligation of obeying to their parents (Yeh & Bedford, 2004). Informant 3, for example, showed a solid sense of filial piety to parents, and she always prioritized parents' demands in decision-making, which significantly reduced the occurrence of conflicts.

4.3 Reaction to the conflicts

This domain provides insight into the psychological reaction of adult children to conflicts with parents. It was surprising that the conflicts had a limited impact on children's overall travel experience. Although negative emotions, such as unhappiness, impatience, or uncomfortable, may be caused by the conflicts, they are short-lived and soon disappeared. The psychological reaction of adult children towards conflict goes through a dynamic process: 1) experiencing negative emotions at the moment, 2) showing understanding to parents when they calm down, and then 3) experiencing a regret or guilt emotion after a while during the trip.

Three main factors generate feelings of regret and guilt, namely, collectivism, reciprocity culture, and filial piety. Collective culture prevails in China, emphasizing cooperation, and in-group goals over personal goals, leading Chinese people to be interdependent and concerned with their influences on others (Wang et al., 2018). Therefore, adult children's guilt towards parents may be shaped by considering that conflicts can bring psychological harm to parents. Further, influenced by reciprocity culture, adult children may feel obligated to repay their parents who sacrificed to raise them (Wu et al., 2006; Ma et al., 2014). Meanwhile, they place a high value on filial piety and consider the family trip as a fulfillment of filial obligation for their parents (Wang et al., 2018). Hence, when they realized they didn't give parents' expectations priority, they might develop a feeling of indebtedness.

5. Conclusions

This study explored the intergenerational conflicts in family travel with young adult children. As a foundation study about parents-adult children conflicts in family travel, the research contributes to the literature in several ways. First, when it comes to family vacations, a noticeable amount of discussion on the family with young children, while research on young adult children is scant (Watne et al., 2014). This study advances the current understanding of family vacations by focusing on young adult children-parents travel. It no longer supports the "children will be king" in decision-making (Decrop & Snelders,2005), but has its unique characteristics result from joint decision-making. Second, the study stands in strong contrast to previous studies where family travel is viewed positively (Lehto et al., 2009), and the first attempt to examine intergenerational conflicts of family travel, which proves the point that active participation of the family members in decision-making creates a potential for conflict (Dong & Li, 2007). Meanwhile, it further confirms the two sides of the generational relationship: solidarity and conflict co-exist.

Last, the results of this study confirm that tourists' generational characteristics could affect their decisions and behaviors related to travel (Gardiner, King & Grace, 2013). Meanwhile, it provides new evidence on Chinese tourists' behaviors of parents' generation. In the Western context, the older generation emphasizes service quality and is willing to pay more for excellent service (Li et al., 2013). While the older generation in China have suffered economic poverty in their childhood and are more price-sensitive in travel consumption. Further, this study highlights filial piety and reciprocity as the core cultural values in China (Ma et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2018). Some participants were found to feel a sense of guilt and regret after conflicts once they remember the efforts and sacrifices that parents have paid for them.

The current study provides practical implications for tourism marketing. First, it may assist with the design and innovation of family travel products. As indicated in this study, intergenerational differences (i.e., travel preference and experience sought, etc.) are the main causes of parents-adult children conflicts. The destination organizations may consider the diversified preferences and needs of different generations in a family. Second, young adult children are found to be the main initiators and information seekers of family travel in this study. Meanwhile, they are eager to repay parents and fulfill their filial duty by traveling with their parents. Therefore, it is practical for tourism operators to target young adult children to promote family travel products and services. Third, the study indicated that the shallow level of travel cognition of parents had limited their travel choice. Destination organizations should develop various strategies to improve parents' travel cognition by offering a series of experiences activities, thereby stimulating their tourism consumption. Besides, parents' generations prefer to get up early and arrange a tight travel schedule. Destination marketing organizations (DMOs) can offer some activities which are suitable for parents.

6. Limitations and recommendations for future studies

This study is not without limitations. First, research mainly focuses on the family with young unmarried adult children. However, adults will appreciate their parents more after they get married (Wang et al., 2018). Future research may compare married and unmarried adult children in terms of their conflicts with parents on family trips. Second, parents-adult children's conflicts may vary across family members' demographic backgrounds and types of trips, none of which was taken into account. Future research may incorporate these into the empirical validation of the proposed framework. Last, it would also be meaningful to explore from the perspective of parents, investigating whether the conflicts and their causes are perceived as the same.

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