

1 Exploring Chinese Tourists' Well-being through a Confucian Lens: A 2 Multi-Focal Model

3 通过儒家视角探索中国游客幸福感：一个多焦点模型

4 Abstract

5 Despite exponential growth in research interest on the psychological benefits
6 derived from travel experiences, existing conceptualisations of well-being in
7 tourism predominantly adopt western perspectives. This conceptual paper
8 proposes a multifocal model for understanding tourist well-being through a
9 Confucian lens. By comparing the five cardinal Confucian virtues with
10 Aristotelian well-being perspectives, this multidimensional framework
11 integrates traditional and modern well-being insights, depicting eleven
12 dimensions of Chinese tourists' psychological well-being. This manuscript
13 contributes a multi-focal model of Chinese tourist well-being, which extends the
14 traditional one-dimensional Confucian perspectives on well-being towards a two-
15 dimensional framework which includes eudaimonic and hedonic aspects. Future
16 studies should conduct empirical work designed to clarify conceptual and
17 terminological ambiguity and advance discourse on the integration of eastern
18 perspectives into the study of tourist well-being.

19 **Keywords:** Chinese tourism, Confucianism, well-being, hedonic, eudaimonic,
20 PERMA

21 摘要：尽管对旅行体验带来的心理益处的研究兴趣呈指数级增长，现
22 有的旅游幸福感概念主要采用西方观点。这篇概念论文提出了一个通
23 过儒家视角理解游客幸福感的概念性框架。通过对亚里士多德幸福感和
24 儒家五大基本美德的讨论和比较，这一多焦点模型融合了传统和现
25 代的游客幸福感洞见，描绘了中国游客心理健康的多个维度。该模型
26 将传统的一维儒家幸福感观点扩展到包括幸福感和享乐感方面的二维
27 框架。未来的研究应开展实证工作，旨在澄清概念和术语的模糊性，
28 并推进将东方观点融入游客幸福感研究的论述。

29 关键词：中国旅游、儒家、福祉、享乐主义、幸福主义、PERMA

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33 1. Introduction

34 Promoting well-being and healthy lives for all is a crucial objective outlined in the
35 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 3) (United Nations [UN], 2024), which
36 requires efforts across various disciplines. (e.g., Hao & Xiao, 2021). Driven by the growing
37 recognition of the potential of travel experiences in enhancing tourists' well-being, tourism
38 studies have increasingly focused on conceptually related inquiries. This burgeoning interest,
39 however, has prompted a critique that questions the dominance of Western perspective in
40 understanding the psychological well-being of tourists from non-Western markets, such as
41 China (Lomas *et al.*, 2021). Consequently, the potential for misinterpretation arises from the
42 inherent differences in the philosophical underpinnings of well-being perspectives between
43 distinct contexts (Jin & Wang, 2016).

44 The concept of well-being consists of two specific schools of thought, hedonia and
45 eudaimonia (Carter & Andersen, 2019; Chang *et al.*, 2024b), and is deeply rooted in Aristotle's
46 philosophy on happiness and the good life (Filep *et al.*, 2016). Aristotle advocated for the
47 pursuit of "eudaimonia", emphasizing that the ultimate goal of psychological well-being lies
48 in "a process...of fulfilling one's virtuous potentials and living as one was inherently intended
49 to live" (Deci & Ryan, 2008, p.2), rather than focusing solely on "hedonia", the pleasurable
50 aspect of experiences (Aristotle, 2019). Central to Aristotle's proposition was the notion of
51 virtuous actions and the simultaneous cultivation of appropriate feelings (Gottlieb, 2022).
52 Based on this definition of well-being, psychologists found a variety of elements within
53 hedonic and eudaimonic well-being directly related to the development of one's psychological

54 well-being, e.g. positive feelings, purpose in life, personal growth etc. (Deci & Ryan, 2008).
55 With this guiding principle, the then-President of the American Psychological Association
56 (APA) Martin Seligman published the PERMA model, which is the pioneering idea of
57 conceptualising both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being with five dimensions: positive
58 emotions (P), engagement (E), relationships (R), meaning (M), and accomplishment (A)
59 (Seligman, 2011). The PERMA model laid a solid foundation for researchers to understand the
60 underlying dimensions of psychological well-being in various life aspects (Cabrera &
61 Donaldson, 2023).

62 Since the inception of PERMA, tourism scholars became curious about how tourism
63 can make the tourists' lives worth living and started to examine the tourist experiences from
64 the lens of positive psychology in 2008 (Filep, 2008). Interest has grown gradually by utilising
65 models like PERMA, flow theory, and positive emotions to explore the dimensions of the
66 tourists' psychological well-being (Vada *et al.*, 2020). Moreover, Filep *et al.* (2017) proposed
67 positive tourism as the knowledge platform investigating what facilitates the flourishing of host
68 communities, tourism workers, and visitors. However, theories applied to guide tourism well-
69 being studies remain predominantly Western-dominated (Vada *et al.*, 2020). For example, a
70 systematic literature review conducted by Vada *et al.* (2020) revealed that cross-disciplinary
71 studies of tourism and positive psychology are conducted in a Western context. Despite the
72 initial investigation in Asian regions, such as China and South Korea, the theories applied to
73 these studies are derived from Western philosophies, e.g., flow theory and the PERMA model
74 (Vada *et al.*, 2020, p.11). Nevertheless, how individuals perceive psychological well-being is
75 proven to be significantly influenced by their cultural backgrounds (Dejbakhsh *et al.*, 2011;
76 Humphrey *et al.*, 2020).

77 Given the crucial role of cultural context in tourism research, scholarly works
78 investigating Chinese tourists have begun the slow and meticulous process of embedding

79 Confucian element into examinations, as evidenced by the works of Li *et al.* (2022), Okumus
80 *et al.* (2018), and Zhang and Tse (2018). Despite this, such tourist studies which embed
81 Confucian elements tend to be focused on tourists' behaviour, motivation, and destination
82 marketing, and as such there are limited applications to tourist well-being studies. Despite the
83 significance of Confucianism in understanding Eastern culture and values (Chon, 2019), the
84 influence of Confucianism on Chinese tourists' well-being remains underexplored and
85 conceptually underdeveloped.

86 A fundamental difference in the conceptualisation of "well-being" from Aristotelianism
87 and Confucianism perspectives suggests that Western conceptual models, such as PERMA,
88 may be insufficient to depict Chinese tourists' well-being. Hamburg (1959) thoroughly
89 compared the foundation of Aristotelianism and Confucianism, including the meaning of "the
90 higher life" in both ideologies. While the Confucian concept of a higher life means to perform
91 all the social rituals and duties guided by Li (Propriety), Aristotle considered "the performance
92 of the social and moral duties the second-best kind of higher life" (Hamburg, 1959, p.248).
93 Despite the compatibility of the virtues from both ideologies (Hackett & Wang, 2012), this
94 fundamental difference underlines that the Confucian perspective of well-being is deeply
95 embedded in collectivism, where virtues cultivate proper attitudes and behaviour to strengthen
96 social bonds and the harmony of society (Kim, 2015; Kim, 2020). On the contrary, Aristotelian
97 well-being, i.e. eudaimonia, requires individual to pursue the greater good through virtuous
98 activity of the rational soul, which in turn cultivates their own virtues, such as courage, justice,
99 and wisdom (Chang *et al.*, 2024a; Kraut, 2015). The fundamental distinction between
100 Aristotelian and Confucian ideologies signify an opportunity to apply a different lens to
101 understand Chinese tourists' well-being.

102 As Mainland China is the biggest outbound travel market in the world (Chen *et al.*,
103 2023), tourism scholars endorsed the need of conducting in-depth explorations in

104 understanding tourists' well-being as defined and experienced by particular groups within
105 specific contextual settings (Chang *et al.*, 2022; Lojo *et al.*, 2019). Given the absence of
106 contextualised psychological well-being frameworks to guide research within non-Western
107 culture, this paper aims to propose a conceptual framework of Chinese tourists' well-being
108 through the lens of Confucianism. This paper lays the groundwork of the conceptual framework
109 by 1) reviewing the fundamental similarities and differences between the philosophy of
110 Confucius and Aristotle in conceptualizing well-being; 2) identifying the underlying
111 dimensions of Chinese tourists' psychological well-being through the lens of Confucian and
112 Aristotelian philosophies. Moreover, tourism organisations can apply this alternative
113 framework when planning, promoting, operating and evaluating the tailor-made tourism
114 initiatives targeting Mainland Chinese tourists.

115 2. Literature Review

116 The literature review presents three sections to systematically examine the common proposition
117 and divergence in the conceptualisation of tourist well-being from Confucian and Aristotelian
118 perspectives. Section 2.1 introduces the Western theories and their development in tourist well-
119 being studies. These theories are influenced by Aristotelian philosophy, which is individual-
120 focused. Nevertheless, East Asian tourists, especially Chinese tourists from regions influenced
121 by Confucian philosophy, show collectivism, such as focusing on collective harmony during
122 travel. This requires introducing the Eastern perspective to understand Eastern tourists' well-
123 being. Section 2.2 introduces the five cardinal virtues of Confucianism, i.e. *Ren (Benevolence)*,
124 *Yi (Righteousness)*, *Li (Propriety)*, *Zhi (Wisdom)*, and *Xin (Trustworthiness)*. It investigates
125 how the virtues influence tourism research in China and the connection to the well-being of
126 Chinese people. Since Confucian philosophy emphasises collectivism, discussing the five
127 cardinal virtues unveils how collective harmony influences the Chinese tourists' well-being.
128 Subsequently, a comparative analysis between Aristotelian and Confucian perspectives on
129 well-being presents in section 2.3.

130 ***2.1. Western Perspective: Aristotelian Perspective of Tourist Well-Being***

131 The inception of positive psychology in the late 1990s marked a departure from the
132 predominant focus on mental illness and pathology in traditional psychology to a preventative
133 and holistic paradigm to foster human strengths and virtues (Hart, 2021; Segliman &
134 Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). In contemporary literature, "eudaimonia" emphasizes an ultimate
135 pursuit of virtues and a higher state of flourishing achieved through self-development and self-
136 realization (Ryff and Singer, 2008), distinct from the transient state of "happiness", or
137 "hedonia". In addition to the early root found in Aristotle's work, modern psychologists further
138 investigate the concepts of well-being across different disciplines of psychology studies. In the
139 early 20th century, Adler (1927) introduced the concept of healthy individual strivings driven

140 by social interest, while Freud (1933) explored the pleasure principle, and Jung (2012) offered
141 insights on spiritual and personal wholeness.

142 The theoretical development of psychological well-being had a breakthrough in the
143 early 1980s when Diener (1984) proposed three constructs of well-being: virtue, pleasant
144 emotional experience, and the factors constructing a good life. Ryan and Deci (2001) further
145 elaborated on the hedonic well-being of Diener (1984) with three scales: pleasant and
146 unpleasant moods, positive and negative emotions, and life satisfaction. For eudemonic well-
147 being, Ryff (1989, 1995) criticised the existing psychological well-being studies, stating the
148 findings did not rest on any strong theoretical basis, proposing a theoretical framework,
149 supported by an empirical study, with six core dimensions of eudemonic well-being: autonomy,
150 environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-
151 acceptance (Ryff, 1995). These multidimensional theoretical models of hedonic and
152 eudaimonic well-being laid a solid foundation for tourism scholars to operationalise the
153 investigations of tourist well-being (Filep, 2014).

154 Indeed, the principles of positive psychology bear a resemblance to the observations
155 made by Aristotle. The model constructed by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) played a
156 pivotal role in elucidating the significance of positive emotions (P), engagement (E),
157 relationship (R), meaning (M), and accomplishment (A) in conceptualising psychological well-
158 being. The model combines hedonic and eudaimonic elements, collectively contributing to the
159 flourishing of individuals' lives (Seligman, 2011). The parallel focus on eudaimonia, a concept
160 pivotal to both Aristotelian philosophy and positive psychology, is far from coincidental,
161 illustrating the philosophical connections between the two.

162 Drawing on the foundations of positive psychology, the tourism literature has expanded
163 its research domain, giving rise to Positive Tourism that examines well-being and flourishing

164 relating to tourist's experience, host communities, and sectors across the tourism industry
165 (Filep et al., 2017; Pearce, 2009). The conceptual connection between positive psychology and
166 tourism has been critically assessed, with Nawijn and Filep (2016) endorsing the role of
167 positive psychology in tourism studies, while suggesting not to only focus on the hedonistic
168 elements of tourism, and against overstating the impacts of vacationing on individuals'
169 subjective well-being. Filep and Laing (2018) articulate the efficacy of positive psychology for
170 studying three phases of the tourist experience, namely anticipatory, on-site, and reflective.

171 Tourism scholars have a tendency to study tourists' well-being by developing
172 conceptual frameworks and theoretical models based on the dimensions in the PERMA model
173 established in positive psychology. For example, a well-being model focusing on leisure
174 experiences can be found in the work of Newman *et al.* (2014), with DRAMMA suggesting
175 five well-being dimensions of the leisure experience: detachment-recovery (DR), autonomy
176 (A), mastery (M), meaning (M), and affiliation (A) (Newman et al., 2014). More recently, Filep
177 *et al.* (2022) established a more advanced well-being model named as DREAMA (detachment-
178 recovery (DR), engagement (E), affiliation (A), meaning (M) and achievement (A)) that
179 extends beyond PERMA and DRAMMA models by delving deeper into the relationship
180 (affiliation) dimension to both social and natural environments.

181 In terms of empirical examination, there is a proliferation of research applying concepts
182 in positive psychology into tourists' behaviours studies. For instance, Gilbert and Abdullah
183 (2004) revealed people who went on frequent vacations reported greater levels of life
184 satisfaction compared to those who did not, both prior to and following their trip. McCabe and
185 Johnson (2013) confirmed that tourism contributes to social tourist's well-being by utilizing
186 the measure of subjective well-being. Laing and Frost (2017) discovered four elements (namely
187 positive emotion, relationships, meaning, and achievement) of the PERMA model influential
188 in promoting the well-being of female travel writers in Italy. Huang *et al.* (2019) utilised the

189 PERMA model on top of Buddhist ideologies and found positive changes in tourists' attitudes,
190 behaviours and lives among Chinese pilgrims. Zhou *et al.* (2019) developed an event-specific
191 PERMA model by investigating the psychological well-being of the event organisers and
192 participants in an iconic Chinese LGBT event. Zhang *et al.* (2023) confirmed that the Buddhist
193 pilgrimage's spiritual values strongly impact the Chinese pilgrims' psychological well-being
194 by using the PERMA model. These examples demonstrated these Western-originated
195 multidimensional models, dominating both Western and Eastern contexts, can understand
196 tourist well-being. Despite this exponential growth in research on psychological well-being,
197 academics have been urged to contextualise the understanding of tourist well-being through an
198 Eastern lens (Chang *et al.*, 2022)

199 **2.2. Eastern Perspective: Confucian Perspective of Tourist Well-being**

200 Confucianism is a foundational philosophical tradition dating back to the Zhou Dynasty (551-
201 479BC) in China, and initially emerged as a response to a period of political instability.
202 Philosophers such as Confucius and Mencius sought to restore societal harmony through the
203 articulation of a philosophy initially focused on virtuous rulership and societal relationships
204 (Jiang, 2018). Over the 2500 years, Confucianism has not only been adapted as a state ideology
205 across various dynasties (as shown in Figure 1), but also extended profound influence in culture,
206 values and societal norms in many Eastern Asian regions, such as Mainland China, South
207 Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan (Weiming, 2017).

208 [Insert Figure 1]

209 Figure 1: The Four Distinct Stages of Confucianism

210 The basic tenets of Chinese life, as noted by Jiang *et al.* (2019), are then rooted in the
211 five virtues of Confucianism (shown in Figure 1 and Table 1), namely *Ren* (Benevolence), *Yi*
212 (Righteousness), *Li* (Propriety), *Zhi* (Wisdom) and *Xin* (Trustworthiness).

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[Insert Table 1]

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The five virtues articulated in Table 1 have evolved to be culturally defined and socially accepted qualities where Benevolence (Ren) serves as the core value of Confucianism (Guo *et al.*, 2012). Confucius advocated for the cultivation of Benevolence as the ultimate goal of moral excellence, as opposed to being selfish and thinking of own comfort (Chon, 2019). The relationship between the five virtues and psychological well-being is elucidated by Kim (2020, p.57), who states, “The virtues help us achieve a clearer grasp of well-being by enabling the practice of virtue (e.g. ritual activity or filial acts) and honing our emotional capacity in ways that help reveal to us the real worth of objects. They also provide the proper epistemological perspective for understanding human flourishing.” This traditional Confucian perspective of well-being bears a distinct resemblance to Aristotelian eudaimonia.

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[Insert Figure 2]

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Figure 2. The Five Virtues of Confucianism

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Deemed to be cardinal where all other virtues are built upon them (Hackett & Wang, 2012), these five virtues have been a subject of academic inquiry because of their crucial role in shaping the Chinese tourists’ psychology, e.g. motivation (Fu *et al.*, 2015). Various research endeavours have been undertaken in the field of tourism to explore Chinese tourists from the perspective of Confucian philosophy (please refer to Table 2). In an exploratory study conducted by Kwek and Lee (2010), group package tours were observed to examine the influence of Confucian values on Mainland Chinese corporate travellers in Australia. The study identified several underlying concepts reflecting the social psychological process from Chinese tourists, including the values of harmony, face, respect for authority, conformity, and relationship. Similarly, Fu *et al.* (2017) discovered similar Confucian dimensions namely harmony with nature and relationship. Importantly, their study concluded that apart from

260 While this section does not intend to conduct a biographical comparison, it is imperative to
261 observe the disparate stages of civilization and culture from which Aristotle and Confucius
262 lived. The distinct stages acted significant roles in shaping the two philosophies and teachings
263 that the opinions both held were influenced by the cultural and societal conditions of their
264 respective periods and locations. This contextual backdrop must be considered when delving
265 into an examination of the origins of their teachings.

266 In previous decades, there exists a growing body of studies investigating both
267 philosophers' teachings across various disciplines in scholarly discourse. The seminal work of
268 Hamburger (1959) provided that while both philosophers emphasized the significance of
269 education as a prerequisite for cultivated individuals, differences arise in the interpretation and
270 outcomes of education. Specifically, Aristotle's notion of higher education encompasses
271 contemplation, study, and research, whereas Confucius focuses on the study of poetry,
272 adherence to ritual, and mastery of music (Hamburger, 1959).

273 When considering their views on well-being, there appeared a distinction in their
274 interpretation of the concept of the higher life. In Aristotle's interpretation, the Greek word
275 "eudaimonia" was adopted as the term to describe the pursuit of encyclopaedic knowledge and
276 accomplishments. In parallel, Confucius emphasizes that the "higher life" entails the idea of
277 maintaining social harmony. This was exemplified by the ten duties outlined in *Li*, one of the
278 five virtues of Confucianism. Kim (2020) posits that Confucian teachings are closely tied to
279 the pursuit of wisdom and the cultivation of a well-ordered life for oneself, one's family, the
280 community, and ultimately, the world.

281 Another concept influencing the conceptualisation of well-being is virtue. Both
282 philosophies acknowledge that virtues are the agents of psychological well-being (Kim, 2020;
283 Kraut, 2015). To be a Superior Man who has achieved moral excellence, Confucian teachings

284 emphasise on to build up flourishing intimate relationship with the Five virtues as guiding
285 principles (Cua, 2002; Chon, 2019; Kim, 2020). Positive psychology recognises that practising
286 virtues like courage, honesty, and perseverance will enhance human strength and well-being
287 (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Koehn (2013) adopted a virtue ethics perspective to
288 discuss how both philosophers share the same views on the nature of virtue ethics relating to
289 global businesses.

290 Yu (1998) further contributes to this discourse by highlighting the comparison between
291 Confucian Ren and Aristotle's virtues. According to Yu, both philosophers share concerns
292 about individual and societal conduct, albeit with a nuanced difference in focus – Aristotle's
293 emphasis on the individual and Confucius's broader concern for societal well-being. As
294 observed by Kim (2020), Confucian virtues pivot on human interactions shaped by a joint
295 recognition of the communal good. Indeed, both Aristotle and Confucius present unique
296 perspectives. While Aristotle, as articulated in "The Nicomachean Ethics", identifies virtue as
297 "the mean between extremes" (Aristotle, 2019, p.xvi) emphasizing the role of voluntary actions
298 in shaping human character, Confucius conceptualizes the mean between extremes, known as
299 the Doctrine of the Mean, as a distinct individual virtue, specifically identified as moderation
300 (Hackett & Wang, 2012). Table 3 provides a concise exploration of the similarities and
301 distinctions between these pivotal concepts in Confucian and Aristotelian ethics.

302 [Insert Table 3]

303 Despite the differences demonstrated above, Hackett and Wang (2012) reveal a
304 significant convergence between the interpretations of virtues by Aristotle and Confucius (See
305 Table 4). Koehn's (2013) observations posit that both philosophers advocate for the
306 development of virtues as a pathway to a happy life, emphasising the role of family and
307 community in fostering these virtues. This commonality forms a substantial basis for

308 consolidating Aristotelian and Confucian perspectives of well-being. Given such significant
309 commonalities, a consolidation could be reasonably assumed across Aristotelian and
310 Confucian teachings to derive a conceptual framework reflecting Western and traditional
311 Chinese dimensions of Chinese tourists' well-being.

312 [Insert Table 4]

313 Noteworthy is the shared dissuasion of the pursuit of immediate pleasure or hedonia by
314 both philosophers. Aristotle contends that hedonia epitomizes a common notion of momentary
315 pleasure, exerting a persuasive influence on individuals, compelling them to follow their
316 desires (Ryan and Deci, 2001; Ryff and Singer, 2008). In Confucian philosophy, the
317 embodiment of virtuous qualities, described as the Superior Man, consistently prioritizes moral
318 excellence. Conversely, the Small Man, lacking such virtues, demonstrates a selfish disposition
319 and little concern for the welfare of others, often seeking immediate comfort (Chon, 2019).
320 This shared perspective leads to the conclusion that both Aristotelian and Confucian views on
321 well-being focus on eudaimonia, aiming to achieve moral excellence for a "higher life".

322 Traditional Chinese culture is an amalgam of Confucianism and other cultural sources
323 such as Daoism and the clan-family structure (Thompson, 2011; Hao et al., 2021). While
324 Daoism contains ideas similar to the pursuit of instant happiness (such as the concept of “及时
325 行乐” translated as “enjoy life whenever you can”), these ideas do not necessarily equate to
326 hedonism. Daoism does not measure well-being in terms of physical pleasure, as it lacks major
327 teachings related to maximizing happiness (Gregory, 2015; Tiwald, 2015). Instead, Daoism
328 advocates that human beings should avoid all sorts of desires and return to their natural way of
329 living to regain primitive freedom (Zhang et al., 2013).

330 However, studies indicate that Chinese tourists are inclined to pursue pleasurable,
331 exciting, or even prestigious tourism experiences with material fulfilment (Wen et al., 2019).

332 These findings align more closely with the Aristotelian definition of hedonism rather than
333 Daoism. Furthermore, the concept of leisure tourism did not emerge in modern China until
334 1997, with outbound tourism maturing in 2011 (Johnson et al., 2020). Before this development,
335 Chinese people primarily visited families and relatives rather than conducted leisure tourism
336 (Gao & Kerstetter, 2016). It is believed that the introduction of Western consumerism to urban
337 China following the economic reforms of the 1990s has led to the flourishing of self-indulgence
338 and individuality within society (Wei & Pan, 1999). This shift reflects a broader cultural
339 evolution influenced by economic and social changes, blending traditional values with
340 contemporary practices.

341 Another contentious construct is the gender differences in both philosophies, which
342 may lead to different perceptions of well-being for males and females. Confucian teachings
343 emphasise the term “man”, as seen in phrases such as “Superior Men”, “A man cannot be a
344 man”. In Chinese, the meaning of “man” narrowly equates to the male gender. Scholars contend
345 that Confucianism advocates male superiority and the subordination of women (Hou et al.,
346 2021). However, Li (2000) denotes that the oppression of women was introduced by later
347 Confucians and is not in the core doctrines of Confucius. Despite arguments that the core ideas
348 of Confucianism are not gender-specific, sexual segregation and male authority are observed
349 in Confucianism (Kim, 2020; Li, 2000). Similarly, Aristotle advocated the exclusion and
350 subjugation of women (Morrell & Brammer, 2016). For example, Aristotle stated “The male
351 is by nature superior, and the female inferior; and the one rules, and the other is ruled; this
352 principle, of necessity, extends to all mankind.” (Aristotle, ca 350 B.C.E./2000). Even
353 regarding virtue, Aristotle believes that a man will rule with merit, but women’s rule is not by
354 virtue (Aristotle, ca 350 B.C.E./2014).

355 The gender differences in both ideologies seemingly to contradict the gender equality
356 movement in the modern world, especially in the discourse of psychological well-being. In the

357 context of tourism, Confucianism has been criticised for constraining female mobility by
358 emphasising obedience to male figures and caregiving responsibilities within the family
359 (Watono & McKercher, 2020). Studies indicated the traditional Confucian values rooted in
360 tourist behaviour, such as female being the primary carer for the family and submissive to one's
361 husband (Hao et al., 2021). Despite this, a trend has been observed where Chinese female
362 tourists are increasingly empowered in travel decision-making process (Cong et al., 2021). This
363 is partially due to China's one-child policy from 1979 to 2015, which led only-children to be
364 less aware of gender inequality compared to those with siblings (Li et al., 2022; Zhang, 2017).
365 Consequently, in modern China, individuals with lower awareness of gender inequality tend to
366 have higher self-esteem and subjective well-being in tourism (Guo et al., 2024; Li et al., 2022).

367 Despite the differing cultural and historical contexts from which Aristotle and
368 Confucius lived, their philosophical teachings often call for comparison. Aristotle's primary
369 philosophical objective focuses on the pursuit of eudaimonia, often translated as the 'good life'
370 or 'flourishing'. In contrast, Confucius emphasized harmony as the cornerstone of social order
371 and individuals' quality. Despite these distinctive core objectives, few commonalities in their
372 philosophies can be identified. From the existing tourism studies, Chinese tourists hold the
373 traditional perspective of virtues but are simultaneously influenced by Western philosophy.
374 This raised the need for an integrative framework to understand the dimensions of Chinese
375 tourists' well-being through both the lenses of Confucian and Aristotelian philosophies.

376 3. The Conceptual Framework of the Psychological Well-being of Chinese Tourists

377 Although the well-being concept originated from Western philosophy, the two primary
378 parallels of Confucian and Aristotelian doctrines legitimise the exploration of Chinese tourist
379 well-being from the lenses of Confucian and Aristotelian philosophies. The conceptual
380 framework will further categorise the Confucian dimensions identified from the literature
381 review into two main groups: The traditional lens and the modern lens (See Figure 3). The
382 traditional lens contains the dimensions related to the Confucian virtues and collectivism that
383 guide tourists to a virtuous life. In contrast, the modern lens includes dimensions unrelated to
384 Confucian teachings, influenced by individualism, globalisation, mass media and social media
385 (Hsu & Huang, 2016). This new model, titled the multi-focal model of Chinese tourists'
386 psychological well-being, extends the Confucian psychological well-being perspective from
387 one-dimensional to two-dimensional by acknowledging the influences of individualism and
388 globalisation towards modern Chinese tourists.

389 [Insert Figure 3]

390 Figure 3. The Multi-focal Model of the Chinese Tourists' Psychological Well-Being

391 3.1 The Traditional Lens

392 Ren (Benevolence)

393 The core value of Confucian virtue is *Ren (Benevolence)*, which focuses on the collective
394 goodness of the society (Kim, 2020). To cultivate this quality, a person should extend their
395 love and kindness beyond human beings to every form of life in the world with deep respect
396 (Chon & Hao, 2020; Kim, 2020). Two significant dimensions related to *Ren* formed the focal
397 point of the traditional lens. The first dimension is **Harmony**. Chinese tourists see maintaining
398 harmony during the trip as the ultimate state of mind (Fu *et al.*, 2015; Fu *et al.*, 2017; Kwek &
399 Lee, 2010, Jiang *et al.*, 2019; Mok & DeFranco, 2000;). It is an end of many dimensions of *Li*

400 (*Propriety*), e.g. face, conformity, respect for authority and reciprocity (Kwek & Lee, 2010).
401 By exercising these elements of *Li*, the Chinese tourists believed that harmonic relationships
402 with fellow travellers and the natural environment could be achieved (Fu *et al.*, 2015; Kwek &
403 Lee, 2010).

404 The second dimension is **Self-cultivation**. This dimension is one of the Chinese tourist
405 motivations that relate to self-cultivation by improving health and well-being, having peace of
406 mind, cleansing the soul, edifying the spirit, being self-disciplined, and eventually becoming a
407 better person (Shao & Perkins, 2017; Wen *et al.*, 2019). Similarly, Chinese tourists exhibit
408 aesthetic enjoyment through natural landscape appreciation, leading to moral and spiritual
409 inspiration (Fu *et al.*, 2015). It differentiates from self-development, another primary
410 dimension related to gaining more knowledge and experience through travelling.

411 **Yi (Righteousness)**

412 The next dimension, **Righteous Tourist Behaviours**, is related to *Yi (Righteousness)*.
413 Righteousness requires living and behaving according to moral principles without emphasising
414 self-interests and material gains (Woods & Lamond, 2011). Only one study by Huang and Wen
415 (2021) discovered that three deviant behaviours suggested by Li and Chen (2019), i.e.,
416 polluting the environment, vandalising public facilities, and breaking the customs of the
417 destination, are negatively related to *Yi (Righteousness)*, Filial Piety and Relationship, and Self-
418 fulfilment. The result proved that Chinese tourists pay attention to righteous behaviours during
419 the trip to cultivate not only *Yi (Righteousness)* but also interpersonal relationships and self-
420 cultivation (Chon & Hao, 2020).

421 **Li (Propriety)**

422 There are three major dimensions related to *Li (Propriety)*. As Confucius said, “Without
423 knowing the principle of propriety, a man cannot be a man.” Learning and demonstrating *Li*

424 (*Propriety*) is vital for Chinese tourists to achieve *Ren*, their core virtue (Zhang *et al.*, 2019).
425 The first dimension is **Relationship with Family**. In Confucianism, family serves as the
426 fundamental end of an individual as its flourishing is constitutive of the flourishing of each
427 family member, and it is the root for moral values and the cultivation of virtues for the next
428 generations (Kim, 2020). Tourism is seen as a mean to enhance family cohesiveness and
429 communication through two-way interactions among parents and children (Fu *et al.*, 2015).
430 The adult children also feel obliged to take their parents on a trip to fulfil filial piety (Fu *et al.*,
431 2015; Fu *et al.*, 2017; Huang & Wen, 2021).

432 The second dimension is **Guanxi (Relationship with Others)**. While Aristotle
433 promoted the network between an individual and society to achieve eudaimonia and happiness,
434 Confucius detailed the ten relationships in *Li* to maintain social harmony. The ten relationships
435 are “kindness in the father, filial piety in the son, gentility in the older brother, humility and
436 respect in the younger brother, good behaviour in the husband, obedience in the wife,
437 benevolence in the elders, and obedience in the juniors, benevolence in the ruler, and loyalty
438 in the ministers” (Hamburger, 1959, p.246). In those ten relationships, the dimension of
439 **Relationship with Family** already covered the first six close kinships. Kim (2020) suggested
440 that self-fulfilment requires fulfilling these roles and flourishing the particular relationships.
441 **Guanxi** extends the harmonic relationship at home to the broader community. Chinese tourists
442 show respect for authority and conform to decisions from the authority, and the majority of the
443 groups are observed during corporate travels (Mok & Defranco, 2000; Kwek & Lee, 2010).
444 Tourism also serves to strengthen the relationship with friends, co-workers and other
445 acquaintances by showing reciprocity and interdependence (Fu *et al.*, 2015). It is believed that
446 flourishing in these particular relationships leads to one’s flourishing (Kim, 2020).

447 The third dimension is **Face (mien-tzu)**. Maintaining other’s Face means avoiding
448 humiliation to others and causing shame (Mok & Defranco, 2000). It is partly related to **Guanxi**

449 as Chinese tourists believe saving Face of others will maintain good interpersonal relationships
450 and strengthen harmony in a group setting (Mok & Defranco, 2000). Chinese tourists also
451 emphasised the collective Face of their national identity by promoting civilised behaviour when
452 travelling, which is related to *Yi (Righteousness)* (Zhang *et al.*, 2019). However, the modern
453 value of Face is primarily related to one's social status and ability. It is observed that Chinese
454 tourists gain Face in their social circle by sharing travel photos and experiences of overseas
455 trips (Chen *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, possession of materials and wealth by purchasing luxury
456 items or overseas trips are observed among Chinese tourists, which is also related to the
457 Modern lens of the proposed conceptual model (Mok & Defranco, 2000; Wen *et al.*, 2019).
458 The above three dimensions, **Relationship with Family, Guanxi (Relationship with Others),**
459 **and Face (mien-tzu)** demonstrated the profound influence of Li (Propriety) in Chinese tourist
460 behaviour.

461 **Zhi (Wisdom)**

462 Regarding *Zhi (Wisdom)*, it is believed to be the foundation of virtue (Kim, 2020).
463 Through extensive learning and the ability to discern the external world, *Ren (Benevolence)*
464 will be cultivated (Chon & Hao, 2020). The first dimension relates to *Zhi* is **Acquire**
465 **Knowledge**. It is found that Chinese tourists are motivated by learning and intellectual
466 development. At the same time, adults regard it as the parental responsibility to educate their
467 children through travel (Fu *et al.*, 2015). The parents are particularly interested in helping their
468 children to learn about history, culture and society (Fu *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, Chinese
469 tourists will identify business opportunities when travelling overseas and gain knowledge of
470 other countries' societies and cultures (Wen *et al.*, 2019). This finding relates to the second
471 dimension, **Self-development**. Chinese tourists, especially the younger generations, believe
472 that travelling is an excellent way to gain wisdom and become an experienced person with

473 broader minds (Jiang *et al.*, 2019; Long *et al.*, 2022; Wen *et al.*, 2019). Young Chinese tourists
474 also found inner peace through this process (Long *et al.*, 2022).

475 **Xin (Trustworthiness)**

476 *Xin (Trustworthiness)* relates to one's credibility and faithfulness, encompassing
477 keeping promises and maintaining loyalty to friends, family, and society, which in turn ensures
478 *Ren (Benevolence)* (Chon & Hao, 2020). It also emphasises "being a dependable support for
479 others" (Woods & Lamond, 2011, p.673). The first dimension related to *Xin* is **Loyalty to the**
480 **country**. Shen and Wu (2022) demonstrated that patriotism, characterized by the feelings of
481 belongingness, responsibility and pride towards the country, promote favour for domestic
482 tourism. It is also found that patriotism affects female Chinese tourists more than their male
483 counterparts. This heightened effect among women is attributed to traditional submissiveness
484 to male figures, such as fathers and husbands, enhancing their patriotic behavior. Shen and Wu
485 (2022) recommend promoting female-specific domestic tourism, like *Guimi* tourism (girlfriend
486 getaways) to enhance the wellbeing of women.

487 *Guimi* tourism highlights the second dimension of *Xin* - **Support the family**. Hao et al.
488 (2021) explored *Guimi* tourist experiences with a "Chinese gender lens" that was partly formed
489 by Confucian traditions. Married Chinese women can be constrained to travel with friends due
490 to their social role as the primary carers of their families (Hao et al., 2021). According to Zhang
491 et al. (2021), married Chinese women often encounter dilemmas about neglecting family duties
492 when traveling with friends, which conflicts with the traditional view in Chinese Confucianism.
493 However, during *Guimi* tours, female Chinese tourists found their unique strengths to support
494 their friends during the trips, which leads to the third dimension of *Xin* - **Loyalty to friends**.
495 This dimension is distinctive to *Guanxi*, a dimension of *Li*, which focuses on harmonious
496 relationships outside the family, including conforming to social norms. Hao et al. (2021)

497 observed that Guimi tours foster camaraderie among female Chinese tourists through
498 engagement in diverse duties during trips. These individuals express pride in fulfilling
499 responsibilities, thereby highlighting reliability and dependable support for friends.

500 Eleven dimensions that are related to all five Confucian virtues promote Chinese
501 tourists' well-being. Future empirical research should focus on the intricate relationship
502 between *Xin (Trustworthiness)* and Chinese tourist well-being. The following section
503 illustrates how modern values influence Chinese tourists in achieving their well-being.

504 **3.2 The Modern Lens**

505 Influenced by globalisation, mass media and social media, Chinese tourists adopted foreign
506 values of individualism in their travel preferences (Hsu & Huang, 2016). From the literature
507 review, three major foreign values emerged from the literature with potential to influence
508 Chinese tourists' well-being. Hedonic and eudaimonic well-being is the guiding theory in
509 categorising these significant dimensions.

510 The first dimension is **Detachment-Recovery**. It refers to “a hedonic sense of
511 separation from work and relaxation” when tourists utilise resources to overcome stress at work
512 and improve their well-being (Filep *et al.*, 2022, p.5; Newman, 2014). Chinese tourists showed
513 mixed results in escaping from the daily routine and seeking relaxation and recovery. Long *et*
514 *al.* (2022) suggested that it is a significant travel motivation for Chinese Gen Y male tourists
515 who stereotypically bear the financial and related psychological stress of being the family's
516 breadwinner. Evidence suggests that married female Chinese tourists, including those with
517 children, engage in Guimi Tourism to temporarily escape ordinary household responsibilities
518 (Hao *et al.*, 2021). While household matters confine the gender norms for Chinese females,
519 Chinese Gen Y female tourists showed enhancing interpersonal relationships as their travel
520 motivations in the same study. This finding resonated with Fu *et al.* (2017), where escape was

521 rated as a less critical travel motivation, which does not conform to the Western assumptions
522 on motivation theories. Moreover, Detached-Recovery is an essential dimension because it also
523 includes positive emotions, e.g., excitement, joy, happiness, and pleasure, resulting from travel
524 experiences (Newman *et al.*, 2014). Chinese tourists reported that pleasure, happiness, and life
525 enjoyment (Huang & Wen, 2021; Jiang *et al.*, 2019; Shao & Perkins, 2017; Wen *et al.*, 2019)
526 are highly related to tourism involvement. While there could be gender differences in escapist
527 motivation, positive emotions are generally observed in broader research.

528 The second dimension is **Materialism and Ostentation**. Confucianism regards *Ren*
529 (*Benevolence*) as in a higher position of material goods or wealth (Kim, 2020). However,
530 Western capitalism has influenced Chinese tourist behaviours (Hsu & Huang, 2016). For
531 example, Chinese tourists show off their overseas trips with destinations far away from their
532 homes and shopping as a symbol of wealth to enhance their **Face (mien-tzu)** (Chen *et al.*, 2021;
533 Fu *et al.*, 2017). Chinese Gen Y tourists also prefer to show their prestigious travel experience
534 on social media to gain attention and keep a positive image from their social groups (Long *et*
535 *al.*, 2022). Although this is also related to positive emotions, its instrumental effect on one's
536 Face (mien-tzu) in modern China contradicts Confucian values. It deserves a distinctive
537 dimension in explaining Chinese tourists' well-being.

538 The third dimension is **Achievement**. It relates to eudaimonic well-being and refers to
539 the perseverance to obtain personal goals, which will contribute to one's pride (Seligman,
540 2011). Hsu and Huang (2016) categorised Confidence, Competitiveness, and Competence as
541 the modern desired characteristic traits among Chinese, whereas Confucianism believes that
542 'non-competitiveness' avoids conflict and leads to harmony. Wen *et al.* (2019) discovered that
543 modern values (being experienced, competitive, individualistic, and confident) are more
544 significant travel motivations than traditional Chinese values. As it results from quantitative
545 research, further research should extract the qualitative reasons for detailed analysis.

546 The conceptual framework of the Chinese tourists' well-being (Figure 3) features two
547 multifocal lenses: one contains eleven dimensions derived from traditional Confucian values,
548 and one contains three dimensions from modern influences. It reflects the dual influences of
549 both traditional culture in China and modern culture from globalisation, driven by the recent
550 economic growth and the changing lifestyle in the Chinese coastal cities (Lin & Wang, 2010).
551 By differentiating the primary dimensions shaping Chinese tourists' well-being through
552 Confucian values, a clearer separation of the modern influences on Chinese tourists is achieved.

553 **4. Theoretical Contributions**

554 By comparing the Confucianism and Aristotelian perspectives on well-being and the review of
555 Chinese tourist research, a multifocal conceptual model for the Chinese tourists' psychological
556 well-being is proposed, illustrating the meaning of well-being in the Confucian collective
557 context with the Western individualism influences (Figure 3). This conceptual framework
558 represents a pioneering effort towards revealing the pivotal dimensions of psychological well-
559 being concerning tourism activities. As Chinese tourists are the largest outbound market in the
560 world (Chen *et al.*, 2023), this framework provides an alternative perspective to analyse their
561 motivation and intention in the tourism context through their philosophies. The second
562 contribution of this conceptual paper proposed that Chinese tourists' well-being evolved from
563 a one-dimensional well-being concept, i.e. eudaimonia, to a two-dimensional well-being
564 concept that included dimensions from both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. It exhibited
565 that tourists' psychological well-being, together with other tourism phenomena (Timothy,
566 2019), is affected by globalisation. Future investigation on tourist well-being should
567 incorporate understanding the tourists' home culture and the cultural influences of globalisation.

588 **5. Future Research Agenda**

589 This research identified three key areas which require specific attention. First, the multifocal
590 model of Chinese tourists' psychological well-being is distilled from a handful of studies since
591 the new millennium. The lack of general representation in the sample size may undermine the
592 generalisation of the proposed model. Future research should test its validity and improve its
593 practicality by drafting questions that match the proposed dimensions and the Confucian values
594 through empirical methods. Such direction contributes to the knowledge advancement of
595 tourists' well-being in a non-Western context, which is still in its infancy. Second, even though
596 Confucianism is the dominant socio-philosophical belief in China, Chinese cultural values are
597 also influenced by other ideologies and religions, e.g., Daoism and Buddhism, hence future
598 research is encouraged to include diverse cultural values in Chinese tourism research. Some of
599 these renowned values may not be captured in the proposed framework. Third, the framework
600 did not consider the socio-political factors, as these macro-environmental factors may
601 significantly impact the daily life of Chinese tourists. For example, the Three-child policy
602 became law in August 2021. The cost of raising children for Generation Y in China, a
603 significant driver of overseas travel, may affect the disposable income and their financial
604 planning. It is believed that the social process strongly influences core human functioning
605 (Pearce & Packer, 2013). Since government policy significantly impacts the tourism sector in
606 the Chinese market, future investigations should be conducted in response to significant
607 changes in government regulations in China that may impact the well-being of Chinese tourists.

588 **6. Conclusion**

589 This research critically examined the fundamental similarities and differences between
590 Confucian and Aristotelian philosophies in conceptualising well-being. By comparing the five
591 cardinal Confucian virtues with Aristotelian perspectives of well-being, a multidimensional
592 framework is proposed integrating traditional and modern well-being insights, illustrating the

593 various dimensions of Chinese tourists' psychological well-being. The framework highlights
594 the evolution of Chinese tourists' well-being from a one-dimensional concept of eudaimonia
595 to a two-dimensional concept that includes both hedonia and eudaimonia, providing a new
596 perspective for analysing well-being of Chinese in the context of tourism.

597 This research expands existing Western-centric well-being concepts to a non-Western
598 cultural context. Future investigations should scrutinize the specific culture of the target tourist
599 group and consider the effects of cultural integration under the background of globalization.
600 Psychological well-being is a multifaceted concept influenced by a plethora of sociocultural
601 and political factors. This research serves as a starting point to uncover the factors influencing
602 the progression of tourist well-being amid social changes in China, such as the economic
603 reform and gender equality movement. Future research should include the gender dynamics
604 analysis of Chinese tourists contextualised with their history, sociocultural background and
605 interactive relations between males and females (Feng, 2013). Empirical research which
606 incorporates the selected Confucian dimensions is encouraged to identify specific modes of
607 tourism that can enhance Chinese tourist well-being. Tourism practitioners can then tailor their
608 products and services to improve Chinese tourist well-being and contribute to Sustainable
609 Development Goal #3, to ensure the health and well-being of all populations at all ages (UN,
610 2024).

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