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**BLUE SKY, GREEN LAND AND THE DIFFERENT LIFE:
PROFILING CHINESE TOURISTS' EXPERIENCES OF AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPES**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy Research Thesis (Tourism)
College of Business, Law and Governance,
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September 2015

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This research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) *National Statement on Ethics Conduct in Human Research*, 2007. The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the JCU Human Research Ethics Committee:

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Publication title	Contribution
Osmond, A. M. (2015). Mapping patterns between experience dimensions for mainland Chinese visitors: A case of ‘traversed’ versus ‘novice’ in Australia’s wet tropics. Proceedings of the 25 th Annual Conference for the Council for Australasian University Tourism and Hospitality Education (CAUTHE), 2 nd -5 th February 2015, Gold Coast, Australia. (pp.663-666).	Author
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I certify that the above material describes my work completed during my registration as Doctor of Philosophy candidate at James Cook University. I also acknowledge that copyright of published works resides with the copyright holder(s).

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STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTION OF OTHERS

The following is a statement detailing the contribution of others to my thesis as a whole, including intellectual support, financial support and research support.

Nature of assistance	Contribution	Names, titles and affiliations of co-contributors
Intellectual support	Supervision	Professor Philip Pearce (James Cook University – JCU) Dr Tracey Harrison-Hill (JCU)
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CLASSIFICATION OF RESEARCH

The following is a list of keywords to describe the thesis research:

Chinese tourists, Australian landscapes, tourist experience, Wet Tropics

Australia and New Zealand Standard Research Classifications (ANZSRC)

The **Socio-economic Objective (SEO)** classification allows research and development activity in Australia and New Zealand to be categorised according to the intended purpose or outcome of the research.

SEO code: 900302, *Socio-cultural issues in tourism* (100%)

The **Field of Research (FoR)** classification allows research and development activity to be categorised according to the methodology used in the research and development.

FoR code: 150606, *Tourist behaviour and visitor experience* (85%)

FoR code: 150603, *Tourism management* (15%)

THESIS ABSTRACT

The principal aim of this thesis was to consider Chinese tourists' views, interests and understanding of Australian landscapes with particular reference to one World Heritage Area – the Wet Tropics. In this study, Chinese tourists included those originating from mainland China only. The questions driving this research were:

1. How do Chinese (and other) tourists portray Australian landscapes?
2. What do Chinese tourists gain from their Wet Tropics' experiences?
3. What are the perspectives of tourism stakeholders' in the Wet Tropics towards managing Chinese tourism?

An integrative, multi-perspective literature approach informed the development of the studies. Firstly, the connection between natural areas and tourism, as well as the unique Chinese ways of viewing landscapes were considered. These perspectives were then supported through wider reflections on visitor management and the experience economy, interpretation, mindfulness and tourist learning, cross-cultural translation and the tourist gaze. Collectively, research insights from these areas provided starting directions in answering “*what do Chinese tourists gain from Australian landscape experiences?*”

Guided by these background considerations, a multiple methods approach was employed to assess this difficult, novel and understudied topic. In particular, the research question was explored from three different perspectives using an Interpretivist/Constructivist frame of reference. The three perspectives were observational, experiential and managerial aspects of Chinese tourists' Australian landscape experiences. In turn, the researcher studied tourists' travel blogs, employed tourist questionnaires and conducted semi-structured interviews.

The first stage (observation perspective) involved an analysis of 844 tourist travel blogs which contained over 28, 000 photographs. Chinese, International and Australian tourists' landscape representations were explored for the Great Ocean Road, Red Centre and Wet Tropics. Thematic coding of travel blog photographs revealed varying levels of importance for experiences linked to the natural environment, additional setting features, tourism infrastructure and Australian lifestyles and relationships. In particular, iconic landmarks, animals and

accommodation features were identified as *star attractions*. Representations of each experience category for the three National Landscapes were significantly different across the three tourist markets. Furthermore, it was found that the more distant the tourist's culture to that being observed, the more interest the tourist has is in capturing the mundane or distinctive Australian lifestyle. Overall, Chinese tourists' representations reflected a collective/spectatorial gaze while Australian and International tourists' depicted a romantic gaze. Findings from the research demonstrated how Chinese, International and Australian tourists experience and understand Australian landscapes. In addition, these results provided a baseline for further exploration in the next phase of the research, which included tourist questionnaires about their Wet Tropics' experiences and interview schedules for tourism stakeholders in the Wet Tropics.

As a second stage of the research (experience perspective), 158 self-completion questionnaires were collected from Chinese tourists to Australia's Wet Tropics. The questionnaire aimed to empirically explore the links between eight different experience dimensions as well as the influence of each dimension towards the *overall tourist experience* of the Wet Tropics for Chinese tourists. Through use of an a priori-clustering scheme, the data from the questionnaire were shown to be suitable to model Chinese tourists' Wet Tropics' experiences. In particular, cluster analysis was utilised to segment the Chinese market into two distinct markets according to a *tourist travel lens*. *Novice Explorers* exhibited limited prior travel experience and knowledge about the destination but were more willing to learn while *Established Travellers* portrayed relatively similar levels of both prior association and willingness to learn. Furthermore, many differences were noticeable in terms of the level of difference (i.e. average scores) and the degree of influence (i.e. strength of association) between various experience dimensions for the two Chinese tourist groups. Overall, *Novice Explorers* benefitted more from viewing and subsequently processing information whereas the actual experience played an important role for *Established Travellers*. The results of these studies demonstrated the role of various experience dimensions in Chinese tourists' understanding of Australian landscapes. In addition, the *tourist travel lens* was determined to be an effective approach to segment the Chinese market while recognising the unique features which comprise each group of tourists.

The third and final stage (management perspective) encompassed 15 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with tourism stakeholders in Australia's Wet Tropics. Tourism authority personnel, tourism ambassadors and tourism enterprises provided perspectives on both current representations and *future attitudes* towards managing Chinese tourists. In particular, the concept of *visitor management* was employed to assess current perspectives while the concept of optimism categorised *future attitudes*. Manual content analysis, thematic coding and frequency counts were utilised to explore the various management perspectives across the three stakeholder groups. Findings from the study indicate that while tourism stakeholders have diverse views they are also convergent to some degree. Furthermore, the addition of a study about managers' perspectives towards the future, which established a largely optimistic view, is a contribution which adds a well-rounded picture to the research phenomenon.

In summary, the current thesis highlighted the unique characteristics of Chinese tourists and their desired experience patterns for Australian landscape experiences. Perspectives were gathered from different stakeholders to provide a more holistic representation of Chinese tourists' involvement with Australian landscapes. Fundamental connections to existing work, as well as new insights arising from the empirical studies, suggested that the western-oriented research approach adopted in this thesis effectively examined a challenging but intriguing eastern phenomenon.

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Chapter 1 Chinese Outbound Tourism and the Natural World

CONFUCIUS SAYS...

“He who knows all the answers has not been asked all the questions”

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THESIS INTRODUCTION

The principle concern of this thesis is Chinese tourists' experiences of Australian landscapes. Particular emphasis is placed on how Chinese tourists view the Wet Tropics, a World Heritage designated area in northern Queensland, Australia. The generic research aim is to investigate what Chinese tourists gain (i.e. their views, interests and understanding) from being experientially immersed in Australian landscapes. Specifically, the goals of the thesis are: (1) to investigate how Chinese (and other) tourists portray Australian landscapes; (2) to explore what Chinese tourists gain from their Wet Tropics' experiences; and (3) to examine Wet Tropics' tourism stakeholders' perspectives towards managing Chinese tourism.

Research presented in this thesis provides an in-depth analysis of Chinese tourists' landscape experiences. This will be achieved through three study projects which explore three key dimensions of the research phenomenon. Initially, a blog analysis of tourists' photographs provides an observational overview. Subsequent questionnaire work offers an experiential account. Finally, semi-structured interviews represent a managerial view. Existing research on Chinese tourists' experiences of Australian landscapes is minimal. Therefore, an overall contribution of this thesis lies in the consideration of and insights about Chinese tourists' Australian landscape experiences from three diverse research angles – observational, experiential and managerial. The observational work provides preliminary insight into different tourists' experiences of different Australian landscapes, which then informs the specific Chinese tourists' Wet Tropics' experience analysis reported in the experiential and managerial studies. Moreover, the research presents western-oriented perspectives towards understanding a difficult, novel and understudied topic, that of Chinese tourists' views, interests and understanding of Australian landscapes.

Chapter one seeks to fulfil three objectives. Firstly, introductory remarks about the thesis are provided with a brief overview on background considerations. Secondly, the research phenomenon is introduced with consideration of background statistics, key issues shaping the research and the research context. Finally, the direction of the research is highlighted through a discussion of the thesis structure.

BACKGROUND CONSIDERATIONS

Overall, two important background considerations need to be clarified. Firstly, key terminology employed in the thesis must be defined. The current work focuses specifically on tourists travelling out of mainland China, not all Chinese tourists (Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan travellers included). Travellers from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan have previously been found to exhibit different travel desires and behaviours to mainland Chinese (Zhou, King & Turner, 1998). Furthermore, for historical reasons, citizens from these three areas were considered as different types of outbound tourists (Xie & Li, 2009). In this work, any reference to the Chinese market and/or tourists refers to travellers emerging out of mainland China. In addition, there is confusion in the subtle distinction (and interchangeable use) of the terminologies ‘tourist’ and ‘visitor’. Tourist refers to those persons travelling away from home for any reason(s), while visitor refers specifically to those seeking leisure activities. The current work employs the terminology tourist to represent people travelling out of mainland China for holiday purposes.

Furthermore, there are other terminologies introduced in the thesis, particularly the empirical research, which must be firstly defined. Table 1.1 explains the terminologies employed in the current thesis (indicated by italicised text).

Table 1.1. Operational working definitions

Terminology	Definition
Western	Those countries with a strong and continuing western European heritage. This link is also closely associated with relatively high levels of affluence (cf. Morris, 2011).
International resident	A person who has lived in any other country (besides China or Australia) for a minimum of one year prior to travel.
Blog	A composition of text and images which represents a travel entry by the individual blogger.
Star attraction	An experience which is portrayed in a substantially higher amount of photographs when compared to the average.
Low-light	An experience which is portrayed in a substantially lower amount of photographs when compared to the average.
Tourist travel lens	A unique combination of personal travel-related factors that

	influence how a tourist interprets their experience.
Overall tourist experience	The outcome of a travel-related experience which is shaped by the culmination of personal, setting and institutional influences.
Future attitudes	Level of optimism towards a situation which depicts Chinese outbound tourism to Australia's Wet Tropics in the year 2020.
Visitor management	The procedures / policies associated with – alongside the general treatment of – a group of visitors.

Whilst these operational working definitions derive from common terminology, the researcher has tailored them (i.e. made them more explicit) for the current research. Accordingly, the terminologies presented in Table 1.1 are not intended for interpretation beyond this thesis. Further explanations of these definitions are provided in the respective chapters where needed.

Secondly, the rationale for investigating this topic must be demarcated. The Chinese outbound market is currently and will continue to be a big player in tourism. While research on the Chinese market is ever-increasing, there exists scope to better understand Chinese tourists' experiences in more detail. This approach may assist destinations to better recognise and appreciate the subtle complexities of the many groups emerging from China. Consequently, more understanding of Chinese tourists' detailed experience components may increase the likelihood of attracting and satisfying the Chinese market. In addition, nature is one of Australia's biggest tourism drawcards for tourists world-wide. To keep visitation and satisfaction levels high, the Australian tourism industry may assist in shaping how tourists see environments and subsequently implement ways to inspire appreciation for the significance of landscapes.

INTRODUCTION TO THE LITERATURE

In 2012, when this research was conceptualised, minimal studies existed on Chinese tourists' experiences of Australian or indeed *western* landscapes and/or natural areas. The review of the available material was organised into two linked areas. Firstly, the research phenomenon was considered. This included a review of the literature in the following areas: (1) Chinese outbound tourism; (2) natural areas and landscapes; and

(3) Chinese cultural perspectives. The next section of the current chapter covers these topics. Secondly, more specific theoretical concepts linked to nature-based experiences were considered. This included a review of the literature in the following areas: (1) interpretation; (2) mindfulness and tourist learning; (3) cross-cultural translation; and (4) the tourist gaze. Chapter two addresses perspectives arising from these themes. Therefore, both sections of the literature review present only those perspectives that contribute directly to the development of a knowledge base for the research phenomenon to be explored in the current work.

RESEARCH PHENOMENON

China outbound tourism continues to be a growing phenomenon which has experienced rapid changes during the past five years (refer to Table 1.2). In 2012, China surpassed Germany and America to become the world's largest outbound tourism market, with over 83 million outbound travellers (<http://chinatraveltrends.com/>). Projections at this stage were for 100 million outbound tourists by 2020. In 2014, however, a milestone for China's outbound tourism was reached with the number of tourists travelling overseas reaching 117 million.

Table 1.2.China outbound tourism (2010-2014)

	Visitor year ^a				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Departures	57,386,500	70,250,000	83,182,700	98,190,000	117,000,000
China SARs	40,873,300	47,931,000	59,088,700	68,461,600	-
<i>Hong Kong</i>	23,099,000	28,320,700	34,955,600	40,303,300	-
<i>Macau</i>	16,112,400	19,765,300	21,502,900	25,239,400	-
<i>Taiwan</i>	1,661,900	1,845,000	2,630,200	2,918,900	-
Australia's ranking ^b	12 th	13 th	13 th	15 th	-

Note. - Data reporting was changed to outbound travel organised through travel agencies.

^aYear of visitation. ^bTop destinations for Chinese people (includes Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan).

(Source: <http://www.travelchinaguide.com/tourism/>).

Throughout 2010-2014, China's Special Administration Regions (SARs) remained major recipients of mainland Chinese tourists. Hong Kong and Macau ranked as the top and second top visited destinations respectively, while Taiwan ranked 4th from 2010 to 2012 but was thereafter surpassed by Thailand. In fact, most of the top 10 countries over the past five years were Asian neighbours and included South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia. Australia, as a *western* destination, continues to be highly visited by mainland Chinese tourists. Table 1.2 displays a drop in Australia's ranking over the five years albeit strong growth year-on-year. In 2010, Australia welcomed 545, 300 Chinese tourists which increased to 822, 700 China outbound tourists in 2013.

Australia has also witnessed the rapid development of the China outbound market. Table 1.3 and Figure 1.1 provide an overview of China outbound tourism to Australia for the past five years. At the beginning of the current thesis research (early 2012), China was Australia's third largest inbound market (533, 200 arrivals) and the largest market for total expenditure (3.8 billion AUD) and visitor nights (25.9 million) (Tourism Australia [TA], 2012a). Overall, Australia ranked 11th among all out-of-region (e.g. outside of mainland China) destinations for Chinese travellers. Demographically, tourists aged 45-59 years old comprised the largest Chinese market visiting Australia. Forecasts for 2020 at the time were that China outbound tourism would contribute 860, 000 visitors and seven to nine billion AUD in expenditure becoming Australia's most valued inbound tourist market (TA, 2011a).

Table 1.3. Market performance of China outbound tourism to Australia (2010-2014)

	Visitor year ^a				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Age demographic (largest) (years)	15-29	45-59	45-59	45-59	45-59
Expenditure (billion)	3.26	3.80	4.20	4.80	5.70
Visitor nights (million)	24.0	25.9	27.8	29.8	33.6
Out-of-region ranking	14 th	10 th	11 th	10 th	NA
Inbound market ranking	4 th	3 rd	2 nd	2 nd	2 nd

^aYear of visitation (data are released around March the following year).
(Source: *China market profiles*; see TA 2011a, 2012a, 2013a, 2014 and 2015).

In 2014 – the latest figures released by the conclusion of this research – China was Australia’s second largest market in terms of visitor arrivals (839, 500). China’s ranking increased from the fourth largest inbound market to second-only to New Zealand. China remained Australia’s largest inbound market for expenditure (5.70 billion AUD) and visitor nights (33.6 million) over the past five years. Chinese travellers aged 45-59 years old have been the largest market for the past four years, overtaking 15-29 year olds in 2011.

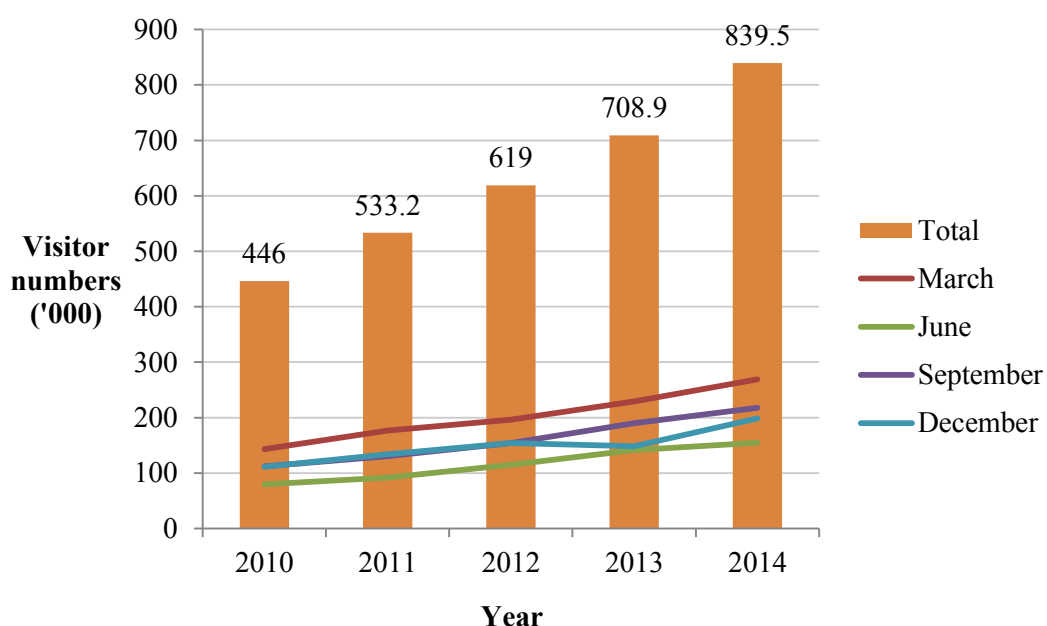


Figure 1.1. Chinese visitor arrivals (2010-2014)

(Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics [ABS], 2015)

RISE OF THE MAINLAND CHINA OUTBOUND TOURISM MARKET

Outbound tourism from the mainland of China is still a rather recent phenomenon. Throughout the duration of this doctoral research, strong market growth has been noted as well as continuously-developing trends with new markets emerging (cf. Arlt, 2013). Zhang and Heung (2001) describe the development of Chinese outbound tourism as a series of four ‘ripples’: (1) growth in domestic tourism; (2) 1983: visiting friends and relatives (VFR) in Hong Kong and Macau; (3) 1990-1996: border area travel to fellow Asian ADS countries such as Singapore, Malaysia,

Thailand, Russia, Mongolia and The Philippines (Guo, Kim & Timothy, 2007; Xie & Li, 2009); and (4) 1997: enactment of “Provisional Regulation on Self-supported Outbound Travel” by the China National Tourism Association [CNTA] and the Ministry of Public Security (Guo et al., 2007; Xie & Li, 2009), and the granting of ADS to the first western countries, Australia and New Zealand (Pan & Laws, 2003). Travel during this period – or first wave – was group oriented and heavily regulated.

Ever since the early 1990s, China outbound tourism has grown at an extraordinary rate (Andreu, Claver & Quer, 2010; Breakey, Ding & Lee, 2008) and has attracted world-wide attention (Chow & Murphy, 2007; Keating & Kriz, 2008). In 2012, changes in the travel patterns of Chinese tourists indicated that a second wave of outbound tourism had begun (see China Outbound Tourism Research Institute [COTRI], 2012). The current research has been conducted concurrently with the emergence of New Chinese Tourists (see Chapter seven for more discussion on the most recent Chinese market changes).

Australia, like many other countries, is actively pursuing a share of the Chinese market. Table 1.2 (and the supporting discussion) highlighted that Australia is a strong competitor on the western front. To remain competitive, Tourism Australia – the national tourism body – has implemented strategic plans to help achieve the 2020 target of 860, 000 Chinese tourists (see TA, 2011b for further details). Research conducted by GfK Blue Moon¹ has determined that the target Chinese customer for Australia is affluent men and women couples, aged 30-49 years, who live in primary (Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou) and secondary (Chongqing, Hangzhou, Nanjing, Shenyang, Shenzhen, Tianjin, Wuhan and Xiamen) cities and are experienced travellers. Tourism Australia is currently targeting this market through various marketing initiatives including “There’s nothing like Australia” global campaign, “Trip in a minute” campaign, “Dream come true” competition and “Discover your Australia” online drama (See TA, 2012b for summary information on all initiatives). Throughout the duration of the thesis, more research has been conducted and more strategies have been developed specifically on Chinese travellers to Australia.

¹ Commissioned by Tourism Australia in late 2011 – as part of TA’s 2020 China tourism strategy – to conduct research into the Chinese target consumer (results are reported in TA, 2012b).

NATURAL AREAS AND LANDSCAPES

People have always been drawn to natural areas. Today's transportation facilitates travel to the many unique and diverse environments in the world (Newsome, Moore & Dowling, 2002). Indeed, nature-related tourism has rapidly grown to become one of the world's biggest tourism sectors (Fredman & Tyrväinen, 2010). Preference for nature-based tourism activities might be linked to the fact that natural areas offer a variety of experiences and cater to many purposes (see Meyer-Arendt, 2008, pp.425-432 for a review of the variety of origins of tourist attraction to the physical environment). In particular, adventure tourism, ecotourism, geotourism, wildlife tourism, wilderness travel and outdoor recreational activities can all be seen as different forms of nature-based tourism. Nature-situated experiences are thus considered to provide significant benefits to the regions where they occur (Laarman & Gregersen, 1996, Eagles, 2002, and Nyaupane et al., 2004, all cited in Munro, Morrison-Saunders & Hughes, 2008, p.1). Furthermore, nature tourists can be both participants in various forms of activities (e.g., hiking, skiing and wildlife viewing) but also consumers of commodities (Fredman & Tyrväinen, 2010). Overall, nature-based tourism aims to ensure that its users not only enjoy the setting but simultaneously develop an appreciation, knowledge and awareness, to mitigate their impacts on the site and local community (Cloesen, 2003).

Tourism (in general) is quite dependent on natural areas and their resources (mountains, lakes, rivers). Natural environments serve as a principal attraction or setting for tourist activities (Buckley, 2000). The tourism industry has been fast to accept this dependence and is increasingly designing marketing initiatives built on nature and natural encounters (Gössling, 2002). For example, the *There's nothing like Australia* – phase 2 campaign features prominent Australian landscapes including Uluru, the Great Ocean Road, the Great Barrier Reef, Kangaroo Island, the Kimberley and the Blue Mountains (see TA, 2012c for further details of the campaign). This dependence, alongside the scale of the market, suggests that some disturbance or damage is inevitable (Deng, King & Bauer, 2002). Consequently, nature-related tourism research has generally focused on tourists' behaviour and motivations as well as ecological and social sustainability (Fredman & Tyrväinen, 2010). Furthermore, due to the diverse and varied characteristics of nature-based tourists, research has also explored tourist typologies (see Arneggar, Woltering &

Job, 2010, for a review of a range of tourist-based typologies as well as key changes and trends for nature-based tourism). The way that people experience and respond to environments is, however, a reflection of our ability to be cognitive and reflexive individuals (Tresidder, 2001). Therefore, a consideration of the values, attitudes and behaviour of people is fundamental to understanding how different people experience environments (Newsome et al., 2002). This thesis attempts to contribute to this topic through a specific focus on what Chinese tourists gain from Australian landscapes.

Landscapes play an important role in tourists' experiences (Fairweather & Swaffield, 2003). Regardless of the activity, destination or reason for travel, tourism is intimately grounded within the experience of landscapes (Jacobsen, 2007). Tourists always encounter natural scenery during their travels and are therefore likely to consciously and subconsciously evaluate these spaces. Indeed, the majority of landscape-related research has been directed towards determining perceptions and evaluating quality. This has evolved over three streams. Firstly, in the 1960s, research was informed by the work of Carl Sauer who believed that "landscapes could be read in an objective, scientific way by mapping, classifying and describing various material forms" (Terkenli, 2008; Scott, Carter, Brown & White, 2009). Secondly, in the 1970s, landscapes were thought to be visually perceived where researchers focused on describing and predicting people's responses and preferences for landscapes through visual techniques. Finally, towards the late twentieth century, there was a cultural and experiential turn to the research thinking (Scott et al., 2009). Research now concerned the way landscapes are seen and how different people could interpret the same features differently. Landscape quality was thus determined to be in the eyes of the beholder instead of in the actual setting (Jacobsen, 2007). The fact that a multitude of different tourists can experience the one site in diverse ways, calls for other avenues of landscape investigations.

Rising competition among destinations creates a necessity for tourism marketers to try and understand how actual and potential tourists perceive certain landscapes (Jacobsen, 2007). The tourist-landscape relationship is complex and requires contextual interpretation (Terkenli, 2008). Specifically, there is scope to investigate tourists' experiences and interactions with local landscapes (Scott et al.,

2009). Additional studies could examine the interpretation of landscapes to make some judgement about peoples' understanding of the environments they experience when travelling (Jacobsen, 2007). Research requires attention to the cultural construction of a landscape and associated distinct and meaningful interpretations (Ryan, 2000, cited in Fairweather & Swaffield, 2003, p.57). The current research explores these ideas through an in-depth analysis of Chinese tourists' experiences of Australian landscapes, with particular reference to one World Heritage Area – the Wet Tropics.

Nature motivates people to travel to Australia more than any other reason². In fact, Australia's plethora of unique, colourfully-distinct environments can be likened to looking through a kaleidoscope. Tourists can enjoy a myriad of nature-related settings, activities and experiences including reefs (snorkelling, diving), beaches (fishing, swimming), the outback (four-wheel-driving, camping), rainforests (bush walking), mountains (hiking) and many other special landscapes. Landscapes, therefore, play an important and prominent role in the Australian tourism industry. This drives a necessity to ensure tourists are receiving the comprehensible messages. Firstly, there are cultural views to Australian landscapes. European settlement and Indigenous Australian beliefs both shape landscape interpretations; Europeans grazed the land while Indigenous people see the land as a food resource and a place to teach younger generations and connect with ancestors. Cultural aspects may add a richer dimension to the tourist experience if incorporated into the interpretation of natural areas (Fountain, Espiner & Xie, 2010). Secondly, natural changes (e.g. bushfires and cyclones) strongly define Australian landscapes. For example, bushfires provide the mechanism for the dispersal of seeds and removal of undesired exotic plants (Hall, 2007); however, the beauty of this event is hard to convey when a tourist gazes upon a blackened landscape.

Overall, there has been a marked absence into how tourists experience natural environments (Newsome et al., 2002). Emerging perspectives from a landscape and natural area orientation were presented above. The current thesis attempts to extend this discussion with a specific analysis of Chinese tourists' experiences of Australian landscapes. There is merit, however, in briefly considering

² Based on research conducted by Tourism Australia in 2010 (reported in TA, 2013b).

two other literature areas that portray the complexity of interaction between nature and tourism. These include (1) landscape and geology (e.g. geotourism) and (2) wildlife tourism.

Firstly, geotourism represents “tourism associated with geological and geomorphological sites (or geosites) and collections” (Hose, 2008, p.37). Specifically, this movement of tourism attempts to promote conservation and understanding of geological features through a process of learning and appreciation (Newsome, Dowling & Leung, 2012). Tourists travel to natural and/or urban environments to understand the science and to admire the evolutionary beauty of a landscape. Geotourism is thus not only concerned with geoscientific matters, but also the scenic, cultural, economic and ecological values of a landscape (Pralong, 2006).

Relatively young as an area of academic inquiry, geotourism has connections to the nineteenth century literature around landscape aesthetics and conservation of the natural environment (Hose, 2012). Indeed, Gordan (2012, p.73) describes some of the purposes of geotourism as: (1) rekindling a sense of wonder, awe, enchantment and reverence for a natural world; (2) recognising and celebrating the creativity of the non-living world; (3) helping people to re-discover their cultural roots and sense of place; and (4) enabling a more holistic view of the world, linking the natural and cultural realms. Australia has some unique geological sites including but not limited to Uluru in the Northern Territory, The Pinnacles in Western Australia, and The Twelve Apostles along the Great Ocean Road, Victoria. Each geological site provides different insights into the evolutionary nature of the surrounding landscape; thus, any attempt to understand tourists’ experiences and connections to geosites warrants a detailed, site-specific investigation.

Secondly, other perspectives towards tourists’ bond with nature can be gleaned from the area of wildlife tourism. On the whole, “wildlife tourists seek an experience that will enable them to explore, no matter for how short a time, a new ecosystem and its inhabitants” (Newsome et al., 2002, p.14). These experiences typically come in a range of non-consumptive activities such as observing and/or photographing wildlife, seeking tracks and/or signs of wildlife movements, and learning about wildlife through interpretation facilities. Wildlife encounters can, therefore, occur in a number of natural and artificial settings, along a spectrum from

fully captive facilities (e.g. zoos, aquariums) to the ‘wild’ environment (see Orams, 1996). Accordingly, it is the specific environmental context and the social dynamics occurring at that instance of consumption which determines wildlife encounters (Lemelin & Smale, 2006). Furthermore, as tourists desire a hedonic communion with nature (Curtin, 2005), wildlife tourism research needs to carefully unpack the human dimensions of wildlife tourism (e.g., viewing expectations, on-site behaviours and experiences) to assist in developing appropriate management strategies (Lemelin & Scale, 2006).

Ideas derived from geotourism and wildlife tourism (as presented above) are only used to a small extent in the current thesis, where the specifics of interpretive content are less of interest than the processes and the nature of the markets.

CHINESE “VIEWS” OF LANDSCAPES

The Chinese outbound market, like many other tourist segments, is attracted to the natural areas and landscapes of the various destinations that they visit. In particular, visiting natural wonders and admiring scenic beauty rates highly among Chinese outbound travellers (Yu & Weiler, 2006; Chow & Murphy, 2007; Ai-Ping, 2009). The most important motivation for visiting natural areas, however, is not related to seeking scientific knowledge. Instead, Chinese tourists are on a journey in search of moral enlightenment, an aesthetic experience and to enjoy *being* in nature (Xu, Cui, Ballantyne & Packer, 2013). In particular, Daoism, Taoism, Buddhism and Confucian thought and philosophies have all contributed to these contemporary values associated with nature (Li, 2008) and the appreciation of landscapes (Xu, Ding & Packer, 2008). One cultural view is that man should have a close relationship with nature (Fountain et al., 2010). Confucian thought and Daoist philosophy recognise a need for a symbiotic relationship (Li, 2008) while Taoism suggests full integration with nature (Xu et al., 2013). Another Confucius teaching is that human beings should learn from nature (Xu et al., 2013).

Chinese tourists’ views of domestic landscapes have also developed through connections to literary works. In China, tourist sites hold little value unless a famous poet has written about it or an artist has painted its majesty. These poems and

paintings have subsequently become embedded in the landscapes and are used by Chinese tourists to evaluate the attractiveness of the visited site (Xu et al., 2008). Huge stone monuments have been erected at numerous sites which are engraved with famous poetry, quotes and philosophies of important Chinese people. In addition, Chinese travellers have a tendency to view landscapes as specific images. For example, the shape of a mountain is often associated with the image of an animal that the shape represents. Overall, for Chinese tourists to have a meaningful experience, they must become part of the landscape which creates a cultural-scape and not wilderness in the idealised western sense (Li, 2005, cited in Li, 2008, p.494).

Furthermore, the concept of scenic spots plays a crucial role in the way that Chinese tourists view landscapes. The term “scenic spot” is quite complex and elusive and is probably only truly understood by Chinese natives. Nyíri (2006), however, provides some defining perspectives in his book titled *Scenic spots: Chinese tourism, the state, and cultural authority*. In particular, he describes four things that contribute to the enshrinement of a scenic spot (pp. 48-55). Firstly, scenic spots have to be delimited and developed or constructed. Secondly, scenic spots have to be classified and approved by a legal or cultural authority. Thirdly, scenic spots are generally constructed as a series of attractions such as natural formations, statues, archaeological relics or simply views. Finally, a visit to a scenic spot should fulfil expectations for what tourists generally do (i.e. playing or entertaining oneself).

Scenic spots, or *mingsheng*³, have played an important role in the development of domestic tourism. Historically, the development of *mingsheng* was influenced by imperial pilgrimages and the routes of the official courier (Nyíri, 2006, p.69). Famous political figures, artists and poets would travel to these “spots” and describe the visual elements of the landscape as well as the atmospherics and sensual aspects of being there. These stories and cultural references have sequentially become entrenched in the landscapes and have created a desire among Chinese residents to visit and experience scenic spots. Tourists are expected to be able to take photographs that are representative of the cultural references and the elements that have been recognised as its essence (p.64). Furthermore, scenic spots are marketed

³ A term used to refer to a place with beautiful scenery since the Northern Qi dynasty (Wu, 1992, cited in Nyíri, 2006, p.7)

with images and brief texts which together detail the sensual element of the site (i.e. a site lies ‘in the midst of high mountains’); details such as the height of a mountain (which is common in *western* travel information) is seldom provided. Therefore, there is a need to understand how Chinese tourists deal with “the far less canonised meanings of sites they encounter outside of China” (Nyíri, 2006, p.104).

‘CHINESE’ IMPLICATIONS FOR THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The complexity of the topic supports a strong probability that any related research would have primarily been conducted by Chinese scholars and published in Mandarin. Indeed, Zhong, Deng, Song and Ding (2011) provide a comprehensive account on the state of research concerning environmental impacts of tourism in China. In this review, Zhong et al. (2011) noted that such studies have increased rapidly over recent years (380 papers published between 2001 and 2009), and have explored a range of topics including environmental impacts, environment carrying capacity, environmental quality evaluation and protection measures. For example, Li, Ge and Liu (2005) in their study about hiking trails in Jiuzhaigou Biosphere Reserve, found that problems were more frequently noted in pristine trails, more serious in flagstone trails, and not evident in wooden trails. Another study by Li (2004) concerning environmental management indicators at Tianmushan Nature Reserve indicated that vegetation destruction and shortage of water supply were two key issues restricting tourism development. Overall, as 16 per cent of the developed nature reserves in China have more than 100,000 tourists annually (Li, 2004), issues concerning water, atmospheric environment, soil and soil erosion, flora and fauna biodiversity, soundscapes, socio-cultural outcomes, and carrying capacity need due consideration (see Zhong et al., 2011 for perspectives on these issues).

In addition, some studies concerning Chinese tourists’ experiences of domestic and international landscapes involving *western* scholars (and published in English) are starting to emerge. The current thesis attempts to add to this growing body of literature by considering what Chinese tourists gain from Australian landscape experiences. In light of the above discussion, landscape managers need to consider what ‘Chinese’ issues might arise in the Australian context. How can tourism presenters understand what Chinese tourists desire in Australian landscapes?

What can be done to ensure environmental integrity and sustainability of the tourist experience? Is crowding / congesting issues that plague Chinese scenic spots likely to transfer to Australian landscapes? Through detailed exploration of Chinese tourists' Australian experiences and the respective Australian tourism managers' reflections on catering to these tourists, can researchers begin to understand the 'Chinese' challenges that Australia's natural environment faces. A core value of the current research includes the use of multiple methods to assess a difficult, novel, understudied topic through a *westerner's* orientation. In this process, it is admitted that a full emic or participant view is not possible. There is, however, the option pursued in this thesis which is to make as much sense as possible of the Chinese gaze in *western* terms.

The researcher is a young, female European-American descendant (nationality: Australian) with no religious affiliation. Since an early age, the researcher had a keen interest for languages and cross-cultural contact despite living in Australia her entire life. Throughout her candidature, the researcher worked closely with her Chinese acquaintances and continued to seek cultural understanding. In addition, travelling with Chinese companions around various parts of Australia provided the researcher with deeper knowledge into the lives of Chinese people. This knowledge was further extended through a personal visit to China, specifically, the cities of Xi'an, Guilin and Beijing. These immersive experiences further strengthened the researcher's knowledge of what it means to be Chinese, and pertaining to this thesis, how to see the world through a Chinese lens.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

Landscapes include a diversity of environments – some of which are land-based (terrestrial) and others water-based (marine). The previous section highlighted key issues to consider when exploring tourists' experiences in nature-based settings. Overall, landscapes can generally be viewed as a geographic area which is constructed through a mixture of biophysical, cultural and social facets and influences. The overall focus of the current thesis is to explore in detail Chinese tourists' Australian landscape experiences. In this sense, 'landscape experience' has been investigated as all the activities linked to a definable, geographic area. That is,

the research studies examine Chinese tourists' reported experiences of three individual sites; the focus is not to identify the wider influences (cultural and social aspects) which shape the experience offering.

In particular, the current research project has been designed to link in with Australia's National Landscape program. Since 2005, Tourism Australia and Parks Australia have been working in partnership to develop the National Landscapes Program. This program was inspired by the need to identify Australia's iconic landscapes, which capture and promote areas of outstanding natural beauty and cultural significance (TA, 2013b). Furthermore, this joint initiative was established to make Australia's wealth of landscapes more 'digestible' by domestic and international tourists alike. In particular, the National Landscapes program aims to:

- Promote Australia's world class, high quality experiences;
- Increase the value of tourism to regional economies;
- Enhance the role of protected areas in those economies; and,
- Build support for protecting our natural and cultural assets.

Altogether, 16 landscapes have been identified (for more information, see <http://www.australia.com/campaigns/nationallandscapes/index.htm>). The selection of these National Landscapes to explore Chinese tourists' experiences of Australian environments was two-fold. Firstly, these geographic areas represent internationally-recognised and acclaimed tourism experiences. Tourism Australia has invested substantially in the marketing of Australia's natural environments. In June 2012, Tourism Australia unveiled the latest phase of the "There's nothing like Australia" campaign. The campaign featured Australia's unique and distinctive experiences and immediately proved to be successful in the Chinese market; over 90 per cent of campaign viewers had already starting to plan a trip to Australia (TA, 2012c).

Secondly, the National Landscapes program is in a state of refinement. At the beginning of this thesis research (2012), the National Landscapes program was in the 'setting the foundations' stage. This stage aimed to establish and market the suite of National Landscapes, deliver experience development strategies, implement priority projects, develop new products and services, build networks and create tools to assist stakeholders. In 2015, the program transitioned to the 'seeing the results'

stage. This stage aims to refine landscapes, improve use of digital social media technology, increase trade awareness and inspire stakeholders, deliver new products and experiences online and profile conservation's success. Findings and implications arising from the current thesis work can contribute towards refining National Landscape experiences and creating new tourism products.

RESEARCH DIRECTION OF THE THESIS

VISITOR MANAGEMENT AND THE TOURIST EXPERIENCE

Natural environments around the world are faced with continued pressures from increasing levels of visitation. One way to alleviate these outcomes while simultaneously maintaining tourist experiences is through visitor management strategies (Jim, 1989). Environmental resources can be managed in sustainable or maintainable ways depending on the level of stakeholder involvement and engagement in management decisions (cf. Hardy & Beeton, 2001). Natural area managers have a responsibility to protect and be publicly accountable for these precious investments (Moore, Smith & Newsome, 2003). Effective visitor management strategies, however, require sensitivity to individual markets. This is because every visitor brings distinctive traits and learns about the environment differently (Urry, 1992). Similarly, the way that individuals engage in tourism may produce differing levels of appreciation for nature-based attractions (Packer, Ballantyne & Hughes, 2014).

In addition, the tourist experience is a well-used phrase and has been a popular academic topic for quite some time (Quan & Wang, 2004; Uriely, 2005; Jennings et al., 2011). Despite this, academic consensus on a definition eludes. Some researchers stress the subjective and individual nature (e.g. Larsen, 2007; Larsen & Mossberg, 2007; O'Dell, 2007) whilst others advocate the fleeting, continuous process of doing activities which are meaningful and different to everyday life (e.g. McClinchey & Carmichael, 2010; Moscardo, 2010). Furthermore, difficulty surrounds the identification and measurement of individual components and how tourist experiences change according to the tourist and destination characteristics (Volo, 2009; Moscardo, 2010). Oh, Fiore and Jeoung (2007) identified everything

that tourists go through at a destination can be an experience – be it behavioural or perceptual, cognitive or emotional, or express or implied. In Uriely's (2005) sophisticated treatment of the conceptual developments of the tourist experience, he advocates that future research should consider: (1) the specific nature / setting; (2) the interconnections between the objects and subjects; (3) cultural sensitivities and the voice of non-western tourists; and (4) both applied and recommended methodologies.

EXISTING RESEARCH ON THE CHINA OUTBOUND MARKET

The rapid rise and development of the China outbound market has resulted in several important considerations. Firstly, the continuing popularity and increasing capability of Chinese citizens to engage in travel related activities, potentially raise concerns about very substantial tourism numbers in the near future. Overseas countries still appear to have 'Chinese hot spots' particularly for the New Chinese Tourists who are engaging in outbound travel for the first time. For example, Sydney, Melbourne and the Gold Coast are still some of the top places Chinese tourists visit in Australia. Secondly, the unique juxtaposition of more sophisticated, affluent travellers seeking richer experiences and those travellers on group packaged tours (see Arlt, 2013 for a detailed review) suggests different levels of travel backgrounds and preferences. Tourism stakeholders and experience providers may need to consider specific approaches to effectively target individual niche markets of Chinese travellers. Thirdly, an overwhelming proportion of Chinese citizens utilise social media to share their travel activities. Chinese residents value recommendations from members of their social groups; therefore, "word-of-mouth" communications play an important role in destination marketing towards Chinese would-be tourists. Finally, the growing size and disposable income of the Chinese market makes targeting these travellers quite lucrative. Many destinations are actively seeking Chinese tourists (through innovative means) due to the emerging middle class and prediction for more than 100 million outbound travellers by 2020. For a country like Australia, strict visa conditions and high expenses are potentially hindering growth, while safety, uniqueness and close proximity are favourable forces attracting Chinese tourists.

With the growth of the China outbound market, more scholarly attention has been directed towards understanding Chinese tourists. Over the last 10-20 years, the majority of this work has been consumer-based and focused on one of three areas: (1) the development of the market; (2) the characteristics of Chinese travellers; or (3) Chinese tourists' travel motivations (refer to Table 1.4 for a selected review of Chinese market related publications). In addition to the English literature, there is a substantial amount of Mandarin work which primarily centres on Chinese domestic tourists (see Huang & Hsu, 2008 for a review).

Table 1.4. A selection of English literature on China outbound tourism

Themes	Sub-themes	Representative work
Travel destinations	China SARs (Hong Kong and Macau) and Taiwan	Zhang & Lam (1999); Zhang & Heung (2001); Huang & Hsu (2005); Li, Wen & Leung (2011)
	Within Asia	Kau & Lim (2005)
	Out of Asia	Yu & Weiler (2001); Breakey, Ding & Lee (2008); Chow & Murphy (2007); Josiam, Huang, Spears, Kennon & Bahulkar (2009); Li, Xu & Weaver (2009); Sparks & Pan (2009); Kwek & Lee (2010); Agrusa, Kim & Wang (2011); Corigliano (2011); Fountain, Espiner & Xie (2010); Hua & Yoo (2011); Yun & Joppe (2011)
Research themes	Chinese outbound tourism development reviews	Zhou, King & Turner (1998); Zhang, Pine & Zhang (2000); Qun & Jie (2001); Tse & Hobson (2008)
	Research reviews	Breakey et al. (2008); Cai, Li & Knutson (2008)
	Motivation studies	Zhang & Lam (1999); Huang & Hsu (2005); Kau & Lim (2005); Li et al. (2009); Hua & Yoo (2011); M. Li et al. (2011); Lu (2011)
	Behaviour studies	Yu & Weiler (2001); Josiam et al. (2009); Sparks & Pan (2009); Fountain et al. (2010); Li, Lai, Harrill, Kline &

	Wang (2011); Chen & Gassner (2012)
Marketing studies	Guo, Kim & Timothy (2007); Li, Harrill, Uysal, Burnett & Zhan (2010)
Cultural issues	Mok & Defranco (2000)
Others	Chan (2006); Kwek & Lee (2010)

Nevertheless, it can still be argued that Chinese outbound tourism studies are relatively limited despite strong growth. Previous work has typically described and profiled the market (see examples in Table 1.4); however, there is a need to shift towards understanding tourist segment specificities as more Chinese markets emerge (Breakey et al., 2008; Ai-Ping, 2009). In particular, researchers have recognised the need to explore differences – and the underlying reasons for those differences – among market segments (Li, Lai, Harrill, Kline & Wang, 2011) as well as between mainland Chinese and *western* travellers (Hua & Yoo, 2011). Furthermore, questions of ‘how’ and ‘why’ with respect to investigations on mainland Chinese tourists’ experiences remain unanswered. Success in attracting a globally-desired market depends on *western* managers’ full comprehension of the culturally different Chinese tourists who continue to see the ‘outside’ world (Chow & Murphy, 2007; Wang & Davidson, 2010).

Thus, the direction of the current thesis is to examine Chinese tourists’ views, interests and understanding of Australian landscape experiences. Drawing on the aforementioned research gaps and suggested future directions arising from the brief review of visitor management and tourist experiences, as well as existing Chinese outbound tourism studies, the current thesis attempts to: (1) **investigate how Chinese (and other) tourists portray Australian landscapes**; (2) **explore what Chinese tourists gain from their Wet Tropics’ experiences**; and (3) **examine Wet Tropics’ tourism stakeholders’ perspectives towards managing Chinese tourists**. Whilst the main analysis focuses on Chinese tourists’ experience of the Wet Tropics (studies two and three), the inclusion of other tourist markets for different Australian landscapes (study one) helps to create more appreciation for this challenging research topic. Importantly, this research is being conducted through ‘western eyes’. *Western* researchers, who still comprise a dominant group in the tourism studies community,

can find it difficult to understand Chinese tourists (Pearce, Wu & Osmond, 2013). Measures were employed to account for this potential issue and include language translations, developing cultural knowledge and working with Chinese natives. Overall, the contribution of this thesis lies in expanding Chinese outbound tourism studies through an in-depth appreciation of Chinese tourists' experiences in Australian landscapes.

THESIS STRUCTURE

This thesis is divided into three sections. Firstly, the study background and rationale are presented in the current chapter as well as in Chapter two. Key statistics, literature and theoretical perspectives are discussed in the first part of the thesis. In addition, Chapter three introduces methodological perspectives including the conceptual underpinning of the work, paradigmatic concerns and methodological approaches. Secondly, three research studies exploring Chinese tourists' experiences of Australian landscapes are presented individually in Chapters four, five and six. These chapters introduce the specific concepts informing each study, as well as detailing the methodology, results, conclusions and implications. Finally, the research is drawn together in Chapter seven which highlights wider study implications and contributions to the tourism literature. Figure 1.2 displays the chapter outline for this thesis.

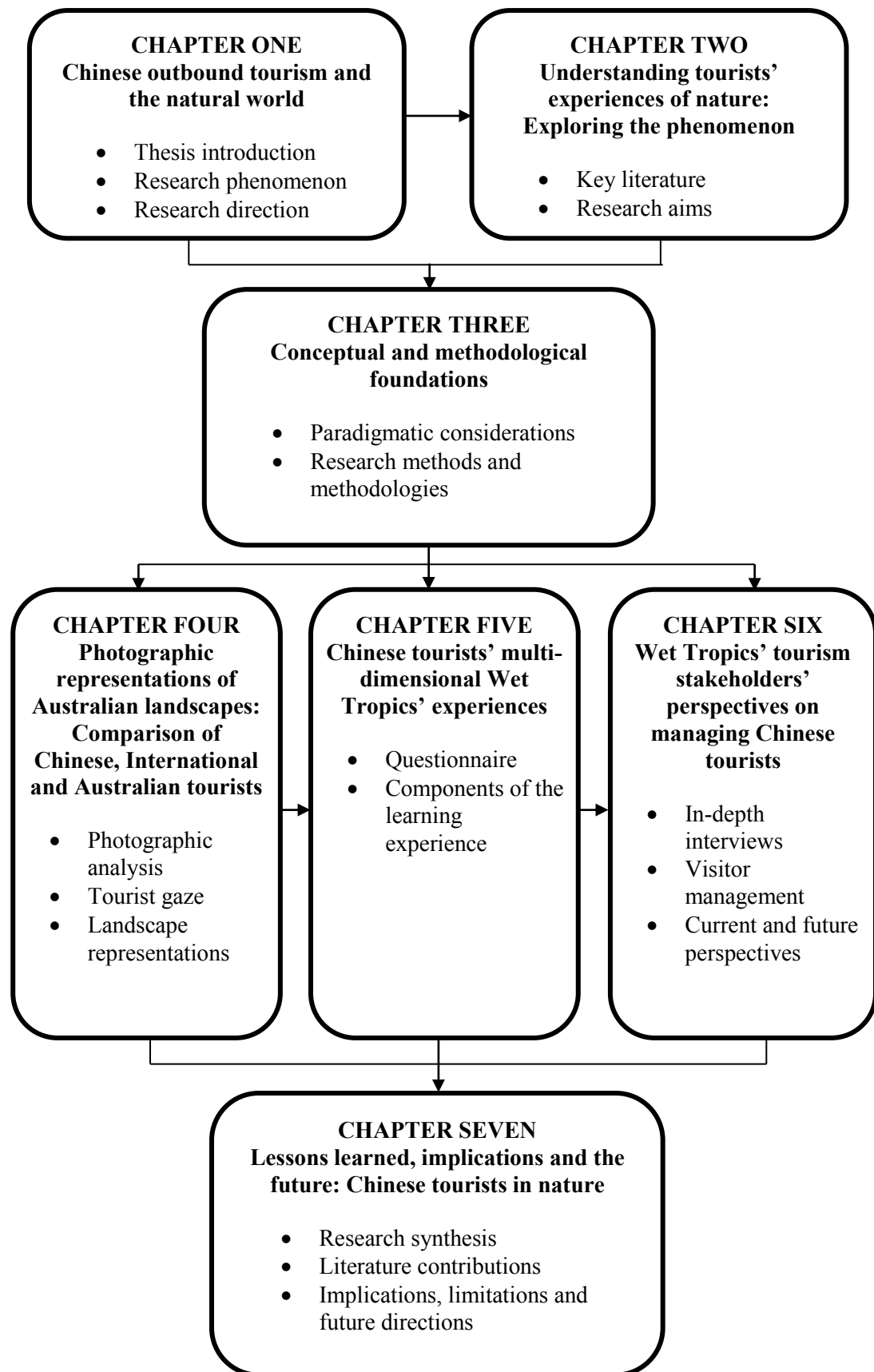


Figure 1.2. Chapter outline of the research thesis

Chapter 2 Understanding tourists' experience of nature: Exploring the phenomenon

CONFUCIUS SAYS...

“To know what you know and to know what you don't know, that is real wisdom”

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INTRODUCTION

Chapter two presents the state of existing knowledge about key topics which are shaping the thesis. Research on China outbound tourism has historically explored its development and/or market characteristics (see discussion in Chapter one). Throughout the duration of this thesis, however, the author acknowledges the increasing amounts of work which have been conducted on Chinese outbound tourists' travel-related experiences. The research presented in the subsequent empirical studies (i.e. Chapters four, five and six) aims to portray a detailed analysis of Chinese tourists' views, interests and understandings of Australian landscapes.

The goal of Chapter two is two-fold. Firstly, a review of the existing knowledge and how it influences the development of the current thesis will be presented. In particular, an integrated, multi-perspective literature approach was adopted. Due to a limited amount of directly relevant Chinese literature, the conceptualisation of the current work drew more broadly on existing research and insights deriving from the fields of interpretation, mindfulness and tourist learning, cross-cultural translation and the tourist gaze. These topics are individually considered below with specific links to natural encounters and Chinese outbound tourism where literature is available. Secondly, initial foundations of the thesis research are detailed. Research opportunities arising from the integrated literature review are documented with the overall research question stated. This discussion sets the framework for the detailed methodological and paradigmatic consideration presented in Chapter three.

INTERPRETATION

Since the earliest cultural activities, thousands of specialists have been responsible for revealing the beauty and wonder, as well as the inspiration and spiritual meaning of places (Tilden, 1977). Tourists to such places and who experience such settings are exposed, should they choose, to a kind of elective education (Tilden, 1977). This elective education seeks to tell tourists what is unique about the place they are visiting, and is called interpretation.

Interpretation is a special kind of communication that is relevant to tourism (Moscardo, 1999). As a concept, it has been defined in many subtly-different ways (see Table 2.1). One difficulty in finding a universal definition lies in the fact that interpretation encompasses many possibilities (Beck & Cable, 1998). Another reason is that some definitions are too inclusive while others lack key information (Tilden, 1977). Tilden (1977) is one of the most cited authors, who defined interpretation as:

“An educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by firsthand experience, and by illustrative media rather than simply to communicate factual information”.

Table 2.1. Explicit definitions of interpretation in the selected literature

Literature	Explicit definitions of interpretation
Prentice (1996) ^a	Interpretation is a process of communicating to people the significance of a place so that they can enjoy it more, understand its importance, and develop a positive attitude towards conservation. Interpretation is used to enhance the enjoyment of place, to convey symbolic meanings, and to facilitate attitudinal or behavioural change
McArthur (1998a) ^b	Interpretation is a coordinated, creative and inspiring form of learning. It provides a means of discovering the many complexities of the world and our role within it. It leaves people moved, their assumptions challenged and their interest in learning stimulated
Moscardo (2000) ^b	Interpretation is an activity which seeks to explain to people the significance of an object, a culture or a place. Its three core functions are to enhance visitor experience, to improve visitor knowledge or understanding, and to assist in the protection or conservation of places or cultures
National Association for Interpretation (2006)	A mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and meanings inherent in the resource
Poria, Biran & Reichel (2009)	Interpretation is the process of the transmission of knowledge, its diffusion, and its reception and perception by the individual
Interpretation Australia (2012)	Heritage interpretation is a means of communicating ideas and feelings which help people understand more about themselves and their environment

Note. ^aCited in Stewart, Hayward, Devlin & Kirby, 1998, p.257. ^bCited in Newsome, Moore & Dowling, 2002, p.241.

Tilden (1977) initially explained the concept by providing six principles to environmental interpretation (refer to Table 2.2). Increasingly, researchers are seeking to extend the work of Tilden by considering interpretation from a number of contemporary theoretical frameworks. For example, Ablett and Dyer (2009) reviewed interpretation from a hermeneutics perspective whilst Stewart, Hayward, Devlin and Kirby (1998) drew on the sense of place theory. Nevertheless, whilst these new efforts provide fresh perspectives about interpretation, some key elements are reoccurring:

- Interpretation is a process of communicating and transmitting knowledge from the presenter to the viewer (Stewart et al., 1998; Poria et al., 2009).
- Interpretation reveals meanings about cultural and natural resources, communicating the significance of a place (Beck & Cable, 1998; Stewart et al., 1998; Uzzell, 1998a; Hughes & Morrison-Saunders, 2005a).
- Interpretation is an educational activity that seeks to enhance a person's understanding, and to encourage new ways of thinking (Beck & Cable, 1998; Stewart et al., 1998; Newsome et al., 2002; Hughes & Morrison-Saunders, 2005b; McNamara & Prideaux, 2010).

Table 2.2. Tilden's six principles of environmental interpretation (Tilden, 1977, p.9)

Principle	Explanation
1	Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile
2	Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information
3	Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable
4	The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation
5	Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phrase
6	Interpretation addressed to children should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach

In appraisal of the three elements identified above, it appears that interpretation (and what is learned) is something that is reliant upon the individual who is receiving the interpretive material. This suggests some important considerations when designing and evaluating interpretation. Firstly, interpretation can vary between cultures. In addition to the obvious language differences, there are also differences in belief structures and cultural behaviours that may influence how something is interpreted. Interpretation should consider the audiences' background (Yamada & Knapp, 2009). Secondly, interpretation has to be wanted to be appreciated. It has been repeatedly demonstrated that tourists travel to sites for various reasons. Furthermore, sites can hold a multitude of meanings. These motives and meanings may affect an individual's interest in interpretation (Poria et al., 2009). Thirdly, interpretation is essentially a representation. Knowledge about the environment is partly constructed through biological and physical phenomena; however, the role of interpreting the setting, in its entirety, is often left to heritage managers or custodians of the land. These people present one view which may or may not be accepted by different tourists. Therefore, the effectiveness of interpretation should be evaluated by considering individual tourist markets. The goal of this thesis will be to examine how Chinese tourists react to the interpretation of Australian landscapes.

ROLES OF INTERPRETATION IN TOURISM SETTINGS

The practice of interpretation has been adopted by the tourism and leisure industries for some time. Interpretation can be seen as a novel way to reinvigorate old tourist attractions and provide a value-added component to tourist experiences (Uzzell, 1989). Similarly, more tourists are increasingly looking towards an educational and informative visit. Chinese tourists, in particular, are seeking to learn from their travels. Interpretation has thus become an integral part of the tourist experience (Moscardo, 1998). Information learned whilst at leisure may offer "the only opportunity [for tourists] to learn about their bonds to the environment, or to their history or culture" (Moscardo, 1999). In particular, nature-based tourism is seen to provide many opportunities for on-site education (Staiff, Bushell & Kennedy, 2002).

Interpretation has the capacity to enhance tourist experiences (Moscardo, 1998; Xu et al., 2013). Moscardo (1999) elaborates further by naming three ways that interpretation can improve the tourist experience, and ultimately, contribute to sustainable tourism: (1) by providing information on alternatives and options; (2) by providing information to encourage safety and comfort; and (3) by creating the actual experience. Another function of interpretation is its potential contribution to visitor management and the subsequent reduction of tourism outcomes (Sureda, Oliver & Castells, 2004; Xu et al., 2013). This can be achieved by increasing tourists' awareness of inappropriate activities and developing travellers' concern by enriching their understanding of a place (Moscardo, 1998; Knudson, Cable & Beck, 1995, cited in Kim, Airey & Svizas, 2011, p.321). In addition, interpretation practices can influence where tourists can go (Moscardo, 1998, 1999). Uzzell (1989) suggests a further role of interpretation; that is, to encourage people to become interpreters themselves. Interpreters should be giving away the skills of revelation so that tourists can further interpret future sites.

EXISTING INTERPRETATION STUDIES IN NATURAL AREAS

As a topic of academic inquiry, interpretation is still under-represented in tourism mainstream journals (Pearce, 2005). In 2012, a search of the academic literature identified nine representative studies that evaluated the effectiveness of interpretation in both a natural area and tourism-based setting (refer to Table 2.3).

Table 2.3. Profile of studies which assessed the effectiveness of interpretation in nature-based settings

Study	Location	Study description	Research findings
Tubb (2003)	High Moorland Visitor Centre in Dartmoor National Park, United Kingdom	Considered the role of interpretation in achieving sustainable tourism development in natural areas used for tourism. Evaluates effectiveness through increased awareness, attitude change and behaviour modification.	Interpretation within the visitor centre was effective in contributing to the knowledge and awareness of visitors (particularly for farming). Post-visit intentions to engage in environmentally friendly activities, however, were low.
Carr (2004)	Mt Cook National Park, New Zealand	Investigated the experience of cultural interpretation.	The provision of cultural interpretation raised tourists' awareness of such cultural values to a certain extent; the audience was not always interested in indigenous cultural heritage.
Madin & Fenton (2004)	Whitsunday Islands, Australia	Determined the effectiveness of environmental interpretation programmes in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. Effectiveness measured by educating the visitors about the reef environment and conservation issues.	The interpretive program was an effective means of affecting tourists' perceived knowledge of the reef environment (significant differences were noted in respondents' pre- and post- scores).
Hughes & Morrison-Saunders (2005a)	Tree Top Walk and Penguin Island, Australia	Investigated the influence of the intensity of interpretation on the visitors' environmental attitudes and perceptions of the site experience.	Type of activity undertaken was related to the type of influence the interpretation had. For example, exploration-focussed respondents shifted towards a kind of responsible conservation stance while recreation-focussed respondents shifted towards a human-centred view.

Hughes & Morrison-Saunders (2005b)	Penguin Island, Australia	Analysed the response of visitors to a site offering a variety of activities coupled with interpretation.	Influence of on-site interpretation is determined by the context of the site experience and the type of tourists, not by the investment in high intensity or various interpretation materials.
McNamara & Prideaux (2010)	Wet Tropics, Australia	Identified visitor demand and level of satisfaction with the static signage and displays used at rainforest sites throughout the Wet Tropics.	Environmental information influenced tourists' attitudes towards the environment, however, the cultural interpretation failed to shift tourists' attitudes towards cultural appreciation and respect.
Coghan, Fox, Prideaux & Lück (2011)	Great Barrier Reef, Australia	Investigated the role of immersion or activity type on reef interpretation, as well as other aspects of the reef experience.	Each group of respondents demonstrated differences to interpretation practices. The out-of-water and combination groups were the most likely to report an attitudinal change. Activities undertaken are also influenced by the respondents' socio-demographic profiles.
Coghan & Kim (2012)	Great Barrier Reef, Australia	Examined the role of interpretive layering (combination of multiple sources of interpretation to repeat interpretive message) in nature-based tourism	Exposure to a variety of interpretive sources assisted in reinforcing the usefulness of each source of information, increasing knowledge and changing respondents understanding of the reef
Xu, Cui, Ballantyne & Packer (2013)	Danxia Shan National Natural Reserve and Geo-Park, China	Examined if the scientific approach used to develop interpretation in Chinese natural attractions meet the needs of Chinese visitors. Explores theoretically through an examination of the relationship between Chinese tourists and the natural landscape	Limited interpretive signs are designed in a way that is culturally appropriate for Chinese tourists. Signs need to support an aesthetic interpretation of the landscapes (e.g. provide emotional connections) through poems and stories rather than scientific geo-morphological information.

In addition to the research identified in Table 2.3, six further studies were located which examined the effectiveness of interpretation in related contexts. Interpretation effectiveness, in these studies, were reviewed in wildlife tourism settings (see Benton & Sinha, 2004; Weiler & Smith, 2009; Ballantyne, Packer & Sutherland, 2011), by exploring the mode of interpretation (see Io & Hallo, 2011; Van Dijk, Smith & Weiler, 2012) and by investigating the changing values and uses of a site (see Hueneke & Baker, 2009). Overall, research about interpretation effectiveness identifies three overarching tourist-based outcomes: (1) cognition – learning, knowledge acquisition or information processing; (2) affect – tourist feelings, attitudes or emotions; and (3) behaviour – tourist actions or inactions. Uzzell (1998b) explains that whilst interpreters typically address the cognitive dimension, interpretation will likely be ineffective if it excludes the emotional and behavioural characteristics.

Information processing, knowledge acquisition and learning (cognition)

The underlying principle of interpretation is to increase tourists' knowledge about the place, object or culture they are visiting. Indeed, acquiring knowledge has become a major motivation for travel, particularly for Chinese tourists (Zhang & Lam, 1999). Kuo (2002) further explains that a tourist undertaking recreational activity does not imply that she or he is not willing to know something about the site. Chinese tourists, however, do not think in the same way as *westerners* (Breakey et al., 2008).

Learning and knowledge acquisition from tourism experiences have been measured in different ways. The most general approach is to assess how much factual knowledge tourists can recall (Stewart et al., 1998). Another popular method has been in terms of pre- and post-experience knowledge change (see Tubb, 2003; Benton & Sinha, 2004; Madin & Fenton, 2004; McNamara & Prideaux, 2010). Furthermore, there needs to be further cognitive processing beyond factual knowledge for interpretation to be effective. That is, tourists need to reflect on the information / facts presented to them to fully understand and to identify appropriate future actions or responses in tourism and other settings. Consequently, more insight into the effectiveness of interpretation in increasing tourists' cognition might be gained through an exploration of the deeper meanings and understandings that

travellers gain from tourist experiences. The current research aims to identify what Australian landscape dimensions shape Chinese tourists' *overall tourist experience*.

Tourists' feelings, attitudes and emotions (affect)

After increasing tourists' knowledge of a place, interpretation aims to provoke a sense of respect and an appreciation for a place. Essentially, interpretation practices try to influence the attitudes of tourists and to establish an emotional connection with the site. Ham (2007) explains that interpretation has the potential to influence tourists by changing an existing attitude, reinforcing an existing attitude or bringing about a new attitude. It is doubtful whether an attitude will be impacted, however, unless the interpreter / interpretation can target a tourist's pertinent beliefs and stimulate deliberate thought (Ham, 2007).

In the context of tourism research, there have been many scales and statements used to measure environmental attitudes (Kim et al., 2011). Research findings in Table 2.3 indicate that some aspects of interpretation may be less effective in changing tourists' attitudes. Furthermore, the likelihood of attitude adaption can also be influenced by the actual site visited and the activities participated in. Indeed, tourist experiences seem to have a greater impact on attitude change if the tourists engage in more layers of interpretation.

On the other hand, minimal research has explored the effectiveness of interpretation in natural areas to arouse emotional change. However, "emotions often prompt curiosity and exploration (Berlyne, 1960; Csikszentmihalyi & Hermanson, 1995) and can lead to greater concentration and willingness to learn (Krapp, Hidi & Renninger, 1992; Pekrun, 1992)" (cited in Ballantyne et al., 2011, p.777). Aesthetics and the promotion of the nature-culture interaction (or "culture-scape") have been identified as important components of interpretive experiences and the subsequent appreciation of natural landscapes for Chinese outbound travellers (see Fountain et al., 2010; Xu et al., 2013). One research interest in the current thesis is to examine the role of sensory components in contributing to Chinese tourists' views, interests and understanding of Australian landscapes, and in particular, the Wet Tropics.

Tourists' action or inactions (behavioural)

Lastly, after increasing tourists' knowledge of and a sense of respect for a place or culture, interpretation aims to prompt behaviour change. At a basic level, interpretation should seek to change peoples' behaviours so that they behave in a respectful way and are mindful of their actions. This idea of mindfully-oriented tourists will be further developed in the following section.

Research into the effectiveness of interpretation in producing a behavioural change has revealed mixed responses. McNamara and Prideaux (2010) explain by stating that "the assumption that site interpretation influences visitor behaviour may not be correct in all cases". For instance, some studies in Table 2.3 (e.g. Tubb, 2003; Coghlan & Kim, 2012) have found that interpretation may succeed in making tourists aware of *how* they can change their behaviour but not in actually creating an enduring behavioural change. Interpretation might not have any influence on tourist behaviour or it might only affect behaviour whilst in the site-specific setting. Furthermore, travellers might change their behaviour towards the relatively simple things but not towards other activities requiring greater effort. For this particular study, the effectiveness of interpretation in facilitating a behaviour change will be assessed by future intentions towards natural areas.

THE CREATION OF EFFECTIVE INTERPRETATION

Effective interpretation, therefore, can be viewed as something which enriches the tourist experience (Newsome et al., 2002), develops emotional and intellectual connections (Stewart et al., 1998; Armstrong & Weiler, 2003) and helps to promote sustainable behaviour (Moscardo, 1999; Pearce, 2005). It entices tourists to read further and widen their interests, and is not just a means to educate or entertain (Tilden, 1977). Furthermore, it is especially important that the audience plays a leading role in attending to and processing the information presented (Ham, 2007). Whilst the interpreter presents the information, the audience must correctly identify the meaning of the object (Uzzell, 1998b). Moscardo (1998) explains that getting and holding a tourist's attention and interest are necessary but not the only requirements for the effectiveness of an interpretive activity.

Throughout the literature, there has been substantial commentary about the factors and variables which contribute to effective interpretation. Xu et al. (2013, p.118) generally believe that the “principles of good interpretation... always refer to the importance of gaining a deep understanding of the audience”. Tables 2.2 and 2.4 document some of the various perspectives concerning principles of effective interpretation.

Table 2.4. Principles of effective interpretation as identified throughout the literature

Source	Principles
Ham (1992)*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation is entertaining • Interpretation is relevant • Interpretation is organised • Interpretation is thematic
Moscardo (1998)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing differences into interpretive experiences • Providing personal connections for visitors • Practicing participation • Creating clear content • Allow for alternative audiences
Newsome, Moore & Dowling (2002)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation should centre on a theme and associated message • Interpretation entails active involvement and the engagement of first-hand experiences • Interpretation facilitates maximum use of the senses • Interpretation seeks to foster self-discovered insights • Interpretation is of relevance to the visitor and clients find the imparted knowledge and insights useful
Ballantyne & Hughes (2003)	<p>Six criteria which must be met in order for signs and exhibits to be classified as interpretive:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relevant to the intended audience 2. Have themes 3. Provide novel experiences and avoid repetition 4. Have clear, organised structures 5. Facilitate visitor involvement and choice

Moscardo, Ballantyne & Hughes (2007)*	6. Respect the audience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretation must make a personal connection with, or be relevant to, the intended audience • Interpretation should provide or encourage novel and varied experiences • Interpretation should be organised with clear, easy to follow structures • Interpretation should be based on a theme • Interpretation should engage visitors in the learning experience and encourage them to take control of their own learning • Interpretation should demonstrate understanding of, and respect for, the audience
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* Quoted in Xu et al., 2013.

Perspectives arising from Table 2.4 highlight the importance of the individual in creating effective interpretation. It has been repeatedly demonstrated that travellers seek different experiences at the same site. The idea of linking interpretive material to individual tourists aims to personalise the experience, increase satisfaction and enhance learning opportunities (Moscardo, 1998). Therefore, the design of interpretation might need to consider the psychological characteristics, cultural differences and the needs, interests, knowledge and previous experience of individual tourists (Ballantyne & Hughes, 2003; Xu et al., 2013). Cai, Li and Knutson (2008) stress the importance of considering these types of factors when profiling Chinese market segments to uncover the unique characteristics that are shaping Chinese tourists' behaviour. Furthermore, encouraging tourists to engage their senses can create a more enjoyable and satisfying experience. Through active participation, people may appreciate the importance of the situation and the site in which the interpretive experience takes place (Newsome et al., 2002).

In particular, there is a growing recognition of the role of cultural background in designing tourist experiences. An individual's perception and assessment of a situation is likely to be determined by their cultural background (Fountain et al., 2010). Chinese tourists draw on religious teachings and beliefs, famous poetry, imagination and Chinese common knowledge when looking at

natural landscapes (see Chapter one). This study takes an Interpretivist approach to assessing interpretation effectiveness, as the concern will be on what Chinese tourists gain from Australian landscape experiences.

MINDFULNESS AND TOURIST LEARNING

The extent of interpretation effectiveness can be determined through the concepts of mindfulness and mindlessness. These concepts describe communication and processing systems which differ to other models in a number of ways. Firstly, mindfulness and mindlessness refer to not just different ways of thinking but also to different amounts of thinking (Moscardo, 1999). Secondly, the concern is with how one creates, processes and assigns meaning to information (Langer, 1989a, cited in van Winkle & Backman, 2009). Thirdly, it is believed that there is no additional cognitive effort required to be mindful instead of mindless (Frauman & Norman, 2004).

Mindfulness represents an active processing of new information within the surrounding environment. Mindful people pay attention to the world and question what is going on around them (Moscardo, 1999). Furthermore, being mindful is being able to create and notice multiple perspectives, new ways of thinking and new routines for behaviour (van Winkle & Backman, 2009). Mindfulness is also likely to lead to a more satisfying experience, greater learning, increased interest in topics (and future learning) and an awareness of behavioural consequences (Moscardo, 1999). This is because when one is mindful, one is more likely in control of his / her own behaviour and the situation they find themselves in.

Mindlessness, on the other hand, is the processing of information which relies on existing or past behaviour routines and/or categories. The individual's ability to recognise and process new information is limited (Moscardo, 1999); that is, the information is unavailable for conscious consideration (van Winkle & Backman, 2009). An individual's possible response to a situation is reduced as they are unaware of alternative perspectives and uses for the information (Moscardo, 1996). Alternatively, people accept definitions or descriptions of the situation unquestionably – due to information being deemed irrelevant or unimportant – which

then guides their behaviour (Moscardo, 1996, 1999). Mindless behaviour is therefore likely to result in little learning, low satisfaction, and minimal understanding.

MINDFULNESS IN INTERPRETIVE TOURISM SETTINGS

Moscardo, building on the work of Langer, first introduced the concepts of mindfulness and mindlessness into the tourism literature in the late twentieth century. The goal of interpretation is to produce mindfully-oriented tourists. Interpretation providers desire travellers who will be active, interested, questioning and appreciative of the setting or object being interpreted. Furthermore, a mindful tourist may see and interpret site information differently, may look for additional sources of information and may be open to reconsidering their beliefs (Langer, 1989, cited in Frauman & Norman, 2004, p.382).

Moscardo (1999) proposed several communication factors which influence mindfulness in her model of tourist behaviour. These indicators of mindfulness are quite similar to the principles for effective interpretation (refer to Tables 2.2 and 2.4) and will, therefore, not be discussed here. Existing research in the tourism field has demonstrated the benefits of mindful processing. Work by Frauman and Norman has shown that individuals who are mindful prefer services that are involved, unique, different, interactive and personally relevant (i.e. mindfully-inclined information) (Frauman & Norman, 2004) and tend to participate in nature-oriented activities at higher than expected levels (Frauman & Norman, 2003). In van Winkle and Backman's (2009) study, significant relationships between learning motives and mindfulness, interest and mindfulness, and satisfaction and mindfulness at festivals were revealed. Findings from these studies suggest that tourists who prefer to be mindful behave in different ways and prefer different services. The current thesis seeks to address the challenge of measuring mindfulness. In particular, mindfulness will be explored in the current research according to the degree of influence it has on other experience dimensions for Chinese tourists.

LEARNING IN INTERPRETIVE TOURISM SETTINGS

Learning is an ongoing, cumulative process influenced by every moment of every situation. Leisure activities, in particular, enable tourists to experience new sights, sounds, sensations and cultures (Falk, Ballantyne, Packer & Benckendorff, 2012). Similarly, tourism experiences present opportunities to learn about other places, acquire new skills and to grow personally (Pearce & Lu, 2011). Some reasons for learning are driven by curiosity, some by need and others for socio-cultural reasons (Falk, 2005). Regardless of the motivation for visiting, destination setting or activities undertaken, every traveller learns something. This occurs through both planned and unplanned opportunities (van Winkle & Lagay, 2012).

A vast majority of the learning one participates in (outside of compulsory settings) is classed as free-choice learning. Free-choice learning occurs when an individual exercises significant choice and control over their learning (Falk, 2005). This type of learning is quite often utilised in tourism-related settings like national parks, zoos and aquariums. In fact, tourism activities generally provide one of the most obvious contexts in which learning occurs. These settings might represent the only opportunity for people to learn about their bonds to the environment, and to their history or culture (Moscardo, 1998). Thus, learning has become a major motive for travel. Tourists are now seeking experiences that intellectually stimulate their thinking through the immersion in new ideas, spaces and activities (Falk et al., 2012). Chinese tourists, in particular, travel with the desire to learn from the *west*; Australia is the closest *western* country to cater to this desire (Breakey et al., 2008). Furthermore, tourism experiences that facilitate direct contact with nature are well positioned to deliver strong educational messages (Ballantyne et al., 2011). If an individual, however, possesses the choice and freedom over their learning, what exactly does one gain from interpretive experiences? And can a tourist successfully engage with interpretive materials that are outside of their cultural sphere? These are some of the questions driving the current research.

Free-choice learning, however, presents several challenges for tourism experience providers. Firstly, tourists are non-captive audiences. They have the choice of ignoring the information without punishment (Ham, 1992, cited in van Winkle & Lagay, 2012). Secondly, tourists have varied prior knowledge. The

provision of interpretive material that will capture and entertain audiences of different knowledge levels requires careful consideration. Indeed, Hua and Yoo's (2011) study on the travel motivations of Chinese tourists to the United States found that highly educated travellers had more interest in exploring the outside world. Thirdly, the interpretive setting often commands the learners' focus in many directions, exposing them to much information. Finally, in comparison to formal learning environments, tourists spend little time with the learning material (Falk, 2005). These challenges make it important to attempt to gauge what exactly tourists learn from interpretive experiences.

Despite this link between travel and learning, research into travellers' experiences in this realm is quite limited (Pearce, 2005). Previously, learning has been conceptualised as an outcome rather than as an experience. More specifically, the assessment of learning has been determined by how much factual knowledge tourists can recall about the interpretive material presented (Stewart et al., 1998). The experience of witnessing a site, object or culture first-hand, however, assists with confirming tourists' previously held information and with developing a richer understanding (van Winkle & Lagay, 2012). Therefore, more understanding is needed on exploring the relationships amongst the dimensions determining the *overall tourist experience*, and how educational experiences contribute to an individual's understanding (Falk, 2005). Furthermore, learning is uniquely personal and highly contextual, with individuals learning about and appreciating things in different ways. It is viewed as a fusion of personal characteristics, past experiences and the present situation. Consequently, research relating to learning experiences of different tourists should consider the levels of difference, as well as the degree of interaction, among experiences dimensions. The current research seeks to identify how individual experience dimensions contribute towards Chinese tourists' views, interests and understanding of Australian landscapes.

CROSS-CULTURAL TRANSLATION

With tourism being a world-wide phenomenon, tourists can physically access sites from across the globe and from different cultures. People are travelling with the intention of experiencing different lifestyles (Turner, Reisinger & McQuilken, 2002).

In particular, experiencing culture has been identified as an important factor of Chinese outbound tourists' experiences (see Yu & Weiler, 2001; Agrusa, Kim & Wang, 2011; Jun & Yoppe, 2011). This often puts travellers in a position where they are called upon to make sense of places and experiences that are outside of their cultural sphere (Saipradist & Staiff, 2008). In contemporary times, the distance between countries is shorter and the contact between different cultures is easier (Steiner & Reisinger, 2004). Cross-cultural translation has thus become an integral part of social life (Ang, 2003, cited in Saipradist & Staiff, 2008, p.211). Furthermore, it is an increasingly pressing issue where "cultural heritage is being interpreted for international visitors" (Saipradist & Staiff, 2008, p.212).

The ultimate goal of cross-cultural translation is to take tourists beyond a superficial encounter towards an appreciation of the other culture (Uzzell, 1989). Interpretation of cultural and natural heritage provides opportunities to turn the tourist's experience into a cultural insight (Carr, 2004). Differences in language, lifestyles and perceptions between tourists and the culture being viewed, however, introduce challenges to cross-cultural translation. Indeed, Chinese consumers do not think in the same way as *westerners* (Breakey et al., 2008). The very act of translation is the process of transforming the 'foreign' into the 'familiar' (Staiff & Bushell, 2003; Saipradist & Staiff, 2008). This process of translating from one language to another can lead to cultural assimilation which then facilitates simplification of the original message, mistranslation and stereotypical thinking (Staiff & Bushell, 2003). Furthermore, many sites are complex and difficult to appreciate without expert guidance (Laws & Pan, 2004). Some sites are so 'full' of meaning that "they cannot be rendered superficial through their commodification" (Edensor, 1998).

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WESTERN AND ASIAN TOURISTS

Inter-cultural disparities between Asian and *western* cultures have been studied extensively. This has typically, however, been in terms of cultural behaviours in a business setting. For example, the differences have been linked to well-known cultural models such as Hofstede's cultural dimensions or Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's value orientations. More recently, the differences between cultures have

been considered from a tourism perspective. In particular, the interaction and communication between host and guests has been the focus of research. The social contact between individuals of different cultural backgrounds is determined by the similarities and differences of those cultural backgrounds (Turner et al., 2002). Cross-cultural communication becomes a problem when the degree of difference between the cultures is significant enough to distort understanding (Steiner & Reisinger, 2004). Some of the greatest difficulties occur between *western* and Asian cultures (Reisinger & Turner, 1998). Furthermore, encounters between different cultural groups can influence customer satisfaction, preference, expectation, service quality and intention to return (Kim & McKercher, 2011). The need to consider the tourists' cultural background with the cultural difference between the tourist and residents of the host destination is important (Reisinger & Turner, 1998). Breakey et al. (2008) suggest that the most ideal scenario for Chinese outbound tourism is to have a "specialised Chinese team" who has an in-depth understanding of Chinese culture and the unique requirements of Chinese travellers.

The differences between *western* and Asian cultures have rarely been considered outside of direct human-interactions in tourism settings. Some studies, however, have revealed that differences exist in the way the *westerners* and Asians 'see' the environment. In considering natural areas, Rockmore (2004, cited in Xu et al., 2013) suggested that some *westerners* are concerned with the beauty of a place and the ability to gather knowledge and the truth from experiencing it. Furthermore, some *westerners* show a preference for sites that have had minimal development and remain relatively natural. Chinese tourists, on the other hand, evaluate Chinese landscapes by following rules and methods in attaining enlightenment (Rockmore, 2004, cited in Xu et al., 2013). Preference is given to landscapes that are connected to the poems, philosophies and stories that are taught during schooling (Xu et al., 2008). In addition, landscapes that have been developed have more meaning to Chinese tourists than those that are 'untouched'. These differences between *western* and Asian tourists may lead one to not appreciating the significance of places from the other culture (Law & Pans, 2004). For example, Sofield and Li (1998, p.367) provide some insight:

“When western tourists look at the Yangtze, they see a river; the Chinese see a poem replete with philosophical ideas... These images bring spiritual unity even if the people have never visited them; but when they do visit the importance of these images is reinforced”.

The ‘Chinese’ way of viewing domestic landscapes might have some implications for when Chinese travellers venture abroad to experience nature. Do they seek this cultural and literary connection in landscapes from other countries? Is the pure visual majesty of a different place enough to keep their interests? Whilst these motives have been identified for China-based landscape viewing, limited work has explored whether cultural connections are equally important in different places (see Mok & DeFranco, 2000; Fountain et al., 2010 for some consideration of cultural issues). An exploration of cultural elements in Australian landscape viewing was beyond the capacity of the current work; instead, the goal was to provide a descriptive analysis which can be supported with further, detailed investigations.

INTERPRETED MEANINGS OF DIFFERENT CULTURES AT TOURIST SITES

People from different cultures experience the world in divergent ways. Consider the Taj Mahal - a renowned tourist site frequented by tourists from all cultures. *Western* travellers may go to the site as it is a ‘must-see’, a national monument of India. They may not be as concerned with the story behind the Taj as to the fact that they have ‘been there, done that’. Indian tourists, however, may view the Taj as an actual woman; they may tell stories like “she was so graceful floating there amongst the clouds” (cf. Edensor, 1998). The way a person from one culture experiences the world will be difficult to convey to other people from different cultures that lack knowledge of the other culture’s beliefs and behaviours (Steiner & Reisinger, 2004). How does one explain these symbolic meanings and cultural ideas to outsiders? What do foreigners acquire from experiencing something that is beyond their cultural knowledge? These questions largely remain unanswered in the tourism literature.

In moving across cultural boundaries, it would appear that there are distinct limits to translation (Staiff & Bushell, 2003). Some things are just untranslatable into words. This could be because there is no equivalent in the target language, or

because the literal translation may not be appropriate for the target culture. Raz's (2000) study of the scripts employed for three rides at Tokyo Disneyland highlights distinct challenges between English-Japanese translation. For example, the original Disneyland statement "gentlemen, if your mother-in-law is still aboard, you've missed a golden opportunity" needed to be removed, as it would have been too offensive for a Japanese audience who values seniority.

Cultural repertoire and tourist sites

Increasingly, the ability to understand some interpretation at tourism sites calls for prior knowledge on the part of the reader, viewer or person having the experience (Saipradist & Staiff, 2008). For example, Staiff and Bushell (2003) investigated some issues with translation in an age of global travel, by examining heritage interpretation (and the context of the interpretation) at three selected sites. In all three locations, Staiff and Bushell (2003) found that the level of cultural repertoire needed and the depth of cultural understanding required to interpret the sites was formidable; see the following comments about an outsiders' experience of the sites:

"In the end, the experience of the Japanese travellers is an encounter with an edifice that is outside of their cultural orbit and can only be understood via a process of assimilating Orsanmichele into what they already know (Morkham & Staiff, 2002). (Site 1).

"...the explanations offered to tourists can only be *appreciated*, almost as an aesthetic object is appreciated, rather than *understood* or *lived* as an Anangu 'insider'. We can *appreciate* Tjukurpa. We cannot *know* it". (Site 2).

"For the cultural 'outsider', to wander around the ruins of Sukhothai, was to be presented with a host of fragmented structures and sculptures and remnants of stucco relief sculpture that, by themselves, make no sense. (Site 3).

Raz's (2000) study provides another example of how the comprehension of the interpretive material rests on the tourists' understanding of the culture in which it is set. In this study, the onstage strategies for adaption in Tokyo Disneyland as exemplified by three of its attractions: Jungle Cruise, Cinderella's Castle Mystery

Tour, and Meet the World were examined. For the Jungle Cruise, the focus of the script is on having fun and using jokes; one fragment of the Japanese script plays a pun with the word “*yari*”.

“It first appears in the spiel when the captain says “I did it!” (*yarimashita*) after shooting the hippo. Then it appears again as he warns the cruisers about the spears (*yari da!*). Finally he says “It was too much for me today” (*senchou kyou wa yarisugichata*).” (Raz, 2000, p.81).

In this context, the tour guide takes two literal forms and a more abstract expression of “*yari*”. Firstly, in verb form, “*yaru*” means “to do” (e.g. “I did it”); secondly, as a noun, “*yari*” represents “spear”; and thirdly, in verb form again, “*yaru*” means “to work or perform” (e.g. abstract expression of being completely done; “it was too much for me today”). Even for a tourist who speaks Japanese, it is unlikely that they will have the same meaningful experience as a native Japanese unless they have prior knowledge of Japanese colloquialisms.

A third study that highlighted the issue of cultural repertoire was that of Saipradist and Staiff (2008), who investigated the cross-cultural dimension of interpretation at Ayutthaya World Heritage Site, Thailand. Like Staiff and Bushell’s (2003) study (particularly site 3), the on-site interpretive signage (English) was full of inconsistencies in spelling and in the usage of English, making them illegible. Furthermore, the signs assumed that visitors had some knowledge about Thai history, culture and traditions, religion, architecture and court ceremonies. For example, a sign outside of Wat Na Phrameru includes the following text (grammatical and spelling errors have been corrected):

“Phra Ubosot was built in the early Ayutthaya style. From the outside it looks like the shape of a sampan 16 metres in width and 50 metres in length. The gable of the front entrance was carved out of teak wood in the design of God Naraya on Garuda stepping on Naga’s head. On both sides of Naga’s head are two Rahu. The scene is surrounded by 26 praying angels. On the inside there are two rows of 16 octagonal posts with lotus cornices, typical of the Ayutthaya style...” (Saipradist & Staiff, 2008, p.215).

The likelihood that every tourist visiting the site would know what Ayutthaya style is, what a sampan is, or who Naraya, Garuda and Naga are, is not probable. Interpreting a site into text barely touches the underlying complexities of cultural translation (see Staiff & Bushell, 2003). As cross-cultural translation is the transformation of the content of heritage interpretation, however, it poses the question: “can universal cultural significance be successfully communicated without reference to the cultural meanings associated with the site?” (Staiff & Bushell, 2003).

Cultural perspectives at tourist sites

The desire to experience something culturally different is a major motivating factor for international travel. Despite this, a tourist will often draw upon previous experiences and meanings to aid their understanding of a new, and perhaps foreign, tourist experience. Sometimes this involves the individual’s cultural practices. It would be naïve to assume that all cultural beliefs are somehow forgotten when we adopt the role of a tourist (Winter, 2009). People cannot understand the significance of a world that is outside of their knowledge the way that someone from within that culture can. Instead, an outsider can acknowledge and perhaps appreciate the significance of a site by relating it to their own world of experience (Steiner & Reisinger, 2004). Thus, the tourists’ experience and appreciation of the site is likely to stem from subjective interpretations (Carr, 2004; Steiner & Reisinger, 2004; Fu, Letho & Cai, 2012).

In comparison, however, the idea of ‘tourist culture’ can also explain how different cultures (and tourists) obtain different meanings at tourist sites. Tourist culture is a classic example of “when in Rome, do as the Romans do”. When people travel, it is expected that they may act in a different way to that at home (Kim & McKercher, 2011). Tourists might adapt their behaviour to be more like the people in the visited destination. However, travellers rarely immerse themselves completely in tourist culture; some elements of the host culture remain (see Carr, 2002, cited in Kim & McKercher, 2011, p.148).

Existing research has shown that interpretation endeavours have been fruitful in transmitting factual knowledge and possibly affecting attitudes and

behaviours. There is less substantial consideration of what tourists gain experientially from these interpretive, cross-cultural experiences. The challenge for interpreters will be to move tourists beyond simply being aware towards really understanding other cultures (Uzzell, 1989). Admittedly, the sheer spectacle of some places may overpower the deficiencies of interpretation and result in a meaningful experience (Saipradist & Staiff, 2008). Does the combination of interpretation and visual aspects of a site, however, create the same experience for all tourists? Furthermore, what kind of experience and meaning do international tourists obtain from culturally different sites? This study will examine Chinese tourists' experiences of Australian landscapes to determine what is gained from experiences of a culturally-different world. The next section explores in more detail the idea of different tourists holding different gazes of tourism sites.

TOURIST GAZE

People are increasingly compelled to travel in order to witness the 'extraordinary', and to gaze upon a set of different scenes (Rojek, 1997; Edensor, 1998). Tourists' motives are, however, complex considering the potential issues associated with foreign travel (Urry, 1990). Increasingly, people seem to be attracted by a much wider range of objects upon which to gaze (Urry, 1992). Chinese outbound travellers, in particular, have indicated preference for destinations with beautiful scenery and landscapes, including water-related scenery, national/provincial/state parks, and protected areas and heritage sites (Yun & Joppe, 2011). However, "what people see and especially value in natural landscapes are cultural projections created by tourism and modernisation in general" (Saarinen, 2004, p.440). Subsequently, responding to and interpreting nature is something that is learned which greatly varies across societies, social groups and historical periods (Urry, 1995; Crang, 1997).

Nowadays, the gaze has become a lens for examination. Edensor (1998) suggests that "gazes are socially organised around a set of techniques which lay the basis for visual performance" (p.119). How do Chinese tourists, many of whom are engaging in outbound travel for the first time, see the outside world? What cultural perspectives drive Chinese tourists' interests in visually consuming places? These questions remain relatively unanswered.

THE GAZE FRAMED THROUGH TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY

The pairing of travel and photography has been recognised throughout time. Susan Sontag states “...it seems positively unnatural to travel for pleasure without taking a camera along...” (1977, p. 9). Places upon which people choose to gaze are selected out of anticipation – through daydreaming and fantasies (Urry, 1990). Indeed, tourists are thought to snap scenes that replicate those encountered in promotional materials (Stylianou-Lambert, 2012) and which may have motivated travel (Markwell, 1997). The compatibility between travelling and capturing images is testament that “visual consumption has become one of the dominant ways in which societies intersect with their respective landscapes” (Crawshaw & Urry, 1997, p.194). However, tourists are increasingly making judgements on outside landscapes as well as their own. In particular, Chinese tourists have traditionally engaged in framing themselves with famous icons as proof they have visited the destination and/or site.

Photographic images can be connected to one’s experience as a tourist. In fact, holiday pictures play a deeper symbolic role in that they capture information about travellers’ experiences with can assist with destination learning and understanding (Haywood, 1990). A tourist’s travel snaps represent a moment in time – communicating an experience or a story of the person depicted in the frame – for some future audience (Crang, 1997). Thus, “touristic photography attempts to capture and materialise the tourist gaze” (Edensor, 1998, p.128). On the one hand, Stylianou-Lambert (2012) suggests that tourists “become mindless consumers of images, mere reproducers with perhaps only the illusion of freedom” (p.1821). On the other hand, Belk and Yeh (2011) advocate that each photograph is unique, even if many other tourists have captured the same picture. The act of using a photographic device can disrupt this common tourist gaze (Pearce, 2011).

Chinese tourists are notorious for taking large amounts of photographs when they engage in outbound travel. The current thesis attempts to identify what experience dimensions help to construct Chinese tourists’ gaze of Australian landscapes.

INTEGRATING THE PERSPECTIVES: A SYNTHESIS

This multi-faceted literature review presented above, and in Chapter one, has a central underlying concern. That is, how do tourists understand travel-related experiences that are distinct to their own? The literature that underpins the current thesis has roots in natural areas and landscapes, Chinese cultural influences, visitor management and the experience economy, interpretation, mindfulness and tourist learning, cross-cultural translation and the tourist gaze. Whilst research into these broad literature areas provides some perspectives on how Chinese tourists might interpret Australian landscapes, more understanding of the unique dimensions informing Chinese tourists' Australian landscape experiences is needed. The following section further elaborates on the key literature gaps and research opportunities arising from the systematic review and identifies the overall thesis research question.

LITERATURE GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Previous studies on tourists' experiences of landscapes and/or natural areas seem to be driven by two main approaches: (1) a reliance on nature-based tourist typologies (classifying tourists); and (2) a focus on perceptions and evaluating landscapes. Both of these approaches have enriched researchers' understanding of this phenomenon; however, as the knowledge base expands, it is important to not only find new methods to conduct the same research but also to find new research topics altogether. Consequently, the current thesis attempts to expand research in this area by addressing the following three research opportunities.

Firstly, there is a need to further appraise how different tourists experience natural areas (Newsome et al., 2002). People respond to the environment in unique ways, where the response is a 'reflection of our ability to be cognitive and reflexive individuals' (Tresidder, 2001). In a similar vein, the quality of natural areas might be judged differently by different individuals (Fredman & Tyrväinen, 2010). Research into tourists' experiences of natural areas is also needed to identify tourists' level of connection. It is important to explore how and if tourists understand local traditions and culture associated with these sites (Fredman & Tyrväinen, 2010). To enhance the

likelihood of sustainability, tourists need to acquire an appreciation, awareness and knowledge of the natural environment (Cloesen, 2003). Therefore, the current work seeks to determine how tourists from different cultures, specifically Chinese, experience (and represent) Australian landscapes.

Secondly, research into the impact of cultural values on tourist experiences is limited. Chinese people, in particular, are strongly influenced by the values of Confucius and Chineseness (Kwek & Lee, 2010). According to some common Confucius' beliefs, Chinese people seek ultimate truth (and knowledge) from the landscape (Guo et al., 2002, cited in Cai et al., 2007, p.8; Tse & Hobson, 2008) and travel with the purpose of learning (Xu et al., 2008). Confucius teachings also creates a yearning in Chinese travellers to acquire new knowledge (e.g. learn from *western* ways) and to link with nature while abroad. Chineseness, on the other hand, is comprised of three components: being Chinese (and performing in a Chinese way); acceptance of a melange of views as to what it means to be Chinese; and the ability to access *zhonghua wenhua*. *Zhonghua wenhua* (roughly translated as "Chinese common knowledge"), which relates to a broad range of information shared by millions of Chinese about Chinese philosophies, history, religion, literary, heritage and poetry (Li, 2008), that is often conveyed through Chinese language (Li, 2008).

Furthermore, the way in which Chinese people view landscapes is largely different to the way that *westerners* do. Landscapes in China are embedded with poems, philosophies, religious teaching and stories. The overall impression of a landscape is thus constructed not only through its scenic beauty but also by these other connections (Xu et al., 2008). In addition, the search for an authentic experience and moral enlightenment appear to be key motivators for travel to natural sites (Xu et al., 2013). Therefore, more work is needed on understanding whether this 'Chinese' way of viewing domestic landscapes translates to landscape viewing in other places. Are cultural values present in Chinese tourists' Australian landscape representations? Overall, the thesis research attempts to identify the individual dimensions that shape Australian landscape experiences for Chinese tourists.

Thirdly, and most challenging, exploration into tourists' understanding of landscapes that are distinct to their own could provide new insights. Landscapes across the world can be contextually and culturally unique. Advancements in global

travel have facilitated tourists' access to experiences and places that are far outside their cultural sphere (Saipradist & Staiff, 2008). Sites which are full of meaning will, arguably, provoke a deeper level of engagement from people who are linked (nationally, religiously or politically) to the site (Edensor, 1998). In particular, there might be a range of signs, images and symbols that make the site familiar to people who inhabited that land (cf. Rojek, 1997). How do these artefacts translate to tourists from different countries? What do tourists gain from landscape experiences that are distinct to those at home? The focus of this thesis is to explore Chinese tourists' understanding of Australian landscapes, particularly, the Wet Tropics.

THE OVERALL RESEARCH QUESTION

Drawing on the literature perspectives documented in Chapters one and two, and the subsequent research opportunities identified above, the current work attempts to primarily answer the following question:

What do Chinese tourists gain from Australian landscape experiences which are distinct to their home environments?

Specifically, this thesis attempts to explore Chinese tourists' views, interests and understanding of Australian landscapes. Admittedly, whilst emphasis has been placed on the Chinese cultural influences and the 'Chinese' way of viewing landscapes, this level of cultural data was not achieved in the current work. Instead, the focus was to document how Chinese tourists experience (and respond) to Australian natural landscapes. That is, how do Chinese tourists gaze upon and interpret Australian landscapes, which are distinct from other landscapes. What natural aspects hold their attention? What experiences shape their natural encounters? These ideas are refined into thesis goals as stated in the next section.

A SUMMARY OF THESIS GOALS

In an attempt to address the above research question, the following three thesis goals guide the development of the empirical research:

Goal 1: How do Chinese (and other) tourists represent Australian landscapes?

Goal 2: What do Chinese tourists gain from their Wet Tropics' landscape experiences?

Goal 3: What are tourism stakeholders' perspectives on managing Chinese tourists in Australia's Wet Tropics?

In particular, the current research attempts to address this issue of Chinese tourists' experiences of Australian landscapes in a two-stage process. Firstly, an initial analysis is presented by comparing Chinese tourists' views of three different Australian landscapes against the perspectives of Australian and International tourists. Exploration of three different landscapes for three different tourist markets is believed to: (1) document a wide spectrum of the experiences in Australian natural landscapes which interest tourists, and (2) highlight some of the special ways that Chinese tourists encounter Australian nature. Then, the thesis focuses on a specific case analysis of the Chinese tourists' Wet Tropics' experience. Drawing on the findings of stage one, this second in-depth examination attempts to portray the Chinese subtleties in Australian landscape viewing. It is recognised that any attempt to understand tourists' experiences of nature, especially landscape perceptions, is packed with complexities. This thesis accordingly provides a base-level account, where research findings could inform new directions for further, detailed exploration.

The overall research question and associated thesis goals have a significant influence on the project design, theoretical approach, methodological framework and individual empirical studies. Chapter three reports the conceptual and methodological foundations of the thesis including a refined account of the thesis goals; specific research aims are presented in the respective empirical work (see Chapters four, five and six).

Chapter 3 Conceptual and methodological foundations

CONFUCIUS SAYS...

“When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached, don’t adjust the goals, adjust the action steps”

CHAPTER OUTLINE

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INTRODUCTION

Chapter three provides further background to the thesis by identifying the conceptual and methodological foundations of the research studies. It is important that research projects arise from solid theoretical and methodological bases. Thus, this chapter details the specific research approach adopted in this thesis by drawing together the introductory remarks about the research phenomenon (as presented in Chapter one) along with existing knowledge (as detailed in Chapter two).

Specifically, this chapter seeks to fulfil four objectives. Firstly, the conceptual underpinnings of the thesis including the operationalisation of key concepts are considered. Secondly, attention is directed towards research paradigms and perspectives in order to describe the overall research position. Thirdly, broad methodological approaches are detailed and supported by a brief identification of methods and analysis procedures. Specific research methods employed in the empirical studies are discussed in more detailed in their respective chapters. Finally, this chapter concludes by presenting a synthesis of the thesis foundations.

CONCEPTUAL UNDERPINNINGS

Clarification and specification of the concepts a researcher intends to explore is an important component of research design. The following section addresses issues linked to project conceptualisation and operationalisation by detailing the conceptual framework and identifying the three research stages of the thesis.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Social science concepts necessarily need to be defined in order to draw meaningful conclusions (Babbie, 2007). The goal of the current research is to determine what Chinese tourists gain from Australian landscape experiences. Gain, in this sense, refers to the experiential outcomes of Chinese tourists' Australian landscape experiences. Minimal research has been conducted on this topic; therefore, the project will primarily take an inductive approach. Inductive theory involves general principles being developed from specific observations; a puzzling issue is

approached by firstly collecting relevant information (the particular) and then moving towards the discovery of a pattern (the general) (Babbie, 2007). Consideration of previous work on interpretation, mindfulness and tourist learning, cross-cultural translation and the tourist gaze provides basic underlying ideas to explore Chinese tourists' Australian landscape experiences (see Chapter two).

Meaningful learning experiences (and how much a tourist learns) appear to depend primarily upon how much the tourist already knows and how they are asked to respond (Pearce, 2005). Pearce (2005) further argues that researchers should consider tourists' existing meanings and beliefs systems in the sophisticated treatment of tourist experience learning. In his book titled *Tourist behaviour and the contemporary world*, Pearce (2011) provides a flow diagram of tourist learning (p.127). This model suggests that the outcomes of learning are determined by several factors including: (1) the individual differences, physical environment context and the socio-cultural context; (2) the amount of interpretation of the setting; and (3) the basic learning processes. Previous research has examined what influences the learning experiences of tourists and what tourists learn from experiences (in terms of factual knowledge). There is scope to extend current understanding by considering what tourists *gain* from tourism experiences. A shift from factual knowledge towards experiential knowledge can provide additional insights. In particular, what constitutes a valuable consumption experience for Chinese tourists warrants further attention (Fu et al., 2012). Figure 3.1 provides the thesis concept map.

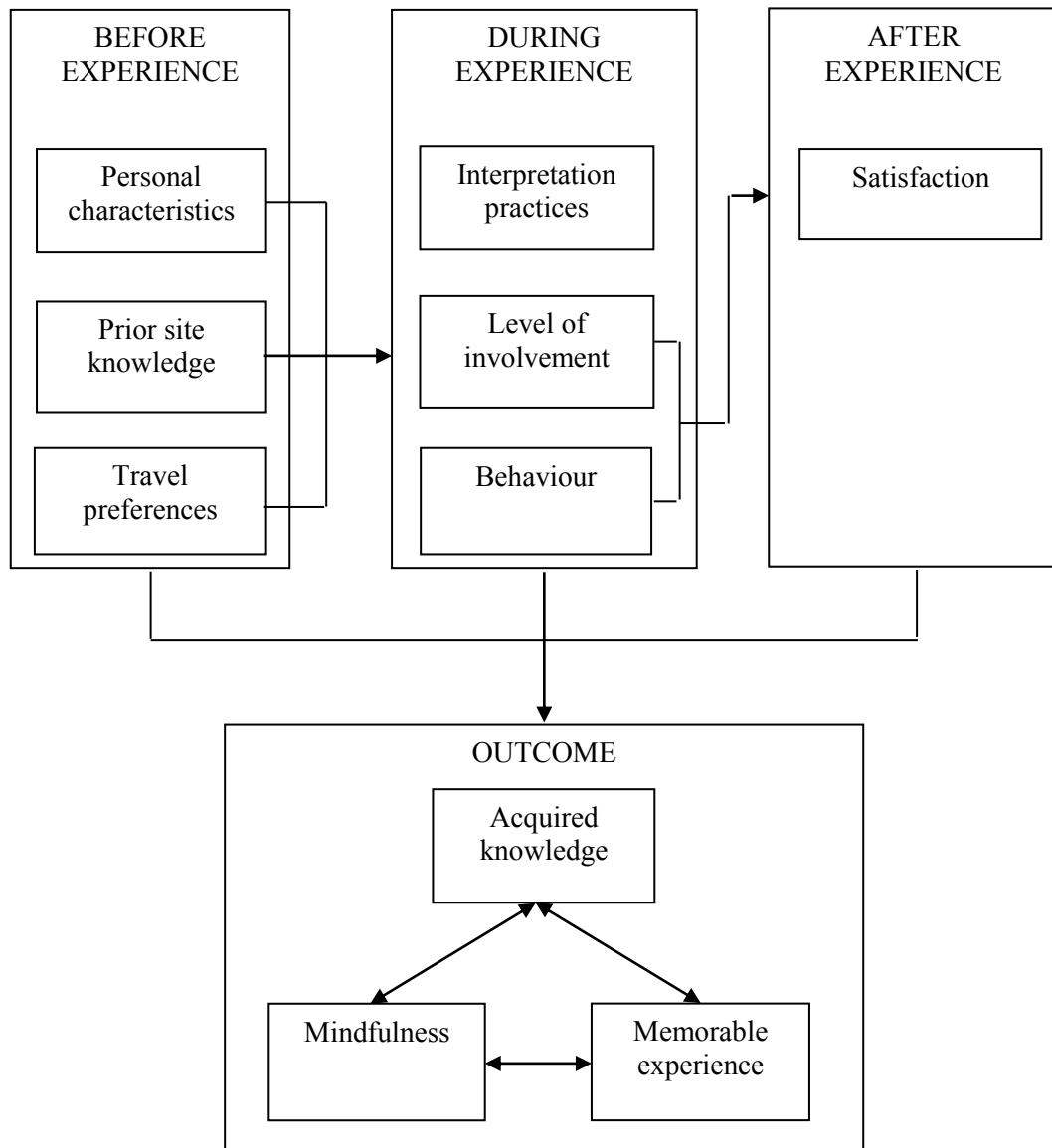


Figure 3.1. Concept map of the research projects

Table 3.1 details the measurement of the concepts depicted in Figure 3.1. Research concepts have varying relevance for the three empirical studies, and may at times be measured under different terminology. Overall, however, Figure 3.1 largely reflects the in-depth analysis to be undertaken in study two – what do Chinese tourists learn from their Wet Tropics’ experience (see Chapter five). Data for study one (tourists’ travel blog photographs) and study three (interviews with tourism stakeholders) will be indirectly gathered, whilst data for study two (tourist questionnaire) are directly sourced primarily through Likert and other scale rating instruments.

Table 3.1. Explanation of the concepts to be used in the thesis

Concept	Operationalisation	Data ^a
Personal characteristics ^b		
<i>Age</i>	Age brackets	2
<i>Gender</i>	Male / Female	1*, 2
<i>Residence</i>	City of residence	1*, 2
<i>Education</i>	Highest qualification achieved	2
Prior site knowledge	Awareness of destination features	2
Travel preferences	Travel history, travel modes, nature skills, motivation	2 [^]
	Motivations, expectations, desires	3*
Interpretation practice	Signs, information (photographic capture)	1*
	Information sources and use	2
	Information provision, market-specific strategies	3*
Level of involvement	Various aspects (photographic importance)	1*
	Experience statements	2 [^]
Behaviour	Various aspects	1*
	Attitude statements	2 [^]
	Behavioural characteristics	3*
Satisfaction	Facilities, services, activities; overall; economic value	2 [^]
Acquired knowledge	Learning value	2
Mindfulness	Feelings, behaviour statements	2 [^]
Memorable experience	Various aspects (photographic emphasis)	1
	Experience statements; management	2 [^]

Note. a Data collected through blog analysis (denoted as 1), questionnaires (2) and interviews (3). ^bFor study three, tourism stakeholders were asked “how would you describe the typical current Chinese market to your attraction/destination?”

*Data will be indirectly gathered. [^]Measured through Likert scales.

PARADIGMATIC ISSUES AND RESEARCH DESIGN

Research can be conducted in many ways through different viewpoints and various approaches. Indeed, the separation of research into totally discrete categories is challenging. Brotherton (2008) suggests that rather than trying to force research into one definitive label, attention should be paid to describing the main emphasis and

purpose of the research. This section, therefore, describes paradigmatic concerns and research design issues by highlighting links to key aspects of the thesis. Topics addressed include the knowledge base, theoretical approach and types of research.

KNOWLEDGE BASE

Knowledge production in tourism has often been a contested issue. Ayikora (2009) states that the fundamental problems which plague tourism knowledge production are associated with one of three areas: (1) paradigmatic underpinnings; (2) qualitative-quantitative divide (method); and (3) connection between power political discourse and tourism. China outbound tourism has been significantly developed – and will continue to be – through politics. Overall, the policy of Approved Destination Status controls the number of outbound travellers and the countries to which Chinese people can visit (Tse & Hobson, 2008). Furthermore, Chinese and international government policies have hindered growth of Chinese outbound tourism in the past (cf. Zhang & Heung, 2001), including the difficulty of Chinese tourists obtaining entry visas (Zhou et al., 1998). In regards to the other two areas, paradigmatic issues will be addressed below with qualitative-quantitative perspectives considered later.

A research paradigm is the basic belief system or worldview that organises our observations and reasoning (Babbie, 2007). In particular, research paradigms define “the nature of the ‘world’, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts...” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.107). Furthermore, paradigms provide “flexible guidelines that connect theory and method and help to determine the structure and shape of an inquiry” (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004, p.35). Observation and understanding – the fundamental characteristics of an inquiry paradigm⁴ – constitute three major elements. That is, ontology (the nature of reality), epistemology (the nature of knowledge) and methodology (process of knowledge collection). Essentially, knowledge production is influenced by a researcher’s definition of reality (ontological position) and what they class as knowledge (epistemological belief), which come together to influence how the

⁴ “...defines for inquirers what it is they are about, and what falls within and outside the limits of legitimate inquiry” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.108)

researcher will collect the knowledge (methodological practice) (cf. Goodson & Phillimore, 2004).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest that an inquiry paradigm is decided upon by how researchers respond to three questions. These are: (1) ontological: what is the form and nature of reality and, therefore, what is there that can be known about it? (2) Epistemological: what is the nature of the relationship between the knower and would-be knower and what can be known? And (3) methodological: how can the inquirer (would-be knower) go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known? The responses of the current thesis to these questions are subsequently presented; ontological and epistemological concerns are firstly addressed while matters of methodological concern are addressed later.

Ontology – the study of being – seeks to learn about the way the world is constructed. Various ontological positions, therefore, prescribe what can be real as well as what simply cannot (Willis, 2007). Hollinshead (2004) identified 10 ontological concerns which commonly occur in international tourism studies, two of which are relevant to the current research. Firstly, Hollinshead argues that there are varied and often incoherent meaning of sites and experiences to tourists who visit foreign places. Why do tourists want to travel abroad to experience particular natural sites? What do tourists gain from natural sites that are distinct to their own? Secondly, Hollinshead believes that foreign people differ from each other in shadowy and indistinct ‘unique ways’. What values, beliefs and attitudes do tourists bring when viewing nature in international contexts? How do these unique ways of ‘gazing’ differ from people from neighbouring populations who appear to be similar?

Epistemology – the theory of knowledge – seeks to learn the origins, nature and construction of knowledge. Various epistemological positions, therefore, are concerned with what we can know about reality and how we can know it (Willis, 2007).

Attempts to answer these ontological and epistemological questions will be addressed in the current thesis as illustrated through Chinese tourists’ Australian landscape experiences. Specifically, the research goal is to observe and understand tourism experiences from the perspectives of the Chinese individuals who co-create

their experiences. This approach is linked to the philosophies of Constructivism and Interpretivism research paradigms. Constructivism takes a ‘realist’ ontological position and a ‘transactional / subjectivist’ epistemological belief (see Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Realities exist in the form of many, intangible mental constructions which are socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature, and shared among many individuals. Knowledge is literally created and held within the minds of the constructors themselves (Ayikoru, 2009). For Interpretivism, research is shaped through pre-existing theories and world views of the researchers where knowledge and reality are still socially constructed (Willis, 2007).

THEORETICAL REASONING

Creation of knowledge is additionally attributed to the researcher’s theoretical approach to research phenomena. That is, does one begin with the known to explore the unknown or, alternatively, does one start at the unknown to add to the known. These theoretical steps respectively describe deductive and inductive reasoning.

Deductive reasoning involves the testing of hypotheses which have been determined through pre-conceived expectations derived from general theoretical understanding (Babbie, 2007). Therefore, the purpose of deduction is to use existing knowledge to test theory; refinements to theories or development of new ones may result. Inductive reasoning, on the contrary, hopes to build theory through the collection of data in the real world to extrapolate new explanations (Brotherton, 2008). Essentially, induction starts with the unknown and subsequently explores relationships, patterns and connections to add to the known.

The choice of theoretical reasoning, that is deduction or induction, is usually guided by the researcher’s fundamental beliefs and the state of existing knowledge. Chinese tourists’ experiences of Australian landscapes is a relatively unexplored phenomena (see Chapter one). The research project, however, has been framed within knowledge drawn from interpretation, mindfulness and tourist learning, cross-cultural translation and the tourist gaze (see Chapter two). Consequently, both deductive and inductive reasoning have been adopted in this thesis. Figure 3.2 displays the tailored theoretical approaches.

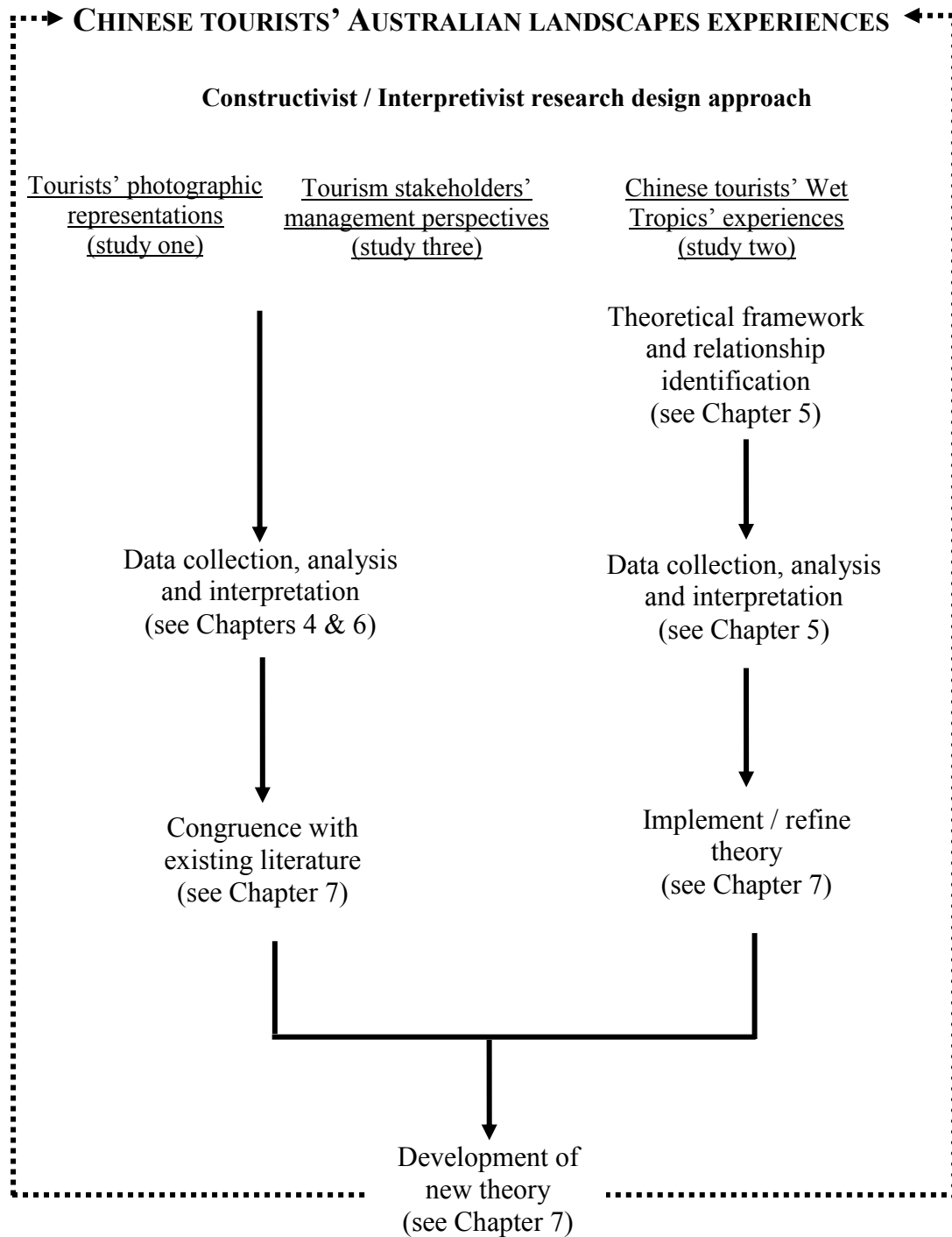


Figure 3.2. Theoretical reasoning of the current research

(Source: adapted from Brotherton, 2008)

THREE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH STUDIES

After consideration of how knowledge is created, research inquiry then needs to identify the type of research. Similar to the knowledge base and theoretical reasoning, the empirical work developed from different types of research purposes. Building off the literature opportunities, the overall research question and the three broad thesis goals are presented in Chapter two, whilst details of the empirical work are documented below. In particular, the following section provides a detailed account of the research design for the three studies informing this thesis. These empirical studies are inter-linked and provide different insights into Chinese tourists' views, interests and understanding of Australian landscapes.

Firstly, this thesis attempts to answer “*how do Chinese (and other) tourists represent Australian landscapes?*” This preliminary stage seeks to *describe* and *explore* the research phenomenon. The goal in this study is to identify interests of different tourist markets for Australian landscape experiences. Therefore, this stage is exploratory – to establish core insights and to provide some starting directions and thoughts for more in-depth explanatory work (Babbie, 2007). In particular, a content analysis of photographs posted in tourists' travel blogs will be conducted to explore how different tourists (i.e. Chinese, International and Australian) represent the Great Ocean Road, Red Centre and Wet Tropics National Landscapes. The focus of this empirical study is to identify: (1) what landscape experiences tourists consider important; and (2) how much emphasis tourists place on photographing such landscape experiences. The results of this stage seek to make the phenomenon clearer and shape the subsequent two stages (Brotherton, 2008).

Secondly, the current research seeks to address “*what do Chinese tourists gain from their Wet Tropics' landscape experiences?*” This second stage aims to *assess* and *explain* the research phenomenon. The purpose of this study is to explore how different experience dimensions shape and influence *the overall tourist experience* for Chinese tourists' during their Wet Tropics' visit. Consequently, this stage is descriptive – to describe what was observed by explaining what, where, when and how (Babbie, 2007). Specifically, self-completion questionnaires will be administered to investigate Chinese tourists' self-reported outcomes from experiences in Australia's Wet Tropics. This second study seeks to determine: (1) if

different Chinese segments exist; and (2) whether these different Chinese tourists progress through Wet Tropics' experiences differently (i.e. report different outcomes). The outcome of this empirical research is to identify the detailed relationships between landscape experience dimensions for Chinese tourists.

Lastly, the thesis work addresses “*what are tourism stakeholders’ perspectives on managing Chinese tourists in Australia’s Wet Tropics?*” This final stage attempts to *manage* the research phenomenon. The intention of study three is to identify tourism stakeholders’ perspectives towards managing Chinese tourism to the Wet Tropics. Thus, this stage is also descriptive – to establish a factual picture of the issue under investigation (Brotherton, 2008). In particular, semi-structured intensive interviews will be conducted with Wet Tropics’ tourism stakeholders to determine their perspectives on managing Chinese tourism. This final empirical work seeks to identify: (1) tourism stakeholders’ overall representations and current thoughts on managing Chinese tourists; and (2) tourism stakeholders’ attitudes towards future Chinese tourism management. Overall, the findings of this third study provide some insights into the host’s response in catering to Chinese tourists’ experiences.

Altogether, the three different approaches can all be seen as pure research. Overall, the empirical research primarily aims to contribute new thinking to expand and/or improve the body of knowledge without immediate application. Nevertheless, with descriptive work of this kind, some implications for management and consumers may be insightful and practical. In addition, the focus is to establish theoretical or conceptual connections as a framework which can be tested in subsequent research efforts (Brotherton, 2008). Further perspectives concerning the methodological approach and research methods employed in each study are considered next and in the respective empirical data chapters.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research procedures are constantly evolving. Social science researchers must, therefore, document research in clearly explained and transparent ways in order to allow others to simultaneously learn from as well as provide judgement (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004). Methodological appropriateness results from a combination of

factors such as the research problem or issue, the knowledge available to the researcher, and the participant's acknowledgement level for the research techniques employed (Santos & Shim, 2012). The following section describes the methodological approach of the thesis including qualitative-quantitative and etic-emic directions, issues with cross-cultural data collection, site selection and the reliability of the research.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Methodological matters follow paradigmatic concerns. Clearly, issues of methodology need to be addressed with reference to their ontological and epistemological bearings (Hollinshead, 2004). Thus far, it has been demonstrated that the thesis operates within the Constructivist and Interpretivist paradigms, using primarily inductive reasoning and exploratory and descriptive research. Two methodological approaches have particular relevance for the current work. Firstly, the quantitative-qualitative divide where focus is on how researchers approach phenomena. Secondly, the emic-etic distinction which considers how researchers relate to research subjects and the subject's point of view (Babbie, 2007).

Debates between research approaches – chiefly quantitative versus qualitative – have existed for some time in tourism. Traditionally, tourism scholars took a Positivist approach – which usually entailed quantitative methods – to understand problems of people and travel. Qualitative approaches, however, are now recognised as more than an adjunct to quantitative work (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). In particular, social sciences researchers are increasingly encouraged to apply of combination of both quantitative and qualitative measures (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Quantitative approaches seek to describe and explain research phenomena. The purpose of quantitative analysis, hence, is the numerical representation and manipulation of observations for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena those observations reflect (cf. Babbie, 2007). Ontologically, the idea of what do tourists gain from landscapes and what values, attitudes and beliefs do tourists bring could be addressed through quantitative measures. In particular, the

thesis work seeks to categorise and/or quantify the factors which attribute to learning or comprise values, beliefs, attitudes. Overall, a quantitative approach is employed in study one, to represent the importance of landscape experiences, and in study two, to demonstrate the patterns among Chinese tourists' Wet Tropics' experiences.

Qualitative approaches, on the other hand, seek to interpret research phenomena. The purpose of qualitative work, therefore, is to observe things in natural settings and to investigate the specific contributions of individuals (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Ontological questions of what do tourists want to experience and how do tourists' unique gazes differ could be qualitatively explored. Specifically, looking at tourist experiences assists in identifying experiential themes. Overall, a qualitative approach is employed in study three, to identify discourse themes of Chinese tourism management to the Wet Tropics.

Another research approach which informs the way researchers collect knowledge is the emic-etic distinction. Pearce (2011) explains that "the emic-etic distinction neatly addresses whose perspective we are considering as we approach the study of tourist behaviour" (p.11). Furthermore, Willis (2007) states that "the distinction between emics and etics has everything to do with the nature of the knowledge that is claimed and nothing to do with the source of that knowledge (i.e., the manner in which it was obtained) (p.101). Traditionally, social scientists have emphasised the importance of objectivity and distance from the research phenomenon (e.g. 'etic' perspective). Benefits from immersing in others' points of views (e.g. 'emic' perspective) are, however, increasingly being recognised and incorporated into later research efforts.

Etic approaches allow researchers to structurally observe and study topics. Research inquiry is, therefore, directed through the researcher's perspectives. In the current thesis work, an etic approach can usefully explore the relationships and connections among experience dimensions. Specifically, experience concepts and conceptual schemes can be pre-defined by the researcher (informed through a literature review) and subsequently tested on tourist markets. Overall, an etic approach is adopted in study two, to investigate the relationships among pre-established tourist experience dimensions, and in study three, to explore tourism stakeholders' perspectives according to specific visitor management categories.

Emic approaches, on the contrary, seek the points of view of those being studied. Research inquiry should, therefore, “be carried out so insider’s perspectives, beliefs, thoughts and attitudes can be fully articulated” (Pearce, 2011, p.11). Emic approaches assist the researcher to experience and understand through others’ eyes (Willis, 2007). The overall research question is to identify what Chinese tourists gain from Australian landscape experiences, which is investigated through mainly exploratory and inductive research approaches. Hence, emic perspectives do allow the identification of experience elements that are important to the research subjects. Overall, an emic approach guides study one, to identify experiential themes of Australian landscape tourists, and study three, to investigate different tourism stakeholders’ views, representations and descriptions of the Wet Tropics’ landscape experience for Chinese tourists.

CROSS-CULTURAL DATA COLLECTION

Tourists increasingly bring a wide array of personal influences, which ultimately combine to shape individual experiences (cf. Santos & Shim, 2012). Understanding these cultural complexities is just one issue in the grand scheme of cross-cultural investigations. For this thesis in particular, three cultural issues were identified.

Firstly, the impacts of cultural characteristics on tourist experiences are widely recognised. Members of a cultural group are believed to behave in similar ways due to the sharing of specific characteristics and traits (Santos & Shim, 2012). Chapter one, in particular, described the unique ways in which Chinese gaze upon landscapes including poetry, calligraphy and imagery, cultural values and the idea of ‘scenic spots’. Therefore, to truly appreciate Chinese tourists’ Australian landscape experiential gain, Chinese nationals were utilised as research informants to gain Chinese cultural insight. Furthermore, research guided by an Interpretivist paradigm automatically derives data that is likely to be better understood by members of the same group (to that observed) due to shared understanding (Willis, 2007).

Secondly, language differences can also be problematic in cross-cultural studies. Indeed, the process of translating from one ‘foreign’ language into something ‘familiar’ can oversimplify the object and result in mistranslation (Staiff

& Bushell, 2003). Likewise, asking tourists to describe experiences in a non-native language might result in misunderstandings in meaning and basic (or limited) descriptions. Cross-cultural research methods, therefore, need to account for cultural differences through the utilisation of native languages.

Graciano (2001) describes back-translation as the process of translating from the original language into the target language, and then having a second person translate back to the original language; the two 'original' versions are compared for consistency in translation. In the current thesis – with the researcher being a westerner with limited Mandarin skills – research instruments were originally designed in English and then translated into Mandarin through the back-translation process. This back-translation procedure was completed by two scholars proficient in both languages. Furthermore, in the case of Mandarin secondary data, Chinese scholars acted as research collaborators to assist with data analysis and interpretation.

Finally, access to foreign tourists is another challenge with cross-cultural research. Access can be hindered through language difficulties as well as cultural dissimilarities. Similar to issues of languages, 'native' means of connecting with different tourists might prove to be more effective and beneficial. In the current work, this included retrieving Chinese secondary data (where available).

SITE SELECTION

The process of site selection was guided by several criteria. As relatively limited research has been conducted on Chinese tourists' experiences of Australian landscapes, the current project is designed to provide a generic approach at first and then a more specific case study. That is, the work begins by exploring different tourists' experiences of three sites and then focusing specifically on one market's experiences of one site. Figure 3.3 portrays the 16 Australian National Landscapes identified by Tourism Australia and Parks Australia (see Chapter one for more discussion on the National Landscapes program).



Figure 3.3. Map of Australia's National Landscapes
(Source: TA, 2013b)

The first research study collects data on the Great Ocean Road, Australia's Red Centre (hereafter Red Centre), and Wet Tropics National Landscape experiences. These National Landscapes were selected because they offer distinct environmental experiences (coastal, desert, rainforest), are geographically dispersed (Victoria, Northern Territory, Queensland), and are popular destinations for domestic and international tourists. In addition, these sites can provide initial understanding of Australian landscape experiences, which will be further explored through a case analysis of the Wet Tropics National Landscape experience for Chinese tourists (studies two and three). This National Landscape was selected due to the tropical location of the author's university (James Cook University) and its recognition as a leader in research addressing the critical challenges facing the Wet Tropics.

RESEARCH METHODS AND ANALYSIS

Furthermore, many alternative choices are available concerning the research instruments and procedures to firstly collect and then analyse data. Research questions addressing Chinese tourists' experiences of Australian landscapes were investigated through several processes. Some of the more broad research instruments and analytical procedures are discussed below while the more detailed processes are described in the respective research chapters (see Chapters four, five and six).

QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires (or surveys) are a very old and versatile research method. As a data collection instrument, questionnaires can be utilised for many different purposes with emphasis generally attributed to descriptive, exploratory or explanatory objectives (Babbie, 1990). In addition, questionnaires are probably the best method to collect original data on populations too large to observe directly (Babbie, 2007), as they generally collect detailed information from individual respondents (Brotherton, 2008). Oppenheim (1992) warned, however, that questionnaires have the potential to be poorly constructed through insufficient attention being paid to instrument design.

Consequently, questionnaires designed for and utilised in this study of Chinese tourists' experiences of Australian landscapes were developed through extensive literature reviews. In particular, pre-existing scales and variables were employed as much as possible in the design of the questionnaire about Chinese tourists' Wet Tropics' experiences. This questionnaire was designed around eight experience dimensions identified from the multi-faceted literature review presented in Chapter two and the conceptual framework presented in Figure 3.1. Chapter five presents further details about questionnaire construction for this study.

Furthermore, questionnaire principles were employed in study three which concerned tourism stakeholders' perspectives on managing Chinese tourism (e.g. interview schedule). The interview schedule was utilised to principally identify topics discussed under the different, literature-informed management and optimism categories to be explored. In particular, both parts of the interview were shaped through four broad questions supported by supplementary questions depending on

the interviewee's response (i.e. semi-structured interviews). Chapter six presents further details about the interview schedule for this study.

CONTENT ANALYSIS

Content analysis describes the procedure where data are explored and subsequently grouped into chunks that identify underlying themes. Epistemologically, content analysis can be conducted through both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative approaches focus on methods which provide statistical inferences, thus, the content is decontextualised into wider outside variables (Stepchenkova, 2012). Differences between Chinese, International and Australian tourists' experiences of Australian landscapes were explored through quantitative content analysis. In particular, frequencies and mean analyses of the photographs posted in tourists' travel blogs were calculated. Increasingly, tourists are sharing travel experiences online – in a public domain – for millions to access (Lo, McKercher, Lo, Cheng & Law, 2011; Banyai & Glover, 2012; Stepchenkova & Zhan, 2013; Tse & Zhang, 2013). Web logs (blogs), in particular, are free virtual diaries which reveal the tourist's feelings, beliefs, stories, thoughts, interpretations and impressions about every aspect of the tourist experience (Pan, McLaurin & Crotts, 2007; Volo, 2010; Banyai & Glover, 2012). Chapter four presents more details on the content analysis employed to reveal tourists' photographic representations of Australian landscapes.

Qualitative approaches, alternatively, apply non-statistical and exploratory methods to explore the content's detail, context and complexity (Stepchenkova, 2012). Tourism stakeholders' perspectives on Chinese tourists' understanding of the Wet Tropics were investigated through qualitative content analysis. Specifically, the interview scheduled described above was employed to logically structure interview participant's data. Chapter six provides further perspectives on the grouping of data.

Thematic coding is a key process of quantitative and qualitative content analysis alike. Individual pieces of the data are logically grouped and organised into themes to illustrate the research findings. These research themes and/or categories can either be pre-established (i.e. a-priori classification) or determined from the first stage of data analysis (similar to factor analysis). A-priori classification formed part

of the content analysis employed in the current work where themes were *literature-informed*. That is, literature on relevant area(s) was reviewed to identify some essential aspects of the research subject being examined. Alternatively, the identification of research themes emerging from the data itself was more important in some aspects of the thesis research. Evidently, this process required the development of codebooks to categorise and classify data. A codebook “identifies the location/s of data items and the meaning of the codes to represent attributes of variables” (Babbie, 2007, p.408).

EXPLORING RELATIONSHIPS

Another direction of the current research is to establish and explore relationships amongst dimensions of Chinese tourists’ Australian landscape experiences. Specifically, the thesis attempts to identify differences between tourist markets and amongst Chinese market segments, as well as links among individual experience dimensions. Figure 3.1 posited some of the connections among experience dimensions that will be explored in the current thesis.

Links among experience dimensions will be analysed through several procedures including descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics serve to produce some simple outputs or statistics that summarise and describe the characteristics of the data (Brotherton, 2008). Patterns among tourists’ photographic representations and importance will be explored through frequencies, means analysis and graphical outputs (see Chapter four). Inferential statistics, on the other hand, make conclusions towards some larger population based on observations from specific samples (Babbie, 2007). In particular, chi-square analysis and t-tests are some appropriate analytical procedures for the current thesis as these tests allow comparisons among tourist segments (see Chapter four) and across experience variables (see Chapter five) respectively.

SYNTHESIS OF THESIS FOUNDATIONS

China outbound tourists have become one of the most important source markets for many destinations worldwide. This market portrays a complex cohort of tourists who differ not only on key demographic and psychographic characteristics but also on travel preferences and experience. Chapter one profiled the China outbound market in general and to Australia, and documented some key literature of natural areas and landscapes. Importantly, the way that Chinese tourists' gaze upon landscapes is the core emphasis of the current thesis.

Minimal work, however, has been directed towards examining how tourists perceive or interpret the special places they visit in distant lands (Hollinshead, 2004). Consequently, the research is guided by previous work which investigated interpretation, mindfulness and tourist learning, cross-cultural translation and the tourist gaze. Chapter two systematically reviewed these literature fields with specific links to experiences in natural areas and/or nature-based tourism encounters. Three areas of research opportunities were subsequently identified which informed the formulation of three studies. In particular, the empirical research revolves around the following thesis goals: (1) **how do Chinese (and other) tourists represent Australian landscapes**; (2) **what do Chinese tourists gain from their Wet Tropics' experience**; and (3) **what are tourism stakeholders' perspectives on managing Chinese tourists in Australia's Wet Tropics**.

Theoretical and methodological perspectives directing the thesis research were considered in the present chapter. Figure 3.1 identified the logical structure of the thesis and highlighted connections between temporal aspects of tourist experiences. Paradigmatic and research design issues were then presented which illustrated the diverse and multi-perspective direction of the current research. In particular, the thesis draws on different paradigms, diverse ontological and epistemological viewpoints, and inductive and deductive reasoning. Furthermore, the research methodology discussion emphasised the quantitative-qualitative approaches, etic-emic bearings, cross-cultural data collection issues and the various overall methods that delineate the current work.

Chapter 4 Photographic representations of Australian landscapes: A comparison of Chinese, International and Australian tourists

CONFUCIUS SAYS...

“Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it”

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INTRODUCTION

Chapter four presents the first research study which seeks to explore tourists' overall representations of Australian landscapes. A content analysis of the photographs posted in travel blogs seeks to determine if Chinese, International and Australian tourists capture landscape experiences differently. Comparisons among the three markets are expected to reveal, and hence, aid understanding about the relative perceptions of Chinese tourists. That is, how does being Chinese influence the way Australian landscapes are seen and experienced when compared to other tourists. Furthermore, the examination of representations across three settings – the Great Ocean Road, Red Centre and Wet Tropics National Landscapes – aims to identify how Chinese tourists' views differ according to individual environmental settings.

Holidays present numerous occasions to photograph experiences with each snapshot potentially representing a personalised moment (Robinson & Picard, 2009; Pearce, 2011). Digital photographic devices also grant tourists the power to instantly view images and decide whether to keep, delete or recapture. These observations raise several unanswered questions. Do tourists photograph experiences differently? What aspects do tourists consider worthy of capture? How much do tourists photograph each experience? This study attempts to address these concerns. In particular, it builds on the extensive discussion about the role and usefulness of travel blogs in tourism research. The focus is to determine what themes bloggers consider important which is relatively unexplored (Wenger, 2008). Chapter two implied that there are multiple tourist gazes that differ across societies and social groups (Urry, 1990). This idea will be explored in a comparison among Chinese, International and Australian tourists' photographic representations of Australian landscapes.

AIMS OF THE STUDY

Research reported in this chapter partly addresses thesis goal one – to explore landscape experiences for different tourist markets – and thesis goal two – to investigate tourists' cultural influence on landscape experiences. Overall, this foundation study provides initial insight into Chinese tourists' views, interests and understanding of Australian landscapes. In particular, the study results inform a more

detailed exploration of this research phenomenon which is subsequently considered in Chapters five and six. Specifically, the research aims of Chapter three are:

1. Investigate the commonalities and differences in the broad photographic representational categories of Australian landscapes by Chinese, International and Australian tourists.
2. Portray the detailed differences in landscape experience components among Chinese, International and Australian tourists' photographic representations.

METHODS

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Travel blogs were reviewed to investigate tourists' representations of iconic Australian landscapes. In particular, the posted photographs were thematically coded (see *codebook construction* below) to explore whether tourists have different photographic representations of three Australian National Landscapes: the Great Ocean Road, Red Centre and Wet Tropics.

Codebook construction

To assess travel blog photographs, a codebook was constructed. The codebook was developed in a separate study which investigated Chinese tourists' Australian landscape experiences. In that study, data were sourced from two Chinese blog sites. A team of five researchers (two Chinese and three Australians) reviewed unique blogs and individually developed codes; the codebook was then agreed as a joint task. To compare Chinese tourists with other markets, this codebook was adopted in the current work. For this research, individual variables were regrouped into four categories, guided by Tourism Australia's work on the National Landscape program and experience themes. The four categories were: *natural environment*, *Australian lifestyles and relationships*, *additional setting features*, and *tourism infrastructure*. Table 4.1 defines each category and lists representative variables.

Table 4.1. Coding scheme employed for tourists' photographic representations

Coding category	Description	Landscape elements ^a
Natural environment	Geological and physical features of the destination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iconic landmarks • Vegetation • Bodies of water
Australian lifestyles and relationships	Human interactions and aspects of Australian living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Australian lifestyles • Individuals / groups • Other tourists
Additional setting features	Experiences which are unique to the individual landscape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animals • Aboriginal culture • Vehicular experiences
Tourism infrastructure	Elements that support the tourist experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure • Information • Food and drink

Note.

^aDescribes the types of experiences for each photographic category; does not represent the full coding scheme.

Photographs were coded according to Kerlinger and Lee's (2000) five rules of categorisation⁵. In particular, the researcher evaluated a unique blog from each landscape to refine the codebook. That is, new features were added whilst other variables were removed from the codebook if they were not present. Throughout this procedure, the researcher worked closely with one team member from the previous project to ensure consistency in photographic interpretations. For more information about codebook development and operationalisation, refer to Appendix 4.1.

DATA

Research was conducted on three markets – Chinese, International and Australian tourists – with data sourced over two periods. Selection of these tourist groups was based on the belief that landscape experiences are culturally constructed (Ryan,

⁵ For analytical purposes, categories must be: (1) constructed according to the research problem and purpose; (2) exhaustive; (3) mutually exclusive and independent; (4) derived from one classification principle; and (5) on one level of discourse (p. 194-200).

2000, cited in Fairweather & Swaffield, 2003, p.57). As discussed in Chapter one, Chinese tourists have a uniquely 'connected' way of viewing landscapes (e.g. poetry, cultural teachings and scenic spots). Furthermore, the eastern-western cultural divide is widely recognised; however, increasing shifts in tourists' preferences warrants more micro-analysis such as comparisons among different segments of *western* markets. Data were sourced in a purposive, non-random fashion. The blog space is forever changing (Pan et al., 2007) so travel blogs were assigned a reference number and saved as Microsoft Word files. Only blogs posted between January 1st 2011 and September 30th 2012 were selected. The more specific sampling procedure for each data set will be considered individually in the following sections.

Chinese tourists' data

The population for the Chinese data was mainland China residents who are members and users of travel blogs sites. In particular, data were sourced from two Chinese websites: <http://blog.sina.com.cn> and <http://www.bbs/qyer.com>. These two sites were selected due to their popularity with and user-friendliness for Chinese people. Sina is reported as one of the most popular websites for the Chinese (Tourism Queensland, 2011). Qyer, on the other hand, specialises in providing travel information for Chinese tourists. Specifically, it provides a platform for users to discuss or share travel information and experiences through its Bulletin Board System (BBS) (Shao, Li & Li, 2012).

Data were sourced over a six week period (mid-August 2012 to end of September 2012). For Sina blogs, 'Australia tourism (travel/trip)' was entered (in Mandarin) into the search engine on the homepage. On August 20th 2012, this resulted in 250,019 blogs, displayed in reverse chronological order. Blog entries were then reviewed individually; any blogs relating to travel agents' advertisements or businesses promoting programs and introductions in Australia were excluded from the study. Three hundred and twenty-two blogs that discussed the Australian travel experience and were posted within the study period were sourced. Among these 322 blogs, 85 had no photographs therefore the final sample size for Sina blogs was 237. For BBS posts on the Qyer website, the 'Australia forum' hyperlink was selected. When accessed on September 26th 2012, there were 13,167 posts on many different

categories. The ‘travel experiences/notes’ category was then selected which resulted in 1,440 posts. From January 1st 2011 to September 30th 2012, 793 blogs were posted. Blogs relating to promotional material and that had no photographs were then excluded which resulted in a final sample size of 176 Qyer blogs.

The content (text and photographs) of the Sina and Qyer blogs was then considered. Only blogs that discussed the Great Ocean Road, Cairns-Kuranda rainforest (Wet Tropics) or the Red Centre National Landscapes were included in the final data set. Table 4.2 presents data sourced from Sina and Qyer in regards to these three National Landscapes.

Table 4.2. Blogs and photographs sourced from Sina and Qyer by landscape

National landscape	Sina		Qyer		Total	
	<i>Blogs</i>	<i>Photos</i>	<i>Blogs</i>	<i>Photos</i>	<i>Blogs</i>	<i>Photos</i>
Great Ocean Road	66	3,220	119	7,692	185	10,912
Wet Tropics	37	1,556	34	1,150	71	2,706
Red Centre	13	1,049	22	1,053	35	2,102
Total	116	5,825	175	9,895	291	15,720

Note.

- 1) For Sina blogs, each individual blogger may have more than one blog entry; several entries by one blogger has been counted as only one blog, where each blog may include information on either one, two or all three National Landscapes.
- 2) For Qyer blogs, each posting has been counted as a separate blog entry, where each post could contain information on one, two or all three National Landscapes.

International and Australian tourists’ data

The population for the International and Australian data sets were residents of any country except Australia (International) – or residents of Australia (Australian) – who are members and users of travel blog sites. A person was classed as a resident if they had lived in that country for more than one year prior to travel. Persons visiting Australia for work or study were excluded, regardless of length of stay. In particular, data was collected from one English blog site: <http://www.travelblog.org>. This site was selected after a three-stage process: (1) review of Lonely Planet’s Thorntree

Forum; (2) Google search of ‘Australian travel stories’ and ‘Australian travel experience blogs’; and (3) appraisal of tourism literature for commonly used sites. Appendix 4.2 provides a more detailed account of site selection procedure. Travelblog.org was started in 2002 and is a ‘unique free online travel diary for travellers across the world’. At the time of research, this site had over 200,000 members, and hosted over 7,000,000 photos, 60,000 maps and 700,000 blog entries.

Data were collected over a four month period (mid-December 2012 to mid-April 2013). On the homepage, blogs were sourced through ‘Oceania’ hyperlink – Australian flag – ‘Australian travel blogs’ hyperlink. When accessed on December 17th 2012, this search returned 52,845 blogs and 572,069 photographs, with blogs displayed in reverse chronological order. Blog entries were reviewed one-by-one; 4,301 blogs matched the study period and had photographs. A two-stage filtering process was undertaken to reduce the data set to a more manageable size. Firstly, after reviewing a sample of the blogs, five exclusion categories were identified (refer to Appendix 4.3 for more details). Then, the blog content was perused; blogs were included if any of the photographs or text referred to places within the landscapes. In total, 418 blogs remained. Table 4.3 shows a break-down of the final data set.

Table 4.3. Blogs and photographs sourced from Travelblog by landscape and market

National landscape	Australian		International		Total	
	<i>Blogs</i>	<i>Photos</i>	<i>Blogs</i>	<i>Photos</i>	<i>Blogs</i>	<i>Photos</i>
Wet Tropics	64	893	153	4,192	217	5,085
Red Centre	46	949	62	1,712	108	2,661
Great Ocean Road	27	570	74	2,730	101	3,300
Total	137	2,412	289	8,634	426	11,026

Note.

- 1) Each posting has been counted as a separated blog entry. However, blogs that discussed more than one National Landscape have been counted as one blog under each National Landscape discussed.
- 2) For the Wet Tropics National Landscape, any blogs/photos that referred to Great Barrier Reef trips (e.g. live on vessels, snorkelling, sailing, diving) were excluded from analysis. This was due to “Great Barrier Reef” being a separate National Landscape (which was not one of the three National Landscapes selected for this project). However, if the blogger mentioned the place/s they visited during these activities and they fell within the Wet Tropics National Landscape boundary (such as Magnetic Island), then the photos were coded accordingly.

Demographic profiles

It is not mandatory for users to provide demographic information on blog sites. Furthermore, users may provide inaccurate or deliberately misleading information to protect their privacy. Thus, constructing a representative profile of a sample consisting of travel bloggers can prove challenging. For this study, demographic information was firstly obtained from the blogger profiles. Then, to strengthen the accuracy of the information, further details were deduced from reading the individual blogs. Occasionally, the blogger was coded as *did not specify*.

Three markets were of interest: Chinese, International and Australian. The following profiles are based on the blogs posted not on the individual bloggers. For Chinese data, 291 blogs and 13,951 photographs were posted. More blogs were posted by females (40.7%) than males (30.5%). Twice the amount of blogs was posted by East-coast (15.4%) and Beijing-Tianjin-Liaoning (13.0%) residents compared to South-east (6.9%) and Other (6.5%) regions. Travel experience was rarely indicated; more blogs were posted by first-time (3.3%) than repeat (2.4%) tourists. For International data, 384 blogs and 11,201 photographs were posted. More blogs were posted by females (55.4%), than males (23.9%), and joint bloggers⁶ (15.2%). Two-thirds of the blogs were posted by European residents (66%; predominately United Kingdom); other blogs were posted by residents of United States of America (16.3%), Canada (10.7%), New Zealand (2.8%) and South Africa (2.1%). More blogs were posted by first-time (34.3%) than repeat (21.8%) tourists. One-third of the blogs indicated a short-medium trip (33.2% less than 21 days) and almost two-thirds a long trip (62.5%). For Australian data, 169 blogs and 2,948 photographs were posted. More blogs were posted by females (58.4%) than males (18.2%) and joint bloggers (20.4%). Most blogs were posted by tourists on a long trip (78.8% more than 22 days).

CODING AND ANALYSIS

The preliminary analytical direction was a content analysis of the photographs posted in travel blogs. Content analysis by text was not employed in this study primarily due

⁶ Travel blogs postings were shared between at least one male and one female.

to the issue of working in multiple languages. Furthermore, travel photographs can be viewed as visual representations which may be linked to the tourist experience. People are increasingly posting travel photographs online to illustrate their experiences (Tse & Zhang, 2013). In particular, tourists are likely to share images of the remarkable and privileged moments, which portray themselves favourably. Collected data were coded (according to two levels) and analysed using SPSS 21.0. The first level of coding signified photographic presence. A majority of the variables were coded on whether there were photographs present (code = 1) or not (code = 0); other variables were coded according to the appropriate options. The second level of coding portrayed the degree of photographic representation. The number of photographs posted on each variable (and overall i.e. total blog photographs) was recorded for all blogs. In some instances, no photographs within a single blog matched the variables identified; these blogs were excluded from further analysis (Chinese = 0; International = 8; Australian = 5).

To code the data, each photograph was examined twice by the lead researcher. Photographs were assigned a code depending upon the *focal feature* of the frame. The *focal feature* was determined to represent more than 60 per cent of the frame. Captions associated with the images were sometimes utilised to clarify the *focal feature*. Occasionally, photographs were assigned multiple codes if several features were believed to be the focus. For example, a couple standing in front of the Twelve Apostles at sunset would be coded for 'group members' and 'Twelve Apostles – sunset'. A random five per cent of blogs were then examined by an independent person who had been fully briefed about coding criteria. It was important to conduct a thorough coding check as the photographs were coded at face value and are thus subject to numerous interpretations (Albers & James, 1988, p.142). Inter-coder reliability was 81.6 per cent. This was considered an acceptable level due to two reasons. Firstly, the independent coder had no additional knowledge of the research project. Secondly, the lead researcher used blog text to assist with coding whereas the independent coder did not; this may have resulted in differences.

A master SPSS file was compiled from the three independent data sets. Further statistical testing was conducted via splitting the file according to a tourist nationality variable. Composite variables of the four experience categories were

computed using a two-stage process. Firstly, any variable containing sub-options was recoded into a yes / no response. Secondly, all applicable variables were summed for each experience area. Number of photographs posted on each variable did not require recoding. Accuracy of data transfer and calculations were checked through descriptive statistics at each stage.

Commonalities and differences in photographic representations

The first stage of analysis was to explore what landscape elements tourists photograph to reveal similarities and differences among tourist markets. Broad photographic representations were initially conceptualised by calculating the frequency (and percentage) of each variable for all landscapes. Frequency counts also served as a way to test for data entry error. For example, the count for 'yes' and 'no' together (or the sum of all options for multiple choice variables) should equal the number of blogs for that landscape. Then, chi-square analyses were conducted to further explore commonalities and differences in tourists' photographic representations. Field (2005, p.682) suggests that chi-square analysis is useful in determining whether there is a relationship between two categorical variables – in this case, the presence versus absence of photographs for each experience category.

Portrayal of individual experiences in photographic representations

The second stage of analysis was to further define differences among tourist markets' representations by identifying the relative importance of landscape elements. In particular, mean scores for the number of photographs posted on each element was computed and subsequently graphed. For this analysis, two labels were utilised to explain the relative importance. *Star attractions* described those experiences that were substantially higher, whereas *low-lights* symbolised experiences which were represented in substantially lower levels. Scores were determined to be substantially different if they varied by more than one standard deviation from the average relative importance⁷ for each market respectively.

⁷ Sum of relative importance scores divided by number of experience aspects.

RESULTS

The guiding aim of this study was to investigate the images connected to tourists' experiences of Australian landscapes as represented in travel blog photographs. Specifically, photographs depicting the Great Ocean Road, Red Centre and Wet Tropics National Landscapes – posted by Chinese, International and Australian residents – were considered. This was approached in two parts. Commonalities and differences in tourists' broad representations were firstly considered (aim 1). Then, photographic differences were further defined through detailed consideration of individual landscape experiences (aim 2). The findings of both approaches will be reviewed separately below, according to the experience representational categories.

PHOTOGRAPHIC CONTENT OF LANDSCAPE EXPERIENCES

Chinese, International and Australian tourists' travel blog photographs were coded according to four experience areas (see Table 4.1). Occasionally, the sourced travel blogs included sections of experiences not linked to these categories or the National Landscapes explored. Broad representations of landscape experiences were achieved through combining the frequencies of all applicable variables. Thus, the combined results of the frequency analysis according to coded photographs are presented in Table 4.4 (see Appendix 4.4 for the detailed frequency analysis).

Table 4.4. Number of coded photographs posted by market and landscape

	Chinese	International	Australian
National Landscape	Number of photographs		
Great Ocean Road (overall)	9,616	939	231
<i>Natural environment</i>	40.3	57.4	50.6
<i>Australian lifestyles and relationships</i>	18.5	5.6	10.4
<i>Additional setting features</i>	22.3	23.7	18.2
<i>Tourism infrastructure</i>	18.9	13.2	20.8
Australia's Red Centre (overall)	1,957	1,117	593
<i>Natural environment</i>	44.0	61.2	60.0

<i>Australian lifestyles and relationships</i>	17.7	5.9	7.4
<i>Additional setting features</i>	17.0	23.6	21.9
<i>Tourism infrastructure</i>	21.3	9.2	10.6
Wet Tropics (overall)	2,549	1,665	452
<i>Natural environment</i>	27.4	21.4	25.4
<i>Australian lifestyles and relationships</i>	21.4	7.3	10.4
<i>Additional setting features</i>	32.3	48.8	36.9
<i>Tourism infrastructure</i>	16.0	22.5	27.2
Total ^a	14,122	3,721	1,276

Note. Number of photographs is expressed as whole numbers for the National Landscape and percentages (of overall photographs – National Landscape specific) for individual experience categories.

^aDifferences between total photographs in Table 4.4 and Tables 4.2 and 4.3 reflect those excluded due to not matching the coding criteria or representing the National Landscape. Subsequent results are based on Table 4.4 data.

Overall, 26,626 photographs were posted with 19,119 matching the coding variables (71.8%). According to the broad representational categories, natural environment was the most represented experience (39.8% or 7,605 coded photographs), followed by additional setting features (26.1% or 4,988 coded photographs), tourism infrastructure (18.3% or 3,498 photographs) and Australian lifestyles and relationships (15.8% or 3,208 coded photographs). Chi-square analyses revealed further differences in tourists' broad landscape representations according to photographic presence and/or absence (see Table 4.5). In particular, Chinese, International and Australian tourists photographed all experience categories in significantly different ways ($p < .001$); the only exception was additional setting features for the Great Ocean Road.

Table 4.5. Chi-square analyses of photographic representation by market and National Landscape

National Landscape	Chinese		International		Australian		Total		Chi-square
	Present	Absent	Present	Absent	Present	Absent	Present	Absent	
Great Ocean Road	(n = 9,616)		(n = 939)		(n = 231)		(n = 10,786)		
<i>Natural environment</i>	40.3	59.7	57.4	42.6	50.6	49.4	42.0	58.0	$\chi^2 = 109.53, p < .001^a$
<i>Australian lifestyles and relationships</i>	18.5	81.5	5.6	94.4	10.4	89.6	17.2	82.8	$\chi^2 = 107.08, p < .001^a$
<i>Additional setting features</i>	22.3	77.7	23.7	76.3	18.2	81.8	22.3	77.7	$\chi^2 = 3.38, p = .184^a$
<i>Tourism infrastructure</i>	18.9	81.1	13.2	86.8	20.8	79.2	18.4	81.6	$\chi^2 = 19.06, p < .001^a$
Red Centre	(n = 1,957)		(n = 1,117)		(n = 593)		(n = 3,667)		
<i>Natural environment</i>	44.0	56.0	61.2	38.8	60.0	40.0	51.8	48.2	$\chi^2 = 103.67, p < .001^a$
<i>Australian lifestyles and relationships</i>	17.7	82.3	5.9	94.1	7.4	92.6	12.5	87.5	$\chi^2 = 107.60, p < .001^a$
<i>Additional setting features</i>	17.0	83.0	23.6	76.4	21.9	78.1	19.8	80.2	$\chi^2 = 21.93, p < .001^a$
<i>Tourism infrastructure</i>	21.3	78.7	9.2	90.8	10.6	89.4	15.9	84.1	$\chi^2 = 92.42, p < .001^a$
Wet Tropics	(n = 2,549)		(n = 1,665)		(n = 452)		(n = 4,666)		
<i>Natural environment</i>	27.4	72.6	21.4	78.6	25.4	74.6	25.1	74.9	$\chi^2 = 18.96, p < .001^a$
<i>Australian lifestyles and relationships</i>	21.4	78.6	7.3	92.7	10.4	89.6	15.3	84.7	$\chi^2 = 162.76, p < .001^a$
<i>Additional setting features</i>	34.2	65.8	48.8	51.2	36.9	63.1	39.7	60.3	$\chi^2 = 90.28, p < .001^a$
<i>Tourism infrastructure</i>	17.0	83.0	22.5	77.5	27.2	72.8	19.9	80.1	$\chi^2 = 35.55, p < .001^a$

Note. Present and absent categories were based on frequency counts.

^a 0 cells have expected count less than 5.

RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF LANDSCAPE EXPERIENCES

Chinese, International and Australian tourists' landscape representations were further explored through the relative importance placed on experience aspects. The following section presents a series of bar graphs linked to the mean number of photographs posted on each experience aspect. Whilst each graph displays Chinese, International and Australian tourists' importance of an individual experience category for an individual landscape, results will be discussed according to the broad representational categories.

Natural environment

Natural environment experiences were represented the most by Chinese, International and Australian tourists across all three National Landscapes. Figure 4.1 provides a sample of natural environment photographs. For the Great Ocean Road, 11 experience aspects were linked to the natural environment; the relative importance of each element is displayed in Figure 4.2. Chinese tourists had the highest average relative importance ($\bar{x} = 3.23$, S.D. = 1.56), followed by International ($\bar{x} = 1.86$, S.D. = 1.16) and Australian ($\bar{x} = 1.50$, S.D. = 1.20) residents. Altogether, five *star attractions* were identified including surf/ocean (Chinese: $\bar{x} = 5.31$; Australian: $\bar{x} = 4.00$), 12 Apostles from a distance/close-up (Chinese: $\bar{x} = 4.99$), 12 Apostles at sunrise-sunset (International: $\bar{x} = 3.56$) and Loch Ard Gorge (International: $\bar{x} = 3.07$). In addition, three aspects were considered *low-lights* for Chinese tourists: London Bridge ($\bar{x} = 1.66$), coastline ($\bar{x} = 1.53$) and personalised landscapes – where tourists characterise the landscape ($\bar{x} = 1.04$).



Figure 4.1. Images of natural environment of Australian landscapes

Source: from Travelblog contributors, used with permission. This source applies to Figures 4.5, 4.9 and 4.13 as well.

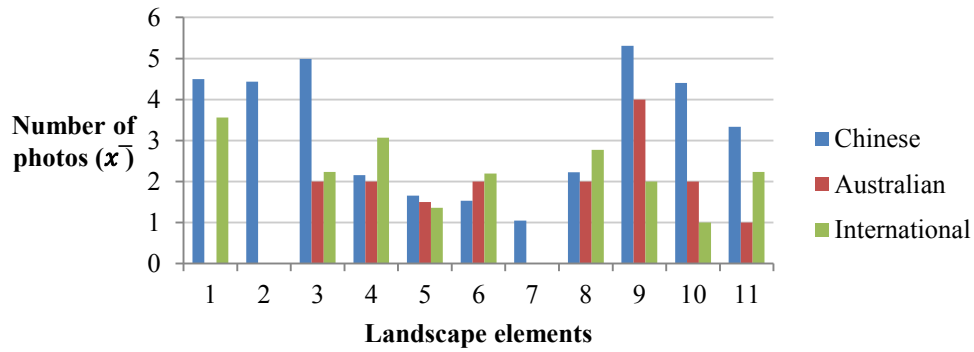


Figure 4.2. Relative importance of natural environment (Great Ocean Road)

Note. 1. Twelve Apostles (sunrise-sunset); 2. Twelve Apostles (different views); 3. Twelve Apostles (distant-close up); 4. Loch Ard Gorge; 5. London Bridge; 6. Coastline; 7. Personalised landscape; 8. Beach; 9. Surf/ocean; 10. Farm; 11. Plants/trees.

Figure 4.3 portrays the relative importance of the nine Red Centre natural environment experiences. Chinese tourists had the highest average relative importance ($\bar{x} = 4.19$, S.D. = 2.02), followed by International ($\bar{x} = 3.32$, S.D. = 3.28) and Australian ($\bar{x} = 2.88$, S.D. = 2.06) residents. Overall, five experiences were identified as *star attractions* which included King's Canyon (International: $\bar{x} = 10.94$; Chinese: $\bar{x} = 7.00$; Australian: $\bar{x} = 6.54$), Uluru at sunrise-sunset (Chinese: $\bar{x} = 7.40$) and Kata Tjuta (Australian: $\bar{x} = 5.44$). Again, Chinese tourists had the only *low-light* experience which was personalised landscapes ($\bar{x} = 1.23$).

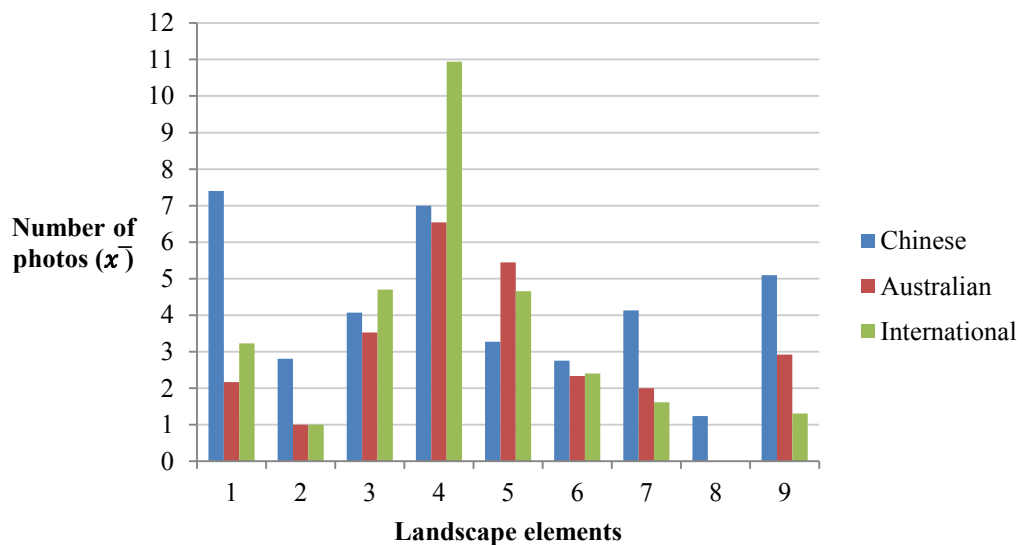


Figure 4.3. Relative importance of natural environment (Red Centre)

Note. 1. Uluru (sunrise-sunset); 2. Uluru (different views); 3. Uluru (distant-close up); 4. King's Canyon; 5. Kata Tjuta; 6. Burrow/dropping; 7. Colourful horizon; 8. Personalised landscape; 9. Plants/trees.

Wet Tropics' natural environment experiences (five in total) showed less variation in the levels of relative importance attached by tourist markets (see Figure 4.4). In terms of average relative importance, Chinese tourists ($\bar{x} = 2.84$, S.D. = 1.40) were higher than International tourists ($\bar{x} = 1.98$, S.D. = 0.50), who were marginally above Australian tourists ($\bar{x} = 1.70$, S.D. = 0.26). Travel blog photographs revealed vegetation as a *star attraction* for Chinese ($\bar{x} = 5.25$) and Australian ($\bar{x} = 2.00$) tourists, and waterfalls for International ($\bar{x} = 2.64$) tourists. Furthermore, views of cities/villages were identified as a *low-light* experience for International ($\bar{x} = 1.45$) and Australian ($\bar{x} = 1.33$) residents.

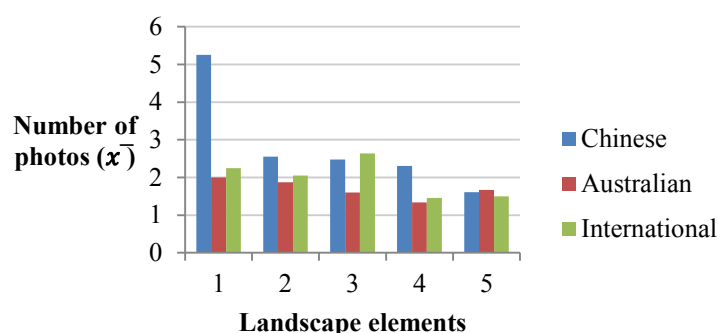


Figure 4.4. Relative importance of natural environment (Wet Tropics)

Note. 1. Vegetation; 2. Water; 3. Waterfall; 4. City-village view; 5. Rainforest.

Additional setting features

One-quarter of tourists' blog photographs were linked to additional setting features. Figure 4.5 displays images which represent this experience category. Great Ocean Road additional setting features were portrayed through seven aspects (see Figure 4.6 for relative importance of each aspect). Substantial differences were noted among tourists' average relative importance; Chinese tourists ($\bar{x} = 2.92$, S.D. = 1.74) had a higher level than International ($\bar{x} = 1.63$, S.D. = 1.15) and Australian ($\bar{x} = 0.86$, S.D. = 0.90) residents. Five *star attractions* were identified including wild animals (Chinese: $\bar{x} = 5.93$; Australian: $\bar{x} = 2.00$), driving experiences (Chinese: $\bar{x} = 4.67$; International: $\bar{x} = 3.60$) and lighthouses (Australian: $\bar{x} = 2.00$). No experiences were considered to be *low-lights* for Chinese, International or Australian tourists.



Figure 4.5. Images of additional setting features of Australian landscapes

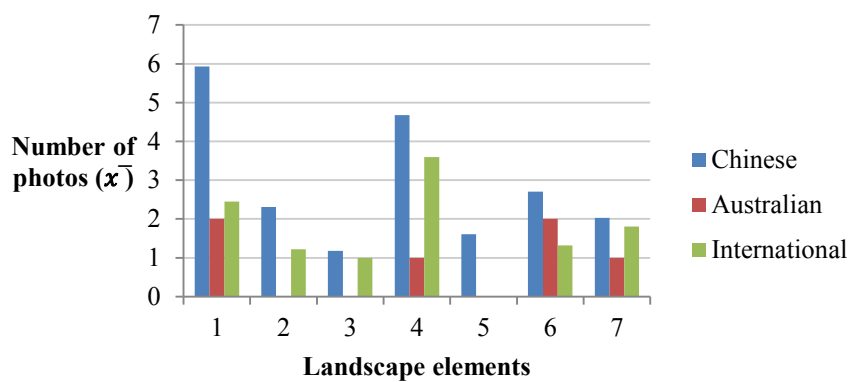


Figure 4.6. Relative importance of additional setting features (Great Ocean Road)

Note. 1. Wild animal; 2. Animal interaction; 3. Aboriginal culture; 4. Driving experience; 5. Helicopter experience; 6. Lighthouse; 7. Path.

For Red Centre, six landscape aspects were measured; the relative importance of each element is displayed in Figure 4.7. Chinese tourists had the highest average relative importance ($\bar{x} = 2.85$, S.D. = 1.07), followed by International ($\bar{x} = 2.45$, S.D. = 0.81) and Australian ($\bar{x} = 1.95$, S.D. = 0.30) residents. Animals featured as a *star attraction* among Chinese ($\bar{x} = 4.71$) and International (animal interactions: $\bar{x} = 3.50$; animals alone: $\bar{x} = 3.43$) tourists' travel blogs. Australians, on the other hand, photographed experiences with less emphasis; paths was identified as the only *low-light* experience ($\bar{x} = 1.56$).

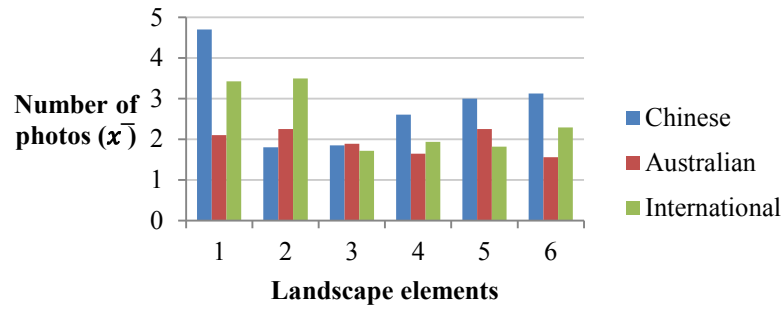


Figure 4.7. Relative importance of additional setting features (Red Centre)

Note. 1. Wild animal; 2. Animal interaction; 3. Aboriginal culture; 4. Walking-driving experience; 5. Helicopter-camel experience; 6. Path.

Figure 4.8 displays the relative importance of the seven experience aspects linked to Wet Tropics' additional setting features. Average levels of relative importance fluctuated among tourist markets where Chinese tourists reported the highest levels ($\bar{x} = 4.73$, S.D. = 2.98), then Internationals ($\bar{x} = 3.10$, S.D. = 1.51) and Australians ($\bar{x} = 1.97$, S.D. = 1.55). Overall, four *star attractions* were identified with bush walking/sky diving/hot air ballooning (Chinese: $\bar{x} = 10.46$) being much higher than Skyrail/Scenic train/army duck experiences (International: $\bar{x} = 4.88$), wild animals (International: $\bar{x} = 4.77$) and animal interactions (Australian: $\bar{x} = 4.38$). Aboriginal culture was the only *low-light* experience (International: $\bar{x} = 1.00$).

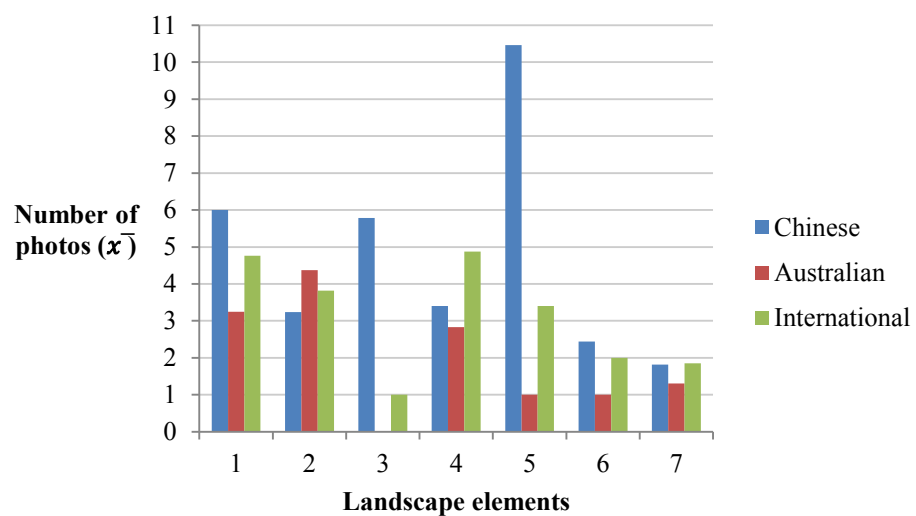


Figure 4.8. Relative importance of additional setting features (Wet Tropics)

Note. 1. Wild animal; 2. Animal interaction; 3. Aboriginal culture; 4. Sky rail/scenic train/army duck; 5. Bushwalking/skydiving/hot air balloon experience; 6. Sky rail (with rainforest); 7. Path.

Tourism infrastructure

Tourism infrastructure-related experiences were captured in noticeably lower levels. Figure 4.9 displays some Chinese, International and Australian tourists' photographs linked to tourism infrastructure. Altogether, 10 experience aspects were coded for across Great Ocean Road, Red Centre and Wet Tropics' National Landscapes; one additional aspect was added to Wet Tropics' representation. The relative importance of Great Ocean Road tourism infrastructure experiences are portrayed in Figure 4.10. Chinese tourists had the highest average relative importance ($\bar{x} = 2.52$, S.D. = 1.14), followed by International ($\bar{x} = 1.08$, S.D. = 0.96) and Australian ($\bar{x} = 0.63$, S.D. = 0.73) residents. Accommodation aspects featured predominately as *star attractions* (accommodation interior – Chinese: $\bar{x} = 4.67$; International: $\bar{x} = 2.50$; accommodation type – Australian: $\bar{x} = 2.00$). In addition, food/drinks (Chinese: $\bar{x} = 4.14$) and signs (International: $\bar{x} = 2.68$) served as other *star attractions*. On the other hand, airport was the only *low-light* experience (Chinese: $\bar{x} = 1.17$).



Figure 4.9. Images of tourism infrastructure of Australian landscapes

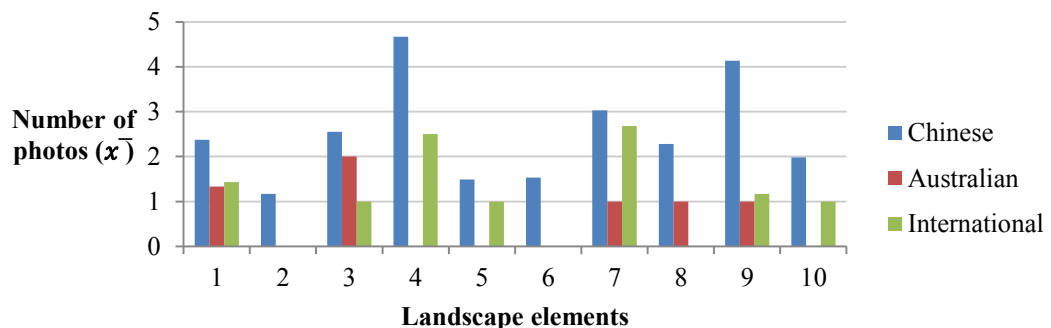


Figure 4.10. Relative importance of tourism infrastructure (Great Ocean Road)

Note. 1. Transport; 2. Airport; 3. Accommodation (type); 4. Accommodation (interior); 5. Accommodation (service); 6. Price; 7. Sign; 8. Map; 9. Food/drink; 10. Restaurant/café.

Figure 4.11 portrays the relative importance of the 10 Red Centre tourism infrastructure experiences. Chinese tourists' average relative importance ($\bar{x} = 2.50$, S.D. = 0.61) was higher than International ($\bar{x} = 1.27$, S.D. = 0.56) and Australian ($\bar{x} = 0.96$, S.D. = 0.54) residents, who had relatively similar levels. Four different experiences were identified as *star attractions* including maps (Chinese: $\bar{x} = 3.29$), signs (Chinese: $\bar{x} = 3.24$), accommodation service (International: $\bar{x} = 2.00$) and accommodation type ($\bar{x} = 1.55$). Chinese tourists' representations indicated two experiences were *low-lights*, that is, restaurants/cafes ($\bar{x} = 1.75$) and accommodation service ($\bar{x} = 1.58$).

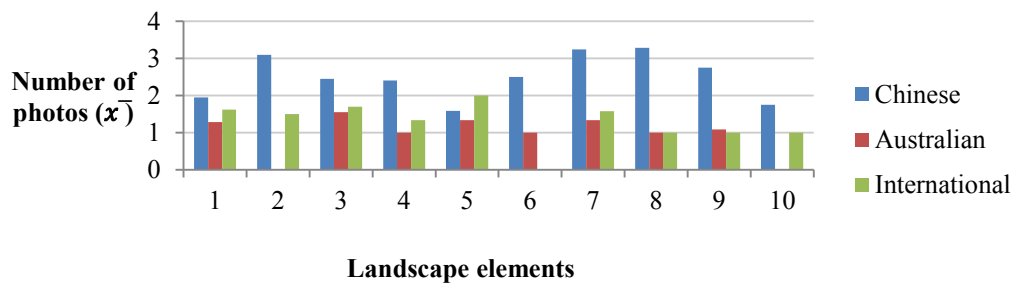


Figure 4.11. Relative importance of tourism infrastructure (Red Centre)

Note. 1. Transport; 2. Airport; 3. Accommodation (type); 4. Accommodation (interior); 5. Accommodation (service); 6. Price; 7. Sign; 8. Map; 9. Food/drink; 10. Restaurant/café.

The relative importance of the 11 Wet Tropics' tourism infrastructure experiences is displayed in Figure 4.12. Smaller differences were noted among tourists' average level of relative importance (Chinese: $\bar{x} = 2.09$, S.D. = 0.87; International: $\bar{x} = 1.44$, S.D. = 0.66; Australian: $\bar{x} = 1.13$, S.D. = 0.64). *Star attractions* differed across tourist markets with Chinese preferring food/drinks ($\bar{x} = 4.00$) and souvenir shops/markets ($\bar{x} = 3.19$), Internationals photographing accommodation interior ($\bar{x} = 2.50$) and Australians representing airport/train station ($\bar{x} = 2.00$) and signs ($\bar{x} = 1.88$). Prices were the only *low-light* experience (Chinese: $\bar{x} = 1.20$).

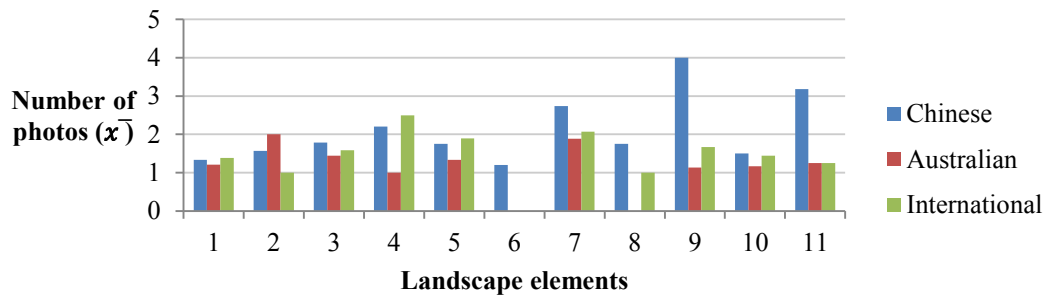


Figure 4.12. Relative importance of tourism infrastructure (Wet Tropics)

Note. 1. Transport; 2. Airport; 3. Accommodation (type); 4. Accommodation (interior); 5. Accommodation (service); 6. Price; 7. Sign; 8. Map; 9. Food/drink; 10. Restaurant/café; 11. Souvenir market.

Australian lifestyles and relationships

Australian lifestyles and relationships was the experience category least portrayed by Chinese, International and Australian tourists. Figure 4.13 provides a sample of Australian lifestyles and relationships related experiences. Similar to tourism infrastructure, 10 Australian lifestyle and relationships experience aspects were coded for across all three National Landscapes. The relative importance of Great Ocean Road experiences is depicted in Figure 4.14. Chinese tourists had the highest average relative importance ($\bar{x} = 2.66$, S.D. = 1.90), followed by International ($\bar{x} = 1.02$, S.D. = 0.78) and Australian ($\bar{x} = 0.65$, S.D. = 1.00) residents. Four *star attractions* were identified which all link to acts of photographing different groups of people; Chinese preferred to capture their travel party (individual members: $\bar{x} = 7.22$; group members: $\bar{x} = 4.67$), while Australian and International residents favoured capturing images of other western people ($\bar{x} = 3.00$ and $\bar{x} = 2.25$ respectively). Chinese, International and Australian tourists portrayed no Great Ocean Road Australian lifestyle and relationships experiences as *low-lights*.



Figure 4.13. Images of Australian lifestyles and relationships of Australian landscapes

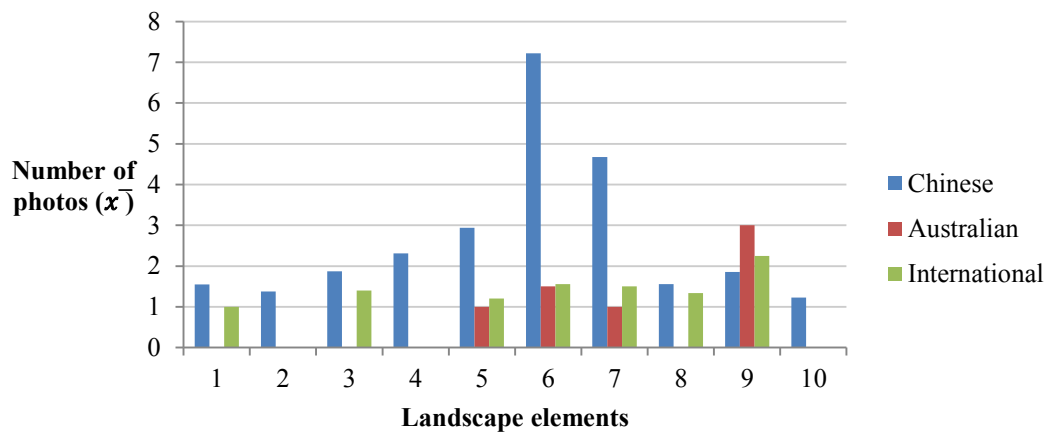


Figure 4.14. Relative importance of Australian lifestyles and relationships (Great Ocean Road)

Note. 1. Walking pets; 2. Western children playing; 3. Leisure in parks; 4. Driving lifestyle; 5. Other lifestyles; 6. Individuals; 7. Group members; 8. Westerners and Asians; 9. Any Westerners; 10. Western children.

Figure 4.15 portrays the relative importance of Australian lifestyles and relationships for the Red Centre. Average levels of relative importance showed some differences across tourist markets with Chinese tourists having the highest level ($\bar{x} = 2.32$, S.D. = 1.67), followed by International ($\bar{x} = 0.95$, S.D. = 0.78) and Australian ($\bar{x} = 0.60$, S.D. = 0.67) residents. Similar to the Great Ocean Road, photographing different groups of people was identified as *star attractions* for all three tourist markets. Chinese and Australian tourists placed more emphasis on photographing their travel party (Chinese – individual members: $\bar{x} = 6.52$; Australian – group members: $\bar{x} = 1.69$; Australian – individual members: $\bar{x} = 1.33$), while International residents favoured capturing images of other westerners ($\bar{x} = 2.43$). Overall, none of the landscape elements were identified as *low-light* experiences for any market.

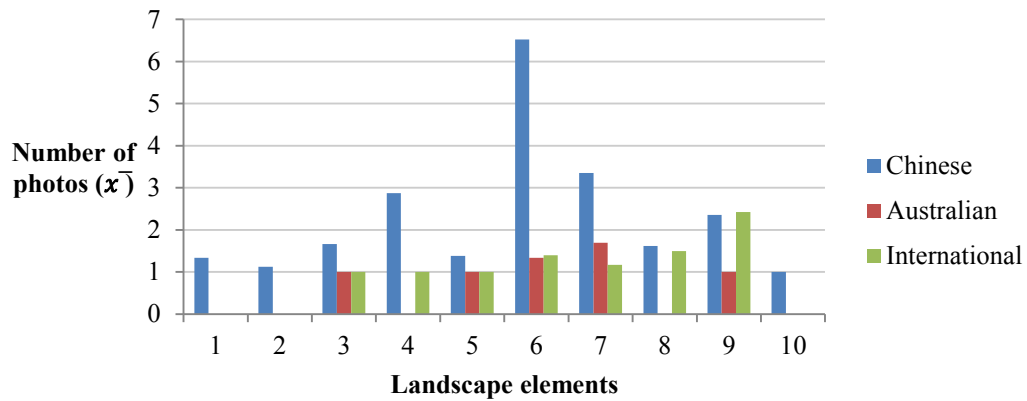


Figure 4.15. Relative importance of Australian lifestyles and relationships (Red Centre)

Note. 1. Walking pets; 2. Western children playing; 3. Leisure in parks; 4. Driving lifestyle; 5. Other lifestyles; 6. Individuals; 7. Group members; 8. Westerners and Asians; 9. Any Westerners; 10. Western children.

Levels of relative importance of the same 10 Australian lifestyle and relationships for Wet Tropics' National Landscape are illustrated in Figure 4.16. Tourists' average level of relative importance were comparable (Chinese: $\bar{x} = 1.95$, S.D. = 0.83; International: $\bar{x} = 0.98$, S.D. = 0.71; Australian: $\bar{x} = 0.85$, S.D. = 0.76). Two landscape aspects were identified as *star attractions* which similarly (to Great Ocean Road and Red Centre) linked to photographing people; Chinese tourists favoured individuals from their travel group ($\bar{x} = 4.09$) while Australians preferred capturing all travel group members ($\bar{x} = 1.75$). *Low-light* experiences were not identified for Chinese, International or Australian tourists.

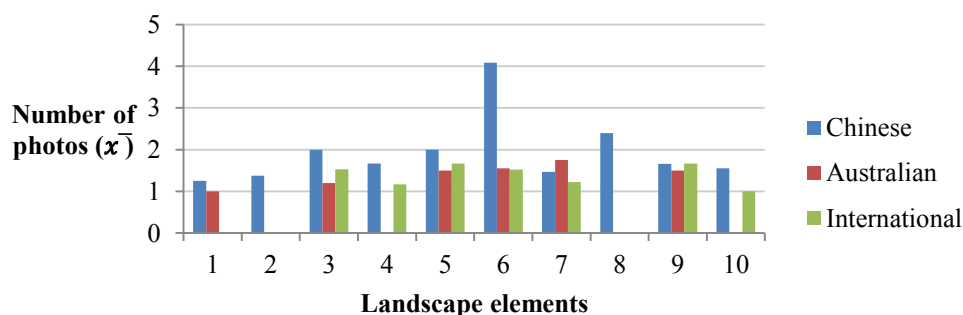


Figure 4.16. Relative importance of Australian lifestyles and relationships (Wet Tropics)

Note. 1. Walking pets; 2. Western children playing; 3. Leisure in parks; 4. Driving lifestyle; 5. Other lifestyles; 6. Individuals; 7. Group members; 8. Westerners and Asians; 9. Any Westerners; 10. Western children.

DISCUSSION

The current study was conducted to pursue two main research aims. Firstly, tourists' broad photographic representational experiences were examined to identify commonalities and differences across Chinese, International and Australian tourists. Secondly, detailed consideration of the representational differences was pursued in terms of the relative importance of individual experience aspects. Several discussion points can be drawn from the findings, which are considered under the respective research aims. Further implications arising from the current photographic representations study will be considered in Chapter seven after a fuller treatment of the topics of interest in the subsequent research chapters.

It is important, however, to firstly outline two major implications that might influence further interpretations of Chinese, International and Australian tourists' photographic representations. First of all, a great disparity was noted in the photographic quantity posted by Chinese (14,122 photographs), International (3,721 photographs) and Australian (1,276 photographs) tourists. Overall, Chinese tourists are notoriously known to take large amounts of photographs when travelling. This was clearly supported in the current work. Interesting, though, was the fact that Internationals also posted a substantially higher amount of images when compared to Australian tourists. One possible conclusion of this further disparity in photographic quantity could be linked to the idea of cultural distance. That is, the more distant the culture being observed / experienced is to the tourist's (photographer's) culture, the more likely those experiences will be portrayed in higher levels. The act of being 'on holiday', particularly in a different environment, presents endless opportunities for taking large numbers of photographs – some staged and others not – and subsequently sharing them afterwards (Robinson & Picard, 2009). Therefore, this implication could be supported through further studies and additional research methods exploring tourists' landscape representations.

Secondly, data reported on photographic emphasis might be influenced by an interest in, and the availability of, a specific feature. Several examples can be provided to illustrate this implication. Firstly, an appreciation of tourism infrastructure and accommodation could be dependent on design. Tourists might not have stayed in architecturally-similar complexes before, thus, generating excitement

and an interest in their surrounds. Secondly, perception of Aboriginal culture may be dependent on availability and delivery. For the Wet Tropics, majority of the Indigenous products involve guided tours in the rainforest; these tours are relatively expensive and involve a large amount of travel time which possibly affects participation desirability. Thirdly, the experience of Australian lifestyle might be dependent on what it actually is. Activities like surf life saving, walking pets or watching sporting events might not hold a high level of interest for different tourists. Accordingly, photographic imagery identified in the current work might not portray a full appreciation for the diversity of Australian landscape preferences and representations. New research could explore the meanings behind tourists' choice of photographs.

TOURISTS' PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATIONS OF AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPES

Chinese, Australian and International tourists photographed a wide variety of landscape aspects for Great Ocean Road, Red Centre and Wet Tropics experiences. The myriad of experiences captured lends support to a few propositions in the literature. Firstly, as suggested by Robinson and Picard's (2009) study, tourists' photographs represent both those that depict natural views of landscapes and buildings as well as those that foreground friends and family. Secondly, supporting Haywood's (1990) research, travel photographs capture information about tourists' experiences linked with destination learning and understanding. In particular, some emphasis was placed on capturing informational aspects such as signs, maps and prices, as well as other uniquely Australian features like Australia's various lifestyles, Aboriginal culture and farms. Overall, the study supports Susan Sontag's belief that "...it seems positively unnatural to travel for pleasure without taking a camera along..." (1977, p.9).

Some differences were noted, however, in the photographic content of landscape representations among the three markets. Tourists' different photographic documentations of travel experiences may be linked to the various expectations and reasons for visiting destinations. In addition, photography generally requires a degree of selectivity and control. Regardless of the photographic subject, its selection automatically excludes other aspects – both people and parts of the landscape – from

the frame (cf. Robinson & Picard, 2009). Photography is thus a highly selective practice. Each image identifies a personalised moment selected through a moment of choice requiring mindfulness (Pearce, 2011). Furthermore, tourists have the freedom to frame pictures in any way desired. Some tourists continuously reposition themselves to represent the ‘best’ views; whilst others patiently wait until all other tourists are out of sight to capture solitude (Robinson & Picard, 2009).

Furthermore, some tourists’ travel blog photographs did not align with the experience categories explored. Overall, 7,507 photographs (Great Ocean Road: 3,417; Red Centre: 1,041; Wet Tropics: 3,049) depicted landscape experiences other than the natural environment, additional setting features, tourism infrastructure and Australian lifestyles and relationships. Consequently, tourists’ gazes are all-encompassing and are comprised of many different factors – some spectacular and some mundane. Furthermore, travellers use photography to construct memories and narratives (Belk & Yeh, 2011); thus, the capturing of many (and all) experience aspects is crucial to delivering the full story (picture).

TOURISTS’ PHOTOGRAPHIC IMPORTANCE OF AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPES

Landscape experience aspects also differed in the degree of photographic importance held by Chinese, Australian and International residents. For the natural environment, two experience aspects were key features of tourists’ representations. Firstly, all tourists placed high importance on capturing iconic landmarks. Kings Canyon was a *star attraction* for all three markets, with 12 Apostles also popular for the Chinese (sunrise views) and International tourists (distance-close up views). Different styles of capturing these iconic landmarks supports the idea that some tourists queue to take photographs at designated vantage points, whilst others snap different angles in an attempt to be unique (Robinson & Picard, 2009). Other iconic features held different importance for different tourists. Preference for photographing symbolic landmarks has previously been recognised (Markwell, 1997; Stylianou-Lambert, 2012). Tourists are expected to not return home without pictures of famous sites from the destinations visited (Caton & Santos, 2008). Secondly, elements of water seemed to have priority in tourists’ landscape representations. Surfs/oceans along the Great Ocean Road were *star attractions* for Chinese and Australian tourists, whilst

Internationals favoured waterfalls in the Wet Tropics. Pan, Lee and Tsai (2014) in their study about the relationships among motivations, image dimensions and affective qualities of place, identified the appeal of water, which linked to stimulating both arousing and pleasant feelings. On the contrary, a few elements were identified as *low-lights* which varied according to different tourist markets.

For additional setting features, tourists collectively placed high emphasis on two aspects. Firstly, animals were a stand-out *star attraction* for Chinese, Australian, and International tourists alike. In particular, Chinese tourists captured animals alone, Internationals enjoyed interacting with the animals, and Australians placed high emphasis on photographing both aspects. Australia has many unique fauna – some endemic – which tourists travel to catch a glimpse of. Photographic records of animals in zoos or captive settings, however, suggest some difficulties in viewing and accessing many species (Hughes, Newsome & Macbeth, 2005). The Cassowary is endemic to the Wet Tropics area but very elusive to witness in the wild. Furthermore, due to the vast area, seeing animals along the Great Ocean Road, and to an extent, in the Red Centre sometimes requires a tourist to be there at the right moment. For Chinese tourists, in particular, observing animals from a distance might provide more comfort for these potentially first-time travellers or be indicative of Australia's reputation for dangerous animals. Secondly, unique landscape experiences played an important role in overseas' tourists' representations. Great Ocean Road driving experiences were favoured by both Chinese and International tourists. Similarly, bushwalking/sky diving/hot air ballooning in the Wet Tropics was a *star attraction* for Chinese tourists, while Internationals preferred the Skyrail/Scenic train/army ducks in this setting. Again, *low-light* experiences were few and varied across the markets.

For tourism infrastructure experiences, two landscape experiences were important for the three tourist markets. Firstly, different aspects of accommodation featured with high emphasis in tourists' photographic representations. In general, the different styles of accommodation, as well as the interior features, were preferred over service aspects. Secondly, signs featured frequently in tourists' travel blogs. Interestingly, signs were a *star attraction* for Internationals on the Great Ocean Road, for Chinese in the Red Centre, and for Australians in the Wet Tropics. While

previous work has indicated signs are generally not well represented, a few issues might explain the present study's higher importance levels noticed. In this study, signs tended to depict informative information in a novel way. For example, in the Wet Tropics, it is common to see a warning sign depicting an upright 'before' and a horizontal 'after' cassowary. Although this highlights a safety concern of the region, tourists commented about the unusualness of its portrayal. Additionally, as tourists are increasingly visiting multiple destinations in one trip, the capture of place names and informative signs can assist tourists' recall and memories after the experience. On the other hand, only Chinese tourists identified *low-lights* experiences for this representational category, which varied across the landscapes examined.

For Australian lifestyles and relationship-related experiences, different groups of people featured with high emphasis in tourists' landscape representations. Photographs of individuals were important for Chinese tourists across the three landscapes. A majority of these images featured iconic landmarks in the background; this supports the idea that tourists photograph themselves to prove they have visited a place and participated in an experience (Prideaux & Coghlan, 2010). Australian residents favoured posting images of other travelling group members, while Internationals enjoyed taking photographs of other *western* travellers. Markwell (1997) suggests that tourists may capture scenes that illustrate the motive to travel. It can be suggested that Australians may be travelling to enjoy family time (i.e., emphasis on group), Internationals might be travelling to experience a different way of western lifestyle (i.e., emphasis on others), whereas the Chinese are potentially travelling to increase social status (i.e., emphasis on self). Future study could investigate this issue for the growing interest in family travel. No *low-lights* were identified for Chinese, Australian or International tourists' representations of Australian lifestyles and relationship-related experiences across the three landscapes.

STUDY CONCLUSIONS

In summary, this study contributed knowledge towards understanding the *observational* aspect of Chinese (and other) tourists' experiences of Australian landscapes. This topic was explored through a content analysis of travel blog photographs posted about the Great Ocean Road, Red Centre and Wet Tropics'

experiences. In particular, the study focused on exploring Chinese, Australian and International tourists' photographic representations in terms of what was important, how important was it, and what were the commonalities and differences across markets. Landscape experiences were investigated by themed categories including natural environment, additional setting features, tourism infrastructure, and Australian lifestyles and relations. Visual themes of tourists' travel blogs has largely been overlooked in previous work (cf. Wenger, 2008). Tourists' photographic representations were found to differ substantially in terms of content and the relative importance placed on landscape experiences.

Overall, the findings suggest that tourists gaze upon Australian landscapes differently, and place more or less emphasis on particular features. Chinese tourists take more images across a wider range of experiences, whereas Internationals photograph fewer experiences in lower amounts and Australians portray the smallest array of experiences, with relatively few photographs. These results might suggest that there are some cultural influences at play when tourists photograph Australian landscapes. This comment, however, is said with reservation. Whilst the study presented a descriptive analysis of photographic representations, future studies could employ more detailed interviews to understand why tourists photograph such images.

Chapter five will present a more refined focused on Chinese tourists' appreciation of Australia's Wet Tropics. The purpose of this second research chapter will be to explore Chinese tourists' experiences of the Wet Tropics from an experiential perspective.

Chapter 5 Chinese tourists’ multi-dimensional Wet Tropics’ experiences

CONFUCIUS SAYS...

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”

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INTRODUCTION

Chapter five presents the second research study which aims to explore the multi-dimensional aspects of Wet Tropics' landscape experiences for Chinese tourists. Self-completion questionnaires exploring detailed experience dimensions seek to reveal if different Chinese Wet Tropics' tourist segments exist, and if so, whether travel experiences differ in diverse ways amongst these segments. Identification of different Chinese tourists is expected to confirm that experience dimensions play different roles for individuals, and that many Chinese segments are starting to emerge. Furthermore, this study proposes a new way to classify market segments; that is, defining tourists according to a *tourist travel lens*.

Tourism activities present numerous planned and unplanned opportunities to learn, experience new feelings and acquire different skills (Pearce & Lu, 2011; Falk et al., 2012; van Winkle & Lagay, 2012). Furthermore, tourist experiences are complex and highly subjective phenomena influenced by many factors (see Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Uriely, 2005; Cutler & Carmichael, 2010; Pearce, 2011). The second wave of Chinese outbound tourism is bringing new groups of travellers demanding contrasting experiences (see China Travel Trends, 2012; Arlt, 2013). Therefore, several questions need addressing. What experiences do different Chinese market segments desire? How much influence do market characteristics have on their tourism experiences? Drawing on the perspectives presented in Chapter two – in particular, the concept of mindfulness – the empirical study reported here posits that different Chinese tourists will respond to their Wet Tropics' experiences in distinct ways (cf. Falk, 2005). That is, levels of difference in the experience dimensions will be noticed between Chinese tourists who have different personal characteristics.

AIMS OF THE STUDY

Research reported in this chapter partly addresses thesis goal two – to investigate Chinese tourists' cultural influence on landscape experiences – and thesis goal three – to identify Chinese tourists' understanding of Australian landscape experiences. Building off the findings presented in Chapter four, this second study further

identifies Chinese tourists' interests and understandings of one particular Australian landscape – the Wet Tropics. Specifically, the research aims of Chapter five are:

1. Define Chinese Wet Tropics' segments according to their *tourist travel lens*.
2. Explore the relationships among experience dimensions for different Chinese Wet Tropics' tourist segments.
 - (a) What is the level of difference among the experience dimensions?
 - (b) What are the patterns of influences contributing to the *overall tourist experience*?

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Overall, the process of learning is derived from a combination of inside (e.g. personal characteristics, past experience) and outside (e.g. setting, institution) influences (Falk et al., 2012). Based on a systematic and extensive review of interpretation, mindfulness and tourist learning, and the tourist gaze literature (see Chapter two), eight experience dimensions were identified that contribute towards what will be conceptualised in the current work as *overall tourist experience*. These experience dimensions include travel experience, existing knowledge, interest in learning, on-site interpretation, mindfulness-mindlessness, experiential connection, satisfaction and experiential reflection (see Table 5.1 for definitions).

Table 5.1 Operational working definitions for experience dimensions.

Experience dimension	Definition
Travel experience	Degree of already-established familiarity with travelling, developed through prior experiences.
Existing knowledge	Degree of already-established familiarity and awareness of the experience and the context it will occur in.
Interest in learning	Individual's degree of motivation to learn about the experience and the context it will occur in.
On-site interpretation	Sources of information which are available to the individual in the context of the experience.
Mindfulness-mindlessness	Degree of actively processing the experience and responding to the context / situation it is occurring in.

Experiential connection	Individual's level of involvement or bond with the experience and the contexts / situations it is occurring in.
Satisfaction	Evaluation of the experience (and its individual components) with respect to meeting the individual's expectations and/or fulfilling their needs.
Experiential reflection	After-processing of the experience (e.g. cognitive, affective, behavioural) which determines future actions.

Essentially, the *overall tourist experience* incorporates the myriad of personal, setting and institutional influences, which in this study, involves three major components. The first component – labelled *tourist travel lens* – represents the combination of personal characteristics and previous travel-related experience that an individual possesses (i.e., travel experience, existing knowledge, interest in learning). As an individual accumulates experiences, they draw together bits and pieces of information to create an overall impression, which they then bring to tourism settings. The second component – labelled *experience context* – includes both the informational sources presented to the tourist and how they respond to it and the physical setting (i.e., on-site interpretation, mindfulness-mindlessness). These elements prepare tourists for the more advanced stages of the experience that relate to cognitive, attitudinal, behavioural and other experiential aspects (cf. Falk, 2005; Pearce & Lu, 2011). The third component – labelled *experiential outcomes* – includes the more personalised components and reflections on the tourist experience (i.e., experiential connection, satisfaction, experiential reflection). The ultimate goal of participating in tourism activities is to experience something enjoyable and memorable, which increases the likelihood of repeat visitation (cf. Bryant & Veroff, 2007; Pearce, Filep & Ross, 2011). Chapter five attempts to model these influences towards landscape experience outcomes for Chinese tourists to the Wet Tropics.

METHODS

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

A self-completion questionnaire was administered to gather information about tourists' travel history, preferences and experiences in the Wet Tropics. This involved a series of Likert- and other scale-item questions (1-7 scale response), with

closed-ended options for demographic information. The questionnaire was originally designed in English and then translated into Mandarin, through a process of back-translation (see Chapter three for more comments) by two independent scholars proficient in both languages. A pilot test was conducted in January 2014 with 10 Chinese who had recently visited the Wet Tropics region. Some refinements to the questionnaire were made as a result of the back-translation and pilot test outcomes. The English version of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix 5.1.

The guiding aim of this study was to explore the influences of various experience dimensions in contributing to the *overall tourist experience* of the Wet Tropics for Chinese tourists. In order to achieve this, Structural Equation Modelling was proposed as the statistical technique. Structural Equation Modelling serves primarily to test interrelationships between latent constructs (indirect measurement) and their observed variables (direct measurement) (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2007). Chinese tourists' experiences are proposed to evolve in a generally linear fashion; that is, tourists draw on their travel background and preferences, then seek further information gathering and processing in the tourism setting, resulting in satisfaction and other experiential outcomes. Appendix 5.2 provides more details about the proposed employment of Structural Equation Modelling.

DATA

The study population for this research project was mainland China residents that had recently (within the past year) visited Australia's Wet Tropics. In particular, the city of Cairns serves as a primary destination for Chinese travellers to this region. The focus of the current work was to explore the influences of and links between several experience dimensions in contributing to the *overall tourist experience* (refer to Appendix 5.2 and *background to the study* for further details). A large data set was desired to explore these patterns if the Structural Equation Modelling was to be correctly employed. Consequently, data were collected through an extensive eight-month sampling procedure, as detailed below.

Stage one involved approaching tourists electronically through popular Chinese blog sites. In particular, two sites were selected: one is a travel forum

(Qyer.com - <http://www.bbs.qyer.com>) and the other is a micro-blog site (Sina.com - <http://blog.sina.com.cn>). Data were sourced March-April 2013 by the search term “Australia travel”. Overall, 17,008 blogs were returned on Qyer and 299,230 micro-blogs on Sina. Blogs posted after January 1st 2013 were reviewed; only blogs about the Wet Tropics were further investigated. For Qyer users, 140 invitations (with the questionnaire link) were sent. For Sina users, 895 bloggers were asked to clarify their visit first (due to limited information in post) with 284 replies and invitations sent.

In addition, Chinese tourists were also approached electronically through means of snowball referral. This process involved the Qualtrics questionnaire link, along with an introductory statement, being emailed to Chinese residents (whom are the researcher’s colleagues) in the Wet Tropics region. The researcher’s networks then forwarded the link and introductory statement to their colleagues whom had recently travelled in the desired region. This data comprised part of the electronic data collection sample.

Stage two involved a paper-based distribution of the questionnaire through Chinese- and Taiwanese-owned tour companies in the Cairns region. Data were collected from July to October 2014 in order to cover travel undertaken during the Golden Week period. Two out of the five companies approached agreed to assist with data collection. Tour guides distributed the questionnaires to clients at the end of the tour, and then later collected them. In total, 175 questionnaires were returned.

Overall, 373 questionnaires were collected. An appraisal of a random selection of questionnaires, however, highlighted some data exclusion categories. For example, there was a high incompleteness rate (102 questionnaires or 27.3% of total collection), especially with the online data. Overall, 158 questionnaires were included in the final data set (42.4% response rate). This included 56 questionnaires from the online collection and 102 from the paper-based collection. Initial exploration of the data indicated non-normally distributed data. Therefore, further statistical analysis was undertaken using non-parametric alternatives.

Demographic profile

Table 5.2 provides the demographic and travel profile of the sample. It is not mandatory for users to provide demographic information on some travel blog sites. Furthermore, some authors may provide inaccurate or deliberately misleading information to protect their privacy. Thus, constructing a representative profile of a sample consisting of travel bloggers can prove challenging. Due to the high case of missing data, sample sizes are given in parentheses. Overall, the sample was relatively gender balanced with tourists of all ages. Chinese travellers came from a total of 29 cities and were highly educated (94 or 75.2% had university qualifications). In terms of their Wet Tropics' visit, a majority stayed for a short duration (78 or 65.6% stayed five days or less), with more than half travelling with their spouse or partner and on a packaged tour.

Table 5.2. Demographic and travel profile of Chinese Wet Tropics' tourists

Factor	n	%
Gender (n = 126)		
<i>Male</i>	66	52.4
<i>Female</i>	60	47.6
Age (n = 128)		
<i>18-29 years old</i>	31	24.2
<i>30-39 years old</i>	44	34.4
<i>40-49 years old</i>	22	17.2
<i>50 years or older</i>	31	24.2
City of residence (n = 113) (top 3)		
<i>Beijing</i>	25	22.1
<i>Nanjing</i>	13	11.5
<i>Guangzhou</i>	9	8.0
Highest education (n = 125)		
<i>Junior school</i>	1	0.8
<i>Middle school</i>	4	3.2
<i>Senior school</i>	18	14.4
<i>Tafe/certificate</i>	8	6.4

<i>University – undergraduate</i>	61	48.8
<i>University – postgraduate</i>	33	26.4
<hr/>		
Length of trip (n = 119)		
<i>2 days or less</i>	21	17.6
<i>3 – 5 days</i>	57	47.9
<i>6 – 10 days</i>	26	21.8
<i>11 days or more</i>	15	12.6
<hr/>		
Previous Wet Tropics' visit (n = 127)		
<i>Yes</i>	64	50.4
<i>No</i>	63	49.6
<hr/>		
Information sources consulted (n = 127) (top 3)		
<i>Travel agent</i>	77	60.6
<i>Internet</i>	68	53.5
<i>Brochures</i>	24	18.9
<hr/>		
Travel mode (n = 126)		
<i>On a packaged tour</i>	73	57.9
<i>Independently</i>	31	24.6
<i>Both independent and packaged tour</i>	22	17.5
<hr/>		
Travel party (n = 127)		
<i>A spouse or partner</i>	54	42.5
<i>Friends and/or relatives</i>	27	21.3
<i>Other family members</i>	23	18.1
<i>Colleagues and/or business associates</i>	14	11.0
<i>No one (I travelled alone)</i>	9	7.1
<hr/>		
Destinations visited (n = 127) (top 3)		
<i>Cairns</i>	118	92.9
<i>Kuranda</i>	58	45.7
<i>Townsville</i>	19	15.0
<hr/>		
Attractions visited (n = 127) (top 3)		
<i>Kuranda Skyrail and/or scenic train</i>	60	47.2
<i>Paronella Park</i>	15	11.8
<i>Waterfall circuit (Atherton Tablelands)</i>	13	10.2

ANALYSIS

The self-completion questionnaires were coded and analysed using SPSS 22.0. For the online collection, data were downloaded from Qualtrics into an .sav (SPSS) file. Data were then cleaned through a procedure of (1) slight modification to question numbering, (2) addition of coding criteria, and (3) removal of questionnaire identification data (e.g. date, completion time, IP address). For the field collection, data were manually inputted by the lead researcher. Majority of the data were coded according to 1-7 Likert scores; other variables were coded with respect to the options provided. A random 10 per cent of questionnaires were checked for coder reliability, with 100 per cent agreement in all coding for the selected cases.

Further analysis involved the merge of the two independent data files. The original intention was to analyse the data using Structural Equation Modelling (see Appendix 5.2) through the Amos package in SPSS. However, the small sample size would cause serious issues with this modelling option. Consequently, a combination of correlation, descriptive statistics and mean differences tests were instead employed to explore patterns of influences between the experience dimensions in the model. This analysis was conducted in two stages. Firstly, tourists were profiled into distinct segments, and secondly, these profiles were utilised to explore differences in the links between experience dimensions (see respective sections below).

To investigate patterns between experience dimensions for different Chinese users, individual observed variables for each construct were firstly correlated. Bivariate correlations using Spearman's rho (2-tailed) were calculated; significance levels of $p \leq .05$ were considered as measuring the same construct. Thus, variables were either included altogether as a latent construct or segmented into sub-traits, based on correlation significance levels. Furthermore, some variables that had several non-significant correlations were removed (total = 11). Secondly, mean composite scores for each construct or sub-trait were calculated by summing the scores of the individual correlated variables. The majority of the variables involved straightforward calculations, however, two special cases existed. Experiential reflection was originally measured on a 1-70 scale. Consequently, the composite score was rescaled (divided by 10) to match the measurement of other variables.

Domestic-international familiarity and group-independent familiarity included variables that could be considered to have different degrees of difficulty. Arguably, travel outside of Asia requires more skills for Chinese tourists than travel within Asia, which in turn may be somewhat more difficult than travelling in China. The same principle applies to group and independent travel. Therefore, algebraic expressions were developed to account for the degree of difficulty for domestic-international familiarity and group-independent familiarity when computing the composite scores. All composite scores were then standardised (composite score divided by the number of summed variables) so all scores were measured on a 1-7 scale. Figure 5.1 models the set of links to be tested in the current empirical study.

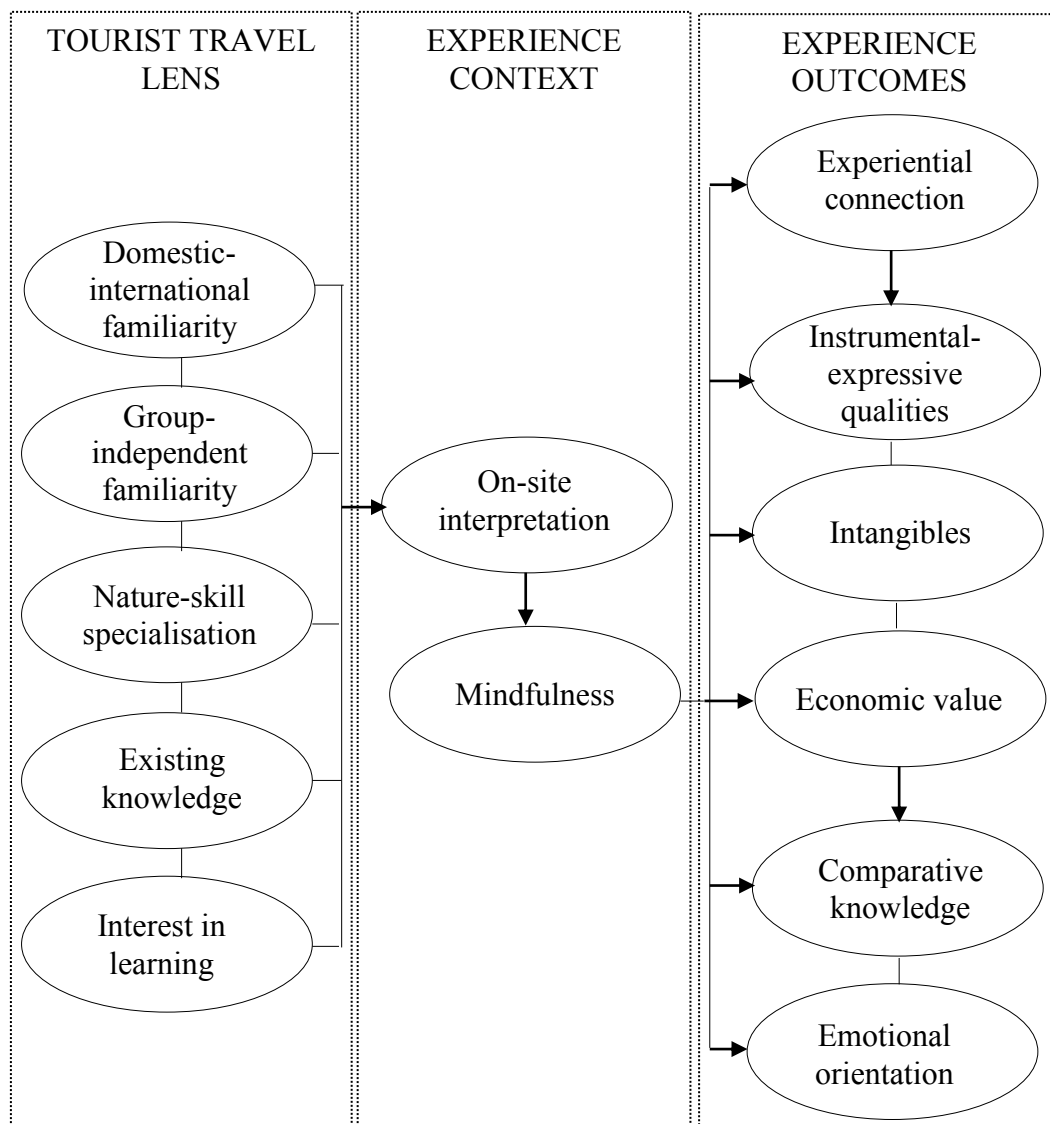


Figure 5.1. Revised measurement model of Chinese tourists' Wet Tropics' experiences

Profiling visitor segments

The segmentation of Chinese tourists into distinct groups was the preliminary analytical direction of this study. This approach was considered important as different groups of Chinese outbound tourists are starting to emerge (see Chapter one and Arlt, 2013 for a detailed discussion). Market segmentation approaches have historically been conducted through means of demographic and/or psychographic characteristics. In particular, research on the Chinese outbound tourist market has favoured travel motivations as a segmenting variable (see Li, Xu & Weaver, 2009; Li, Meng, Uysal & Mihalik, 2013). Due to the high percentage of missing data for demographic factors in the current study, a new segmentation approach was employed. Specifically, a *tourist travel lens* was constructed in order to account for the increasing differences noticed in the market such as travel experience as well as the already-established travel motivation of learning / acquiring knowledge. Cluster analysis was utilised to divide the market into distinct segments.

Integrated approach to exploring the multiple dimensions of tourist experiences

Individual dimensions of the Wet Tropics' experiences were then explored in two ways. Both approaches compared the tourist segments identified in the previous analysis. Firstly, the level of difference in experience dimensions was analysed through descriptive statistics and mean differences testing. Secondly, correlation analysis was employed to investigate the degree of influence among the experience dimensions for each tourist segment using a correlation map. The careful combination of descriptive statistics, mean difference testing and correlation analysis was considered to provide a more modest but appropriate set of analytical procedures when the assumptions of the Structural Equation Modelling could not be met.

RESULTS

The guiding aim of the study was to explore the influence of several experience dimensions on the *overall tourist experience* for different Chinese tourists to the Wet Tropics. Specifically, self-completion questionnaires about Chinese tourists' Wet Tropics' experiences were implemented. This was approached in two ways. The

development of tourist profiles segmented according to a *tourist travel lens* was firstly considered (aim 1). Then, using these tourist profiles, patterns of differences in the experience dimensions were explored (aim 2). The findings of both approaches will be reviewed separately, according to the distinct Chinese tourist segments.

PROFILING CHINESE TRAVELLERS BASED ON A TOURIST TRAVEL LENS

A hierarchical cluster analysis using Ward's method was performed to identify Chinese segments based on a *tourist travel lens*. Two clusters were identified ($n = 134$ after removing cases with missing data). Further exploration of cluster differences was conducted through Mann-Whitney U-tests and descriptive statistics. Significant differences ($p \leq .001$) were found in all five *tourist travel lens* (refer to Table 5.3).

Table 5.3. Profile of tourist clusters (tourist travel lens), Mann-Whitney U-test

Tourist travel lens	Cluster 1 (n = 55) (Novice Explorers)			Cluster 2 (n = 79) (Established Travellers)			Sig.
	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Domestic-international familiarity	55	2.79	0.90	79	4.62	0.99	.001
Group-independent familiarity	55	2.52	1.19	79	5.11	0.92	.001
Nature-skill specialisation	55	3.65	0.79	79	5.16	0.85	.001
Existing knowledge	55	2.78	0.98	79	4.06	1.08	.001
Interest in learning	55	3.88	1.07	79	4.65	0.87	.001

Note.

^aLevels of experience were determined by the value attached to the scale responses. Low = 1.5-2.49; average = 2.5-3.49; medium = 3.5-4.49; high = 4.5-7.0.

Cluster one - labelled *Novice Explorers* - contained 55 respondents. These tourists had average levels of travelling in different ways (group-independent familiarity), awareness of the destination (existing knowledge), and previous travel experience (domestic-international familiarity), and medium levels of familiarity with nature (nature-skill specialisation) and willingness to learn (interest in learning).

Essentially, this group had limited prior travel experience and knowledge about the destination but were willing to learn. On the other hand, cluster two – labelled *Established Travellers* – contained 79 respondents. Characteristics of this group included medium levels of existing knowledge, and high levels of domestic-international familiarity, interest in learning, group-independent familiarity and nature-skill specialisation. These tourists had relatively similar levels of both prior association and willingness to learn.

EXPLORING RELATIONSHIPS AMONG EXPERIENCE DIMENSIONS

Chinese tourists' *overall tourist experience* from their Wet Tropics' visits were further explored through links and patterns among experience dimensions for different groups. This was achieved by firstly investigating the level of difference between the experience dimensions, and then exploring the degree of influence of each experience dimension on each other. Additional Mann-Whitney U-tests and descriptive statistics identified the level of difference between Chinese segments. Significant differences ($p \leq .03$) were found on six occasions (refer to Table 5.4).

Table 5.4. Profile of tourist clusters (experience components), Mann-Whitney U-test

Experience components	Cluster 1 (n = 55) (Novice Explorers)			Cluster 2 (n = 79) (Established Travellers)			
	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Interpretation	54	4.17	1.15	77	5.31	0.85	.001
Mindfulness	53	4.33	1.06	74	5.14	0.78	.001
Experiential connection	53	5.18	1.16	78	5.53	0.79	.128
Instrumental-expressive qualities	49	4.21	1.10	75	5.23	0.85	.001
Intangibles	55	5.71	1.07	77	5.85	0.86	.802
Economic value	52	4.42	0.90	79	4.97	0.93	.001
Comparative knowledge	55	4.67	0.97	78	5.07	0.96	.033
Emotional orientation	54	4.31	1.24	79	5.23	1.21	.001

Note.

^aLevels of experience were determined by the value attached to the scale responses. Low = 1.5-2.49; average = 2.5-3.49; medium = 3.5-4.49; high = 4.5-7.0.

Novice Explorers reported medium levels of using information sources (interpretation), being satisfied with tangible objects (instrumental-expressive qualities), reflecting on their emotional state (emotional orientation), having their curiosity provoked (mindfulness), and being satisfied with costs (economic value). In addition, they reported a high level of comparative knowledge. On the other hand, *Established Travellers* reported high levels in all six of these experience dimensions.

Spearman's rho correlation coefficients were then employed to explore the differences and patterns of influences more deeply. For both tourist segments, all significant correlations ($p \leq .01$ and $p \leq .05$) had positive effects. The level of analysis employed in the current work, however, cannot – with certainty – determine causality. Based on a detailed review of the tourist experience (and other) literature, it is reasonable to assume that some of these relationships have a logical flow. That is, for both types of Chinese Wet Tropics' tourists, (1) interpretation influences other experience dimensions, (2) mindfulness simultaneously influences and is influenced by other dimensions, and (3) all dimensions influence comparative knowledge and emotional orientation, as these two dimensions represent after-experience reflections. Figures 5.2 and 5.3 display the significant pathways (at $p \leq .01$ and $p \leq .05$ levels) for *Novice Explorers* and *Established Travellers* respectively, and will be considered in turn.

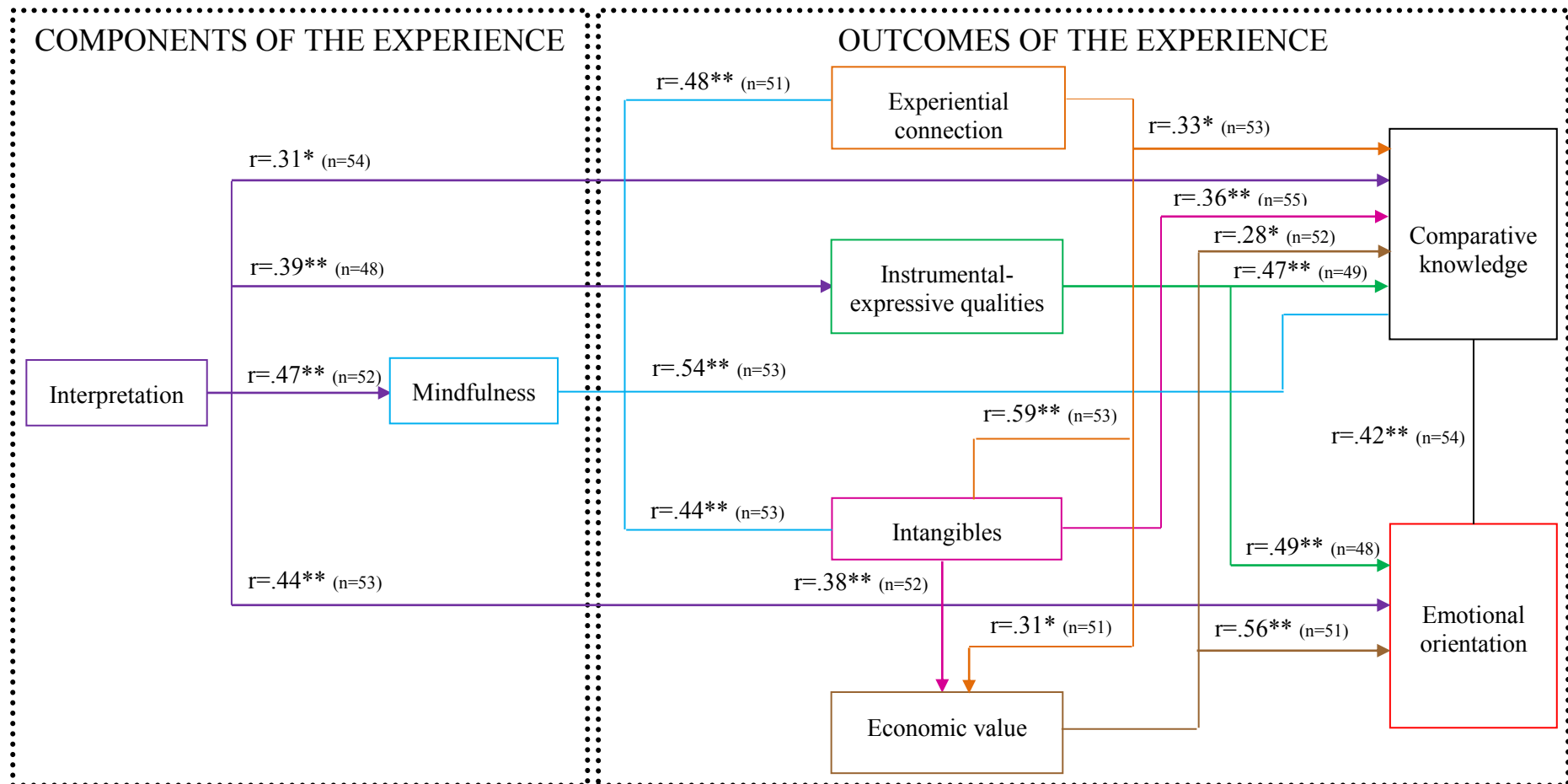


Figure 5.2. Significant correlation pathways for Novice Explorers' Wet Tropics' experiences

Note. Numbers in parenthesis indicate sample size for particular correlations. An arrow indicates a logical (and possible causal) linkage between dimensions whereas a straight line simply indicates a linkage between dimensions (as there might be some ambiguity in the direction of the potential causality).

****** Significant at $p < .01$ level. ***** Significant at $p < .05$ level.

For *Novice Explorers*, 17 significant patterns of influence were identified in tourists' experiences with 13 at $p \leq .01$ and four at $p \leq .05$ (refer to Figure 5.2). In terms of effect size, one relationship had a small effect, 13 had a medium effect and three had a large effect (according to the guidelines proposed by Cohen, 1988). The smallest influence was between economic value and comparative knowledge ($r = .28$, $p \leq .05$) and the largest was between experiential connection and intangibles ($r = .59$, $p \leq .01$). Overall, all seven experience aspects significantly influenced comparative knowledge whereas only four impacted emotional orientation. The magnitude of the effects, however, was greater for emotional orientation relationships. Mindfulness contributed the most to comparative knowledge ($r = .54$, $p \leq .01$) and economic value contributed the most to emotional orientation ($r = .56$, $p \leq .01$). Furthermore, mindfulness was the experience dimension that had the highest significant influence on other dimensions of the experience, with three medium effects and one large effect. Several experience dimensions exhibited large variances in their influences on other dimensions including experiential connection (coefficient variance of .28), economic value (coefficient variance of .28), and intangibles (coefficient variance of .23). Instrumental-expressive qualities had the least variance (coefficient variance of .10).

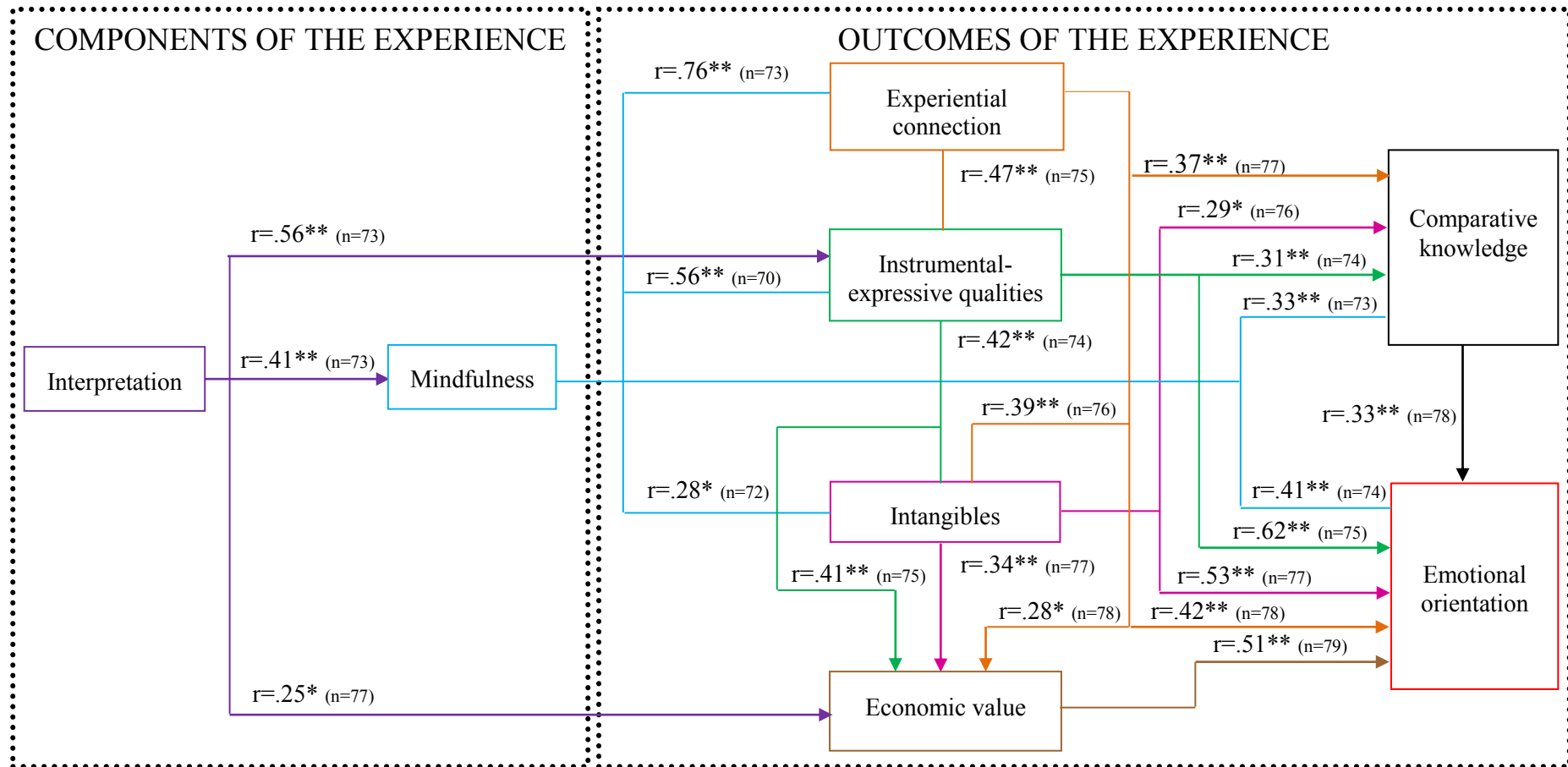


Figure 5.3. Significant correlation pathways for Established Travellers' Wet Tropics' experiences

Note. Numbers in parenthesis indicate sample size for particular correlations. An arrow indicates a logical (and possible causal) linkage between dimensions whereas a straight line simply indicates a linkage between dimensions (as there might be some ambiguity in the direction of the potential causality).

****** Significant at $p < .01$ level. ***** Significant at $p < .05$ level.

For *Established Travellers*, 22 significant patterns of influence were identified in tourists' experiences with 18 at $p \leq .01$ and four at $p \leq .05$ (refer to Figure 5.3). In terms of effect size, four relationships had a small effect, 12 had a medium effect and six had a large effect (cf. Cohen, 1988). The smallest influence was between interpretation and economic value ($r = .25$, $p \leq .05$) and the largest was between mindfulness and experiential connection ($r = .76$, $p \leq .01$). Overall, five experience dimensions significantly influenced comparative knowledge whereas six impacted emotional orientation. Similar to *novice explorers*, the magnitude of the effects was greater for emotional orientation relationships. Experiential connection contributed the most to comparative knowledge ($r = .37$, $p \leq .01$) and instrumental-expressive qualities contributed the most to emotional orientation ($r = .62$, $p \leq .01$). Furthermore, instrumental-expressive qualities was the experience dimension that had the highest significant influence on other dimensions of the experience, with four medium effects and three large effects. Several experience dimensions exhibited large variances in their influences on other dimensions including mindfulness (coefficient variance of .48), experiential connection (coefficient variance of .48), intangibles and economic value (coefficient variance of .25).

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to pursue two main research aims. Firstly, a Chinese *tourist travel lens* was utilised to identify different Wet Tropics' market profiles. Secondly, further patterns of differences in the individual experience dimensions were investigated according to tourist segments. Several discussion points can be drawn from the findings, which are considered separately under the respective research aims. Further implications arising from the detailed exploration of Chinese tourists' Wet Tropics' experiences will be considered in Chapter seven after the final empirical study (i.e. managerial perspectives) linked to the topics of interest is presented (see Chapter six).

CHINESE TOURISTS' CLUSTER PROFILES

This study identified two distinct Wet Tropics' tourist clusters based on a *tourist travel lens*. The first group, labelled *Novice Explorers*, had average to medium levels of travel experience, existing knowledge and interest to learn. These tourists had a higher nature-based skill set and expressed higher interest to learn compared to their previous travel experience and existing knowledge levels. Consequently, their experiences in the Wet Tropics may have provided an important opportunity for them to learn due to their limited prior experience (Pearce & Lu, 2011). The second group, labelled *Established Travellers*, reported higher means on all *tourist travel lens* aspects, with medium to high levels of travel experience, existing knowledge and interest to learn. These tourists had higher levels of travel experience and familiarity with nature, but were less interested in learning and reported lower levels of existing knowledge. By comparing the two clusters, it would appear that as one's travel experience increases (i.e., becomes an *Established Traveller*), one's desire to learn slightly decreases, despite the higher levels recorded (over *Novice Explorers*).

It is interesting to note that there were more *Established Travellers* than *Novice Explorers*. That is, more tourists with higher levels of experience, existing knowledge and interest in learning. This could be an indication of the changing nature of the Chinese outbound market. The second wave of Chinese tourism is bringing travel-savvy tourists who are increasingly engaging in independent travel (cf. Arlt, 2013). Furthermore, the extent of difference between the two types of tourists suggests increasing market diversification. The smallest difference was noted between tourists' interest in learning. In Chinese culture, travel has always been seen as an opportunity to learn, therefore, all tourists would be interested in this aspect. On the other hand, the largest difference was observed between tourists' reported familiarity with independent-group travel. Thus, there are differences between independent versus group travel experience across the Chinese outbound market.

LEVELS OF DIFFERENCE AMONG EXPERIENCE DIMENSIONS

Tourist travel lens also had a significant impact on several experience dimensions for different Chinese tourists. *Novice Explorers* reported medium to high levels of using

interpretation, being mindful, being satisfied and reflecting on the experience. There was relatively little difference, however, in the reported levels of these respective dimensions. Chinese tourists with less experience and familiarity with nature but more willingness to learn, reported slightly higher levels of experiential reflection than their satisfaction, mindfulness and interpretive use levels. In comparison, *Established Travellers* reported high levels of all six experience dimensions. Similar to *Novice Explorers*, the differences between the experience dimensions was relatively small; these tourists rated their interpretation use and mindfulness levels slightly higher than their sense of experiential reflection and satisfaction.

The extent of differences between the two types of tourists for the experience dimensions was smaller than the differences observed among the *tourist travel lens* variables. Overall, the smallest difference was noted in comparative knowledge. The largest difference was observed between interpretation levels. One interesting finding, however, was the differences between the tourist groups with respect to the order of variables. For example, *Novice Explorers* reported higher satisfaction levels with economic value than instrumental-expressive qualities, whereas *Established Travellers* were more satisfied with instrumental-expressive qualities than economic value. Furthermore, in regards to experiential reflection, *Novice Explorers* reported outcomes with a greater learning rather than emotional feeling component, whereas *Established Travellers* reported higher levels with emotional orientation compared to comparative knowledge.

DEGREE OF INFLUENCE OF EXPERIENCE DIMENSIONS

Overall, most experience dimensions were significantly correlated with most others. Thus, the *overall tourist experience* of the Wet Tropics is comprised of many contributing dimensions for Chinese tourists. Furthermore, all significant associations were found to be positive which indicates that as travellers report a higher level of one experience dimension, all other dimensions are higher as well.

In terms of the overall correlation maps, 17 significant associations between experience dimensions were identified for *Novice Explorers*, with 22 links for *Established Travellers*. Fourteen of these links were shared between the two groups

of tourists. However, only six had the same level of association including five medium effects and one large effect. These were interpretation: mindfulness, experiential connection: comparative knowledge, instrumental-expressive qualities: comparative knowledge, intangibles: economic value, comparative knowledge: emotional orientation, and economic value: emotional orientation respectively. The strength of association, however, varied slightly between the two groups. *Novice Explorers* reported stronger associations in five out of the six commonalities. Furthermore, the strength of association for the other eight common links varied greatly. For example, the greatest difference was noted between mindfulness and experiential connection (correlation coefficient difference of .28; *Established Travellers* higher association) and the smallest between experiential connection and economic value (correlation coefficient difference of .03, *Novice Explorers* higher association).

Clearly, individual dimensions of travel experiences have varying degrees of influence for different groups of Chinese users. Pearce and Lu (2011) reported similar findings and proposed that Chinese individuals may have different patterns of learning. In this study, for tourists with less experience and skills but a higher interest to learn (i.e. *Novice Explorers*), mindfulness, interpretation and experiential connections played strong influencing roles on the other experience dimensions. In comparison, instrumental-expressive qualities and experiential connections had strong impacts on the other dimensions for tourists with higher levels of experience than interest to learn (e.g. *Established Travellers*). This suggests that viewing and subsequently processing information may have more importance to developing tourists, whereas the actual experience components are more pertinent for already-established travellers.

With respect to the *overall tourist experience* of the Wet Tropics' for different Chinese tourists, several conclusions can be drawn from the findings. Firstly, nearly all experience dimensions contributed in some shape towards the *overall tourist experience*. This is not surprising given that "learning has become an integral and satisfying part of the tourist experience" (Falk et al., 2012, p.915). The only dimension not to have a significant impact on either experiential reflection dimension (i.e. comparative knowledge or emotional orientation) was interpretation

for *Established Travellers*. These experienced travellers can be seen as self-directing graduates while the inexperienced tourists are more akin to dependent first-year students. Ballantyne et al. (2011) found overall that learning outcomes are a complex, individually-constructed composition of what is seen, read, felt and considered. On the contrary, for *Novice Explorers*, interpretation had a medium significant effect on both comparative knowledge and emotional orientation.

Secondly, the experience dimensions investigated contributed more significantly towards one experiential reflection dimension than the other for different Chinese tourists. For *Novice Explorers*, experiential reflection was determined more through a knowledge-based component instead of an emotional aspect. Altogether, every experience dimension had a significant impact on comparative knowledge. Whereas, only four experience dimensions were significantly linked to emotional orientation. For *Established Travellers*, experiential reflection was determined more through emotions than knowledge. All experience dimensions (except interpretation) were strongly associated with emotional orientation. Whereas, five experience dimensions had strong associations with comparative knowledge. Therefore, the inexperienced travellers can be likened to text book users (and subsequent teachers) while experienced travellers represent detailed empirical researchers. Van Winkle and Lagay's (2012) study on recent visitors' experience of one Canadian city also noted differences in the contributing factors towards overall learning for different visitors. Although not discussed in detail, van Winkle and Lagay (2012, p.347) stated that when visitors discussed their thoughts about what they learned from travelling, some commented on their knowledge acquisition whilst others reflected on the affective qualities of learning.

Thirdly, some experience dimensions were highly correlated with one experiential reflection dimension but not the other. For *Novice Explorers*, this was noticed in two cases. Firstly, economic value was more strongly associated with an emotional component ($r = .56$) rather than a knowledge component ($r = .28$). Secondly, interpretation was similarly more strongly linked to emotional orientation ($r = .44$) than comparative knowledge ($r = .31$). For *Established Travellers*, this different contribution towards experiential reflection was found in four cases. Firstly, instrumental-expressive qualities contributed more towards emotional orientation (r

= .62) than comparative knowledge ($r = .31$). Intangibles also had a stronger association with emotional orientation ($r = .53$) compared to comparative knowledge ($r = .29$). In addition, mindfulness and experiential connection respectively were more strongly associated with emotional orientation ($r_{\text{mindfulness}} = .41$, $r_{\text{experientialconnection}} = .42$) than comparative knowledge ($r_{\text{mindfulness}} = .33$, $r_{\text{experientialconnection}} = .37$). Therefore, although to differing extents, the experience dimensions contributed towards experiential reflection more in terms of emotional responses (i.e. hedonic value and future orientation) for all Chinese tourists to the Wet Tropics.

STUDY CONCLUSIONS

In summary, this study contributed knowledge towards understanding the *experiential* aspect of Chinese tourists' experiences in Australia's Wet Tropics. This topic was explored through Chinese tourists' responses to scaled questions about various experience dimensions. In particular, the study focused on clustering current tourists into distinct groups (according to a *tourist travel lens*) to explore differences among the experience dimensions. The expanding Chinese outbound market further supports the necessity to first categorise and then analyse the market. Independent-group familiarity was the experience variable which demonstrated the most difference between Chinese tourists. Xiang (2013) suggests that failure to consider independent tourists as well as the already-established group market could result in an inaccurate representation of the Chinese market's characteristics. Furthermore, when segmented according to a *tourist travel lens*, many differences were noticeable among market segments. This included both the level of difference (i.e. average scores) and the degree of influence (i.e. strength of association) between various experience dimensions.

Consequently, there appears to be some strong emerging differences in the patterned outcome of *overall tourist experiences* for different Chinese tourists. Overall, the findings suggest that different Chinese tourists place more emphasis on particular dimensions of their experiences. The more-travelled Chinese travellers gained more from being involved or hands-on in the experience, whereas less-travelled Chinese tourists benefitted from seeking and responding to information sources. The treatment of Chinese tourists as a homogenous market with similar

needs does not account for the expanding market. The way tourist experiences are provided for the Chinese may need to consider issues of flexibility and alternative sights to account for different Chinese tourists' travel lens. Further implications arising from the *tourist travel lens* will be considered in Chapter seven.

Chapter six will extend this interest in Chinese tourists' views, interests and understanding of Australian landscapes. The purpose of this final research chapter will be to explore Chinese tourists' experiences of the Wet Tropics from a managerial perspective.

Chapter 6 Wet Tropics’ tourism stakeholders’ perspectives on managing Chinese tourists

CONFUCIUS SAYS...

“By three methods we learn wisdom: first, by reflection, which is noblest; second, by imitation, which is easiest; and third, by experience, which is the bitterest”

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INTRODUCTION

Chapter six presents the final empirical study which aims to identify tourism stakeholders' management perspectives towards Chinese tourism in the Wet Tropics. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with tourism authority personnel, tourism ambassadors and tourism enterprises to explore current representations and management thoughts as well as future attitudes. Selection of these three types of stakeholders are expected to reveal a wide spectrum of responses across different management areas i.e. destination capacity, marketing considerations and host-tourist issues. Furthermore, the examination of current versus future management perspectives aims to identify tourism stakeholders' experience, competence and willingness towards Chinese tourism.

More people are engaging in recreational activities in nature, which bring distinctive traits and appreciate areas differently (Urry, 1992). In particular, Chinese outbound tourism is a dominant market in many distinctions. Visitor management is guided by the attitudes of tourism stakeholders. These observations raise several unanswered questions: do tourism stakeholders understand the increasing diversification of Chinese market segments? What are tourism stakeholders' attitudes towards future Chinese tourism management? Are there different dimensions of their management perspectives? This study attempts to address these concerns. In particular, current thoughts will be explored through visitor management principles while future perspectives are investigated through optimism-pessimism. The latter constructs symbolise a manifestation of a set of beliefs, perceived opportunities and outcomes concerning future states where optimism represents positivity and pessimism negativity (Dember, Martin, Hummer, Howe & Melton, 1989; Burke, Joyner, Czech & Wilson, 2000; Ünüvar, Avşaroğlu & Uslu, 2012).

AIMS OF THE STUDY

Research reported in this chapter partly addresses all three thesis goals. That is, to explore different tourists' landscape experiences, to investigate tourists' cultural influence on landscape experiences and to determine tourists' understanding of Australian landscapes. Overall, this final study provides insight into the management

practices which influence Chinese tourists' views, interests and understanding of Australian landscapes. Specifically, the research aims of Chapter six are:

1. What are Wet Tropics' tourism stakeholders' current perceptions about the Chinese tourist market?
 - (a) How do they describe the current market?
 - (b) What thoughts do they have on managing the current market?
2. What are Wet Tropics' tourism stakeholders' attitudes towards future management of the Chinese tourist market?

CONTEXT TO THE STUDY

To understand tourism stakeholders' perceptions about managing Chinese tourists of the present and the future, two major concepts were explored. Firstly, the concept of visitor management was considered to examine how tourism stakeholders currently perceive Chinese tourism management. Secondly, the concept of optimism-pessimism was considered to assess tourism stakeholders' attitudes towards the future management of Chinese tourists. Both concepts are briefly reviewed below with links to their conceptualisation and measurement in the current work.

Visitor management

With more tourism comes the necessity for more management. Outcomes from tourists to a destination might not only compromise resource protection mandates, but can also occur rapidly at the beginning, become cumulative, and lead to other undesirable consequences (Farrell & Marion, 2002). Visitor management is an approach that can help reduce negative outcomes and enhance tourist experiences (Jim, 1989). Furthermore, visitor management strategies facilitate acceptable recreational usage of resources to enhance values such as learning and appreciation (Eagles & McCool, 2003).

Visitor management can be applied in a variety of contexts and in different ways. Based on the discussion presented in Chapter one – and to some extent, Chapter two – five categories were developed that link to achieving the objectives of

visitor management; that is, reduction of negative outcomes and enhancement of tourist experiences. The categories are: consumer awareness; opportunities; problems and issues; tourism-related change; and, strategies and plans (see Table 6.1).

Table 6.1. Visitor management categories

Category	Justification
Stakeholders' awareness of consumer needs	Awareness of the tourists' characteristics assists in developing targeted programs that will enhance recreational experiences and effectively communicate information.
Opportunities	Identification of potential opportunities for future tourists allows managers to pre-emptively design experiences which are more sustainable.
Problems and issues	Reflection on the problems and issues associated with tourism and particular tourists can inform better experience design and reduce recovery time.
Tourism-related change	An appreciation of the changes associated with tourism facilitates the development of counteractive measures and forward planning.
Strategies and plans	Development of strategic directions and policies requires an understanding of the market, and can mitigate the outcomes of tourism whilst enhancing visitor experiences.

Table 6.1 delineates the researcher's choice for each visitor management category, which was informed by the various perspectives presented in the visitor management literature. These visitor management categories will be employed in this study to assess tourism stakeholders' understanding of Chinese tourism management. An understanding of tourists and their desired experiences can result in more effective management, perhaps reducing the need for regulatory measures and contributing towards the sustainability of the experience.

Optimism-pessimism

Optimism and pessimism are well-grounded concepts in the medical and psychology disciplines. In general, these concepts have been employed to evaluate people's outlook on life; optimists hold favourable expectations about future events while

pessimists expect bad things to happen (Carver, Scheier & Segerstrom, 2010). Measurement of optimism and pessimism in tourism studies, however, is in its infancy. Existing research has assessed optimism-pessimism in a generic fashion. For example, questions such as “how would you describe the state of the Great Barrier Reef in 10 years’ time?”, or “how optimistic are you about the future?” have been posed to assess a person’s attitude towards a future state. A new approach to categorising optimism will be employed in this study.

Chang, D’Zurilla and Maydeu-Olivares (1994) identified two important considerations concerning the definition and measurement of optimism and pessimism. Firstly, there is little agreement about a common definition. Some researchers advocate that optimism-pessimism reflects a single factor such as emotion, while others contend the importance of multiple factors working together like learning processes, expectations and hopes. Dember et al. (1989) suggested that researchers might conceptualise optimism-pessimism in diverse ways (according to different perspectives of their study discipline) along the lines of (a) cognitive process, (b) underlying mood and (c) trait-like variables. Tourism stakeholders’ optimism will be conceptualised following Peterson and Seligman’s (2004) position that optimism – along with its sister concepts of hope, future-mindedness and future orientation – “represent(s) a cognitive, emotional and motivational stance towards the future” (p.570).

Secondly, there is confusion and controversy about the dimensionality of optimism and pessimism. Some researchers suggest that optimism and pessimism can be measured on one bipolar scale continuum while others advocate assessing separate dimensions. The latter ‘separate dimensional view’ suggests that people can possess both optimistic and pessimistic tendencies (Burke et al., 2000); therefore, the two constructs should be measured separately. Chen (2011) states that “previous studies have shown that expressions of pessimism are not equivalent to expressions of the lack of optimism” (p.12570). Carver et al. (2010) also propose that optimism-pessimism could be measured on two scales; one pertaining to the affirmation of optimism and one measuring the existence of pessimism.

Mindful of these concerns, this empirical study analysed tourism stakeholders’ level of optimism only. Optimism, in the current work, is defined as:

“An individual’s confidence that the suggested future environment will be positive, and in which they hold favourable expectations, anticipate desirable outcomes, envisage constructive opportunities, and possess a strong willingness to approach the situation in an active manner”.

This definition was constructed by the researcher and builds on the various perspectives noted by others. Furthermore, the analysis of tourism stakeholders’ level of optimism was based on individual dimensions as well as establishing an overall measure. Measurement of optimism in previous works has considered: (1) future condition (see Moscardo, Green & Greenwood, 2001); (2) future time perspective / orientation (see Västfjäll, Peters & Slovic, 2008); and (3) well-being (see Västfjäll et al., 2008). Drawing on these perspectives – as well as other notions defining optimism as reviewed in the literature – four dimensions of optimism were employed in the current study. Specifically, optimism was operationalised according to the following four, researcher-defined levels:

Reality acceptance, *the tourism stakeholder’s willingness to accept the alternate future as a real situation.*

Organisational survivability, *the tourism stakeholder’s belief that the organisation could adapt and survive in the alternate future posited.*

Tourism-industry condition, *the tourism stakeholder’s opinion about the overall state of tourism and the environmental setting in the alternate future presented.*

Visitation outlook, *the tourism stakeholder’s stance on visitation numbers of the particular mainland Chinese visitor described in the alternate future presented.*

In this study, the constructed measure of optimism will be used to interpret and inform the stakeholders’ perspectives as it is hypothesised that the construct may differentiate among the proposed management actions.

METHODS

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted to investigate current versus future management perceptions. The work on current perceptions was guided by four questions. These questions were designed to assess tourism stakeholders' overall representation of the current Chinese market and their thoughts on managing them. Secondly, future management perceptions were explored through the use of four additional questions. These questions were included to gauge tourism stakeholders' overall attitudes to four different scenarios (see *scenario planning* section below).

Scenario planning

Scenario planning is a disciplined method which seeks to capture the richness of an issue by simplifying the wealth of data into a select number of imagined futures (Schoemaker, 1995). Each scenario should highlight how we get from the present to the future by identifying trends, events, and uncertainties, and by demonstrating the interrelationships, causes and effects of these elements. One goal of scenario planning is to help users recognise, consider and reflect on the uncertainties which may evolve (Varum & Melo, 2010). The second wave of Chinese outbound tourism clearly foreshadows different forms of tourism. Distinct intra-market groups are emerging much faster than the evolution of Western and Asian markets. Tourism managers who can exhibit a proactive attitude and can envisage a range of futures will be better positioned to cater to the unexpected opportunities that arise (Godet & Roubelat, 1996; Schoemaker, 1995). Therefore, understanding the accelerating pace of change of Chinese travellers is vital to managing this tourist group in the future.

Scenario planning was utilised in this study to assess whether tourism stakeholders in Australia's Wet Tropics region are ready to cater to tomorrow's different Chinese tourists. The scenarios give consideration to: what different Chinese tourists will value, desire to experience, and behavioural traits they might exhibit; how political regulations will affect outbound travel; and how society will view outbound travel. Scenarios are based in the year 2020 and highlight the pathway for the next five years. Based on an extensive literature review, a nine-stage deductive approach was taken to develop the scenarios (refer to Appendix 6.1). In

particular, the scenarios were developed using a matrix format with the two most prominent clusters of trends and events forming the matrix axes. These were:

Political cooperation: the degree of political support by the Chinese government in encouraging outbound travel for its citizens. The poles on the scale are preclusion (no support) to endorsement (full support).

Travel experience: the degree of travel experience that the individual tourists possess. The poles on the scale are relative reservedness (no experience) to relative fluency (lots of experience).

Figure 6.1 provides a summary of the scenarios; the full scenarios are provided in Appendix 6.2. A pilot test was conducted to evaluate the logic and readability of the scenarios; some refinements were made.

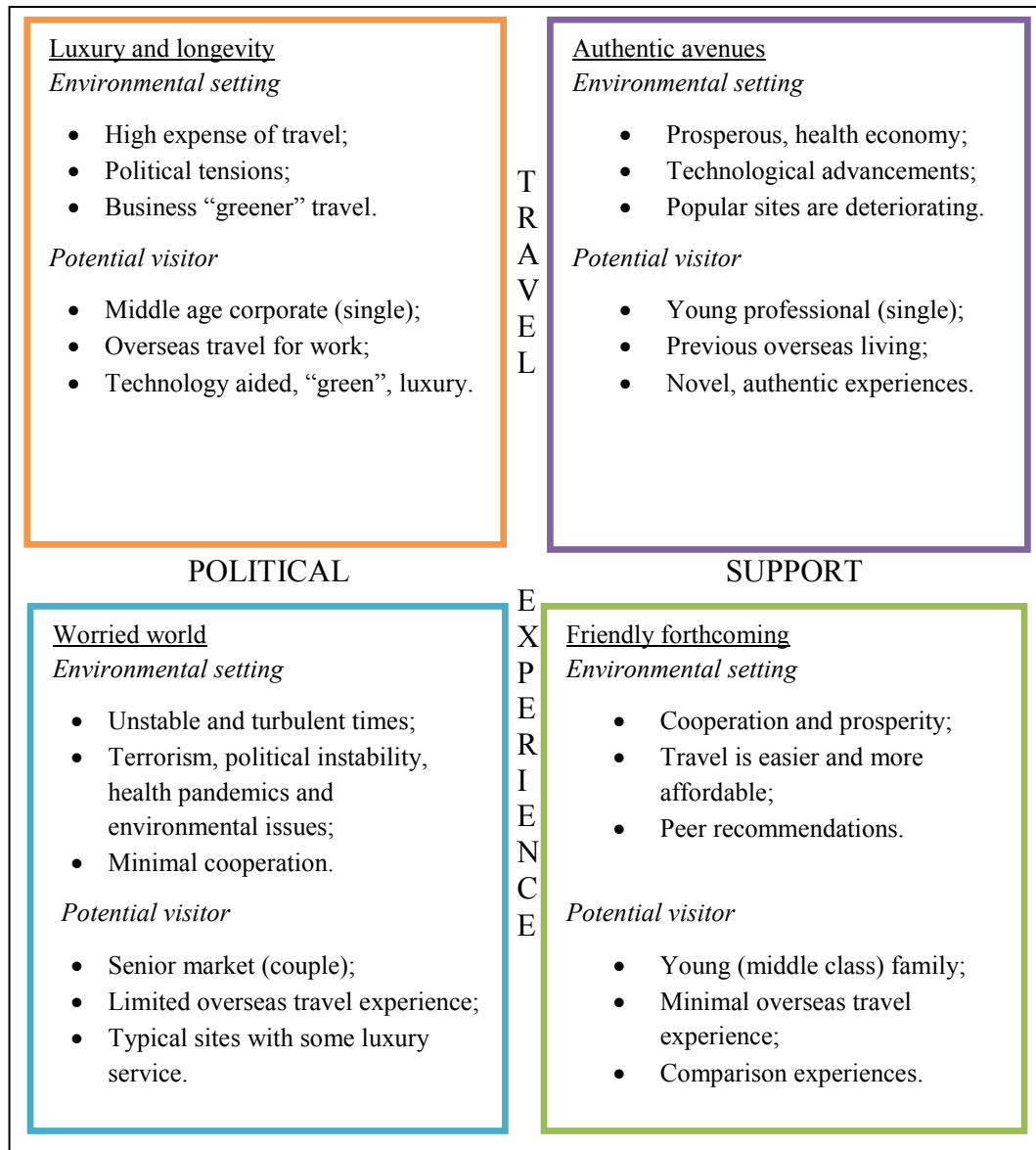


Figure 6.1. Future scenarios of Chinese tourism to Australia’s Wet Tropics

DATA AND ANALYSIS

Overall, 18 intensive interviews were conducted (refer to Table 6.2 for a profile) during May and June 2014. Tourism stakeholders were strategically selected based on the prominent (and senior) position held within the business / organisation. That is, interviewees were key decision makers and represented the powerful elite of the regional industry. Further considerations such as business / organisation location and participant’s familiarity and/or experience with the Chinese market informed final selection. Three types of tourism stakeholders were involved in the study including

tourism authority personnel (‘protectors’ of the Wet Tropics), tourism ambassadors (‘marketers’ of the Wet Tropics) and tourism enterprises (‘operators’ of the Wet Tropics). Due to above selection criteria, tourism enterprises (e.g. attractions) and tourism stakeholders operating from Cairns were well represented in the work.

Table 6.2. Profile of Wet Tropics’ tourism stakeholders

Characteristic	Sample
Region	
<i>Atherton/Kuranda/Port Douglas</i>	5
<i>Cairns</i>	10
<i>Townsville/Ingham/Innisfail</i>	3
Stakeholder type	
<i>Tourism authority personnel</i>	4
<i>Tourism ambassador</i>	4
<i>Tourism enterprise</i>	10

In-depth interviews ranged from 48 to 129 minutes and were audio-taped and later transcribed by the researcher into Microsoft Word files. Transcription allows data to be converted into written form that is fully amendable to analysis (Wood & Kruger, 2000). This process was conducted through the use of Audacity. Although 18 interviews were conducted, the primary data set included 15 interview transcripts; three interviews were excluded due to incomplete sections. Due to time restrictions, three tourism stakeholders did not participate in the future management in-depth discussions. These three interviews served as supplementary material to support research findings.

Current management perspectives

Current management perspectives were explored in two parts. Firstly, stakeholders’ overall representation of Chinese tourism was gathered through the question “how would you describe the typical Chinese market to your attraction/destination?”

Specifically, this discussion (guided by supplementary questions based on respondent's answers) aimed to gather data on: (1) *descriptions*, (2) *behavioural characteristics, motivations, expectations*, (3) *needs* and (4) *desire for nature-based experiences*. For this part, each interview contained approximately 10 to 15 minutes of data. The 15 transcript files were analysed with Leximancer 4.0; relevant data were loaded individually. Initial analysis was performed by setting 'prose test threshold' to zero and selecting 'apply dialog tags' (to remove the interviewer's speech). The 15 concept maps and related thematic summaries were then explored.

Secondly, tourism stakeholders' thoughts on managing the Chinese market were assessed. This component was guided by three additional questions (asked with slight variations based on stakeholder type): "what kinds of experience / service do you / does the destination offer Chinese tourists?", "please tell me something about how your tourism product has evolved / destination has changed", and "what are your plans for the future of this attraction / to cater to Chinese tourists?" To assess tourism stakeholders' understanding of Chinese tourism, an a-priori, literature-informed coding scheme was employed. Interviewees' responses were coded according to five pre-established visitor management categories (see Table 6.1). This was achieved through repeated readings of the themes. For this part, each interview contained approximately 15 to 20 minutes of data. Thematic coding and frequency analysis was utilised to illustrate tourism stakeholders' perceptions.

Future management perspectives

Future management perspectives made up the more involved part of the intensive interviews. Firstly, stakeholders were asked to read four scenarios about possible futures of Chinese outbound tourism to the Wet Tropics. Refer to section *scenario planning*, Figure 6.1 and Appendix 6.1 for more details. After each scenario, discussions were guided by four questions (asked with slight variations based on stakeholder type): "how realistic do you think this scenario is for the year 2020?", "in 2020, how well do you think your organisation / the destination would cope in the scenario described?", "thinking about the year 2020, how would you describe the state of Australia's tourism industry based on the situation depicted in this scenario?", and "do you think that the number of Chinese tourists to the Wet Tropics

area in 2020 will be better or worse than current visitation levels based on the visitor described in this scenario?” These questions were designed to assess stakeholders’ attitudes towards the future of Chinese outbound tourism to the Wet Tropics. For this section, each interview contained approximately 40 minutes to 1 hours’ worth of data (including reading time).

Content analysis of the responses was employed to assess tourism stakeholders’ perceived level of optimism. Firstly, tourism stakeholders were scale-rated (0-4 scale) based on the four dimensions of optimism (see *optimism-pessimism* section). Negative and positive attitudes were both captured in the scale; the zero-point accounted for any pessimistic feeling, the one-point represented neutrality, and the other three points showed variance in the level of optimism. An independent researcher also rated tourism stakeholders according to the optimism dimensions; percentage agreement for optimism coding was 57.5 per cent.

Interviewee quotes are presented in the results section to illustrate the research findings. Grammatical corrections have been made to enhance readability, and subsequent presentation, of data. Furthermore, sections of quote have been removed and are indicated by three dots in square parenthesis, that is, [...].

RESULTS

The guiding aim of the study was to understand tourism stakeholders’ viewpoints on managing Chinese tourism to the Wet Tropics. Specifically, in-depth, semi-structured interviews – which explored current and future management perspectives – were conducted with tourism authority personnel, tourism ambassadors and tourism enterprises. This was approached in two parts. Current management perspectives were initially considered to determine how stakeholders describe the current market (aim 1a) and what thoughts they have on managing them (aim 1b). Then, tourism stakeholders’ attitudes towards four different Chinese tourism scenarios were explored using the theory of optimism-pessimism (aim 2).

TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS' OVERALL "CHINESE" REPRESENTATION

Interview data were explored through Leximancer 4.0 to determine Wet Tropics' tourism stakeholders' representations of the current Chinese market. Leximancer is a text analytics tool that measures (and visually displays) concepts based on both their presence within the text and how they co-occur or interrelate (Leximancer Pty Ltd, 2011). Initial findings indicated themes such as "things", "particularly" and "certainly" – due to the nature of the data – which held limited research insight. Therefore, an adapted Leximancer portrayal of themes was employed through a two-stage procedure. Reoccurring themes and concepts were firstly identified and then situated in the adapted Leximancer portrayal, according to their presence and connections to other themes/concepts across the individual stakeholder maps (see Appendix 6.3 for more details). Figure 6.2 displays the researcher-generated aggregate concept map.

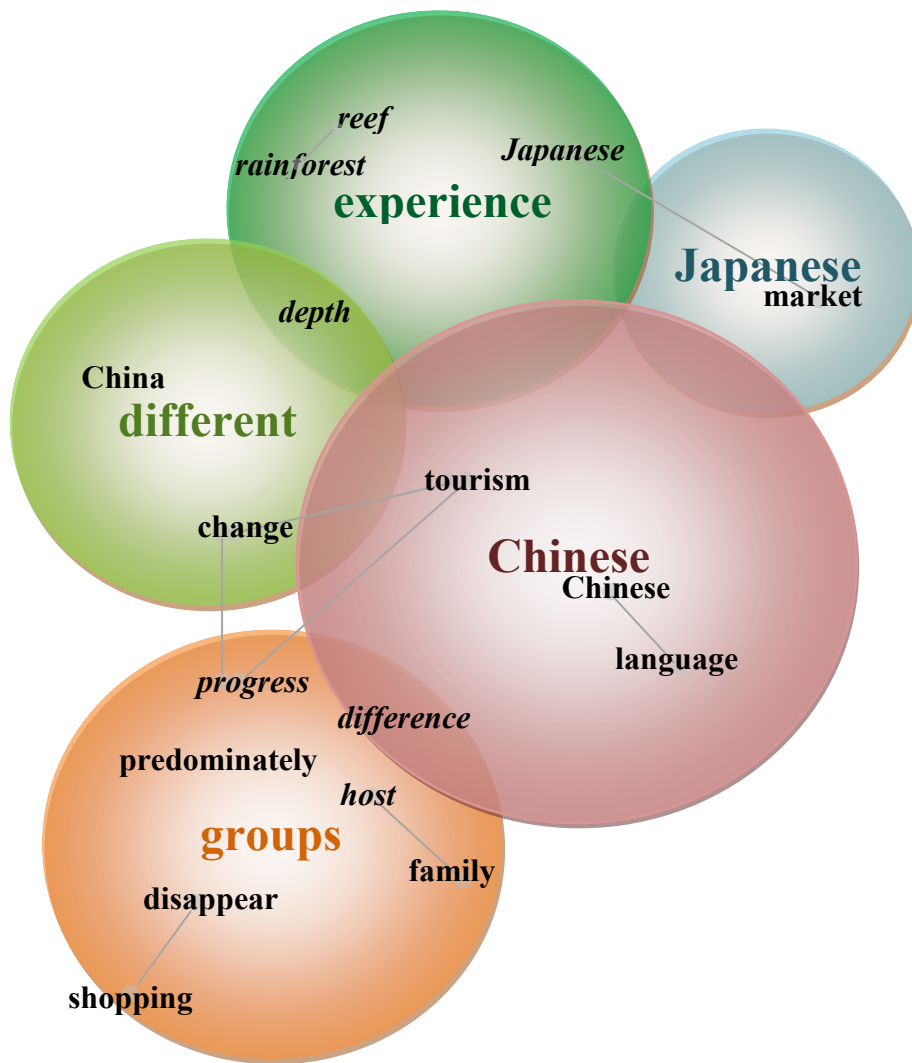


Figure 6.2. Adapted Leximancer concept map of stakeholders' perceptions

Note. Bold text indicates labels derived from Leximancer whilst italicised text indicates labels developed by the researcher.

“Chinese” was the theme determined to be most central to tourism stakeholders’ discussions. This theme consisted of four major concepts including tourism, Chinese, language, and difference. Table 6.3 provides illustrative examples for the individual concepts.

Table 6.3. Leximancer examples of the concepts associated with “Chinese” theme

Concept	Leximancer extract (speaker)
Tourism	“...are seeing a significant change in the dynamic of the Chinese tourist at the moment...” <i>(Tourism enterprise)</i>
	“...the evolution of the Chinese visitor seems to be happening a lot quicker.” <i>(Tourism ambassador)</i>
Chinese	“...we all expected there to be greater demand for Chinese speaking and Chinese ...” <i>(Tourism ambassador)</i>
Language	“...language is definitely an issue. Look, obviously, there’s varying levels in all walks of life and ... the Chinese are no different to that as well.” <i>(Tourism enterprise)</i>
Difference	“We have a number of different demographics I guess... We get the whole gamut of the Chinese tourists that’s coming through at the moment.” <i>(Tourism enterprise)</i>

For the concept “tourism”, interviewees discussed the change in the market, growth potential, and difference to Japanese tourists. Interviewees not only contrasted Chinese tourists to the previous Japanese market, but also to earlier Chinese travellers, commenting that the evolution of the market has been quite remarkable. The second concept “Chinese” elaborated on the issue of Chinese language provision. Again, stakeholders believed there would be greater demand for information in Chinese (similar to the early Japanese arrival). Linked to this, the concept “language” discussed the issue of language barriers and differing skill levels. While these two themes may appear contradictory, it is testament to the changing nature of the Chinese outbound market, which Wet Tropics’ tourism stakeholders are clearly noticing. Interviewees described the fact that some sections of the market (particularly group travellers) require more Chinese information provision while others are “quite comfortable in their surrounds”. Furthermore, the final concept “difference” also highlighted the diversity of Chinese tourists. Overall, the “Chinese”

theme demonstrated stakeholders' surprise with the changes occurring among Chinese tourists.

The next prominent theme in stakeholder interviews was “groups”. In total, seven concepts were identified including predominately, disappear, shopping, host, family, difference, and progress. Table 6.4 provides illustrative examples for the individual concepts.

Table 6.4. Leximancer examples of the concepts associated with “groups” theme

Concept	Leximancer extract (speaker)
Predominately	<p>“...source group or source segments for the Chinese, is still predominately the group”.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism ambassador)</i></p> <p>“A lot of the Chinese that we have through at the moment are based on tour groups...”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p>
Disappear	<p>“Yeah I would imagine some of that group market would certainly disappear like they have out of North America and Japan...”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism ambassador)</i></p>
Shopping	<p>“...the group shopping market has certainly decreased”.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism ambassador)</i></p>
Host	<p>“...family member who is domiciled here, so they’re guided, you know what I mean?”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p> <p>“...VFR group – it’s usually being planned by someone who’s already in Australia”.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism ambassador)</i></p>
Family	<p>“...family group will come out and then they’ll do some touring in Australia...”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism ambassador)</i></p> <p>“...group market which come in on a visa, where typically they have a domiciled family member that’s living in Australia...”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p>
Difference	<p>“And it depends on the distribution model that brings them into the region. So the Chinese market is separated into two groups”.</p>

	<i>(Tourism enterprise)</i>
Progress	“...so you will get some groups which are still a lot more unsophisticated than others”.
	<i>(Tourism enterprise)</i>

The seven concepts identified in Table 6.4 had three overarching thoughts. Firstly, stakeholders commented on the fact that while the Chinese market is still typically group-based (concept: predominately), proportionately large group numbers are diminishing (concept: disappear) particularly from the shopping tour market (concept: shopping).

Secondly, interviewees explained how they have recently noticed a trend of Chinese tourists being increasingly hosted and guided by fellow family members residing in Australia (concepts: host, family). They explained how Chinese people who are living in Australia (sometimes for the purpose of study) are now inviting family members over and touring around.

Thirdly, the stakeholder discussions alluded to the notion that more Chinese market segments are arriving (concept: difference) and that Chinese tourists themselves are showing increasing complexity (concept: progress). Overall, the market’s increasing sophistication was evident across all concepts for the “groups” theme.

The three other themes were not as central to stakeholder discussions. “Different” was the third-most connected theme, which included the concepts of China, depth, and change. Table 6.5 displays some Leximancer reporting of these concepts.

Table 6.5. Leximancer examples of the concepts associated with “different” theme

Concept	Leximancer extract (speaker)
China	“...they’re happy with the really good weather, for example, the blue sky; compared to China , it’s totally different...” <i>(Tourism enterprise)</i>
Change	“one of the biggest things is seeing how quickly they change and they adapt and they have become [...] more eco-minded then they were.” <i>(Tourism enterprise)</i>
Depth	“...curiosity or a passion to discover things which are different.” <i>(Tourism authority personnel)</i>

Chinese tourists’ desire to experience things that differ from China came through in both the “China” and “depth” concepts. For example, interviewees commented that Chinese tourists enjoy experiencing the contrasting differences between China and Australia in everyday things such as the weather, food, daily life and so forth (concept: China). Furthermore, they are seeking richer and deeper experiences (concept: depth). The other concept “change” once again alluded to the market’s continuous evolution, supporting its link with the “progress” and “tourism” concepts previously discussed. Overall, this theme described the changing nature of Chinese visitors in that they are seeking experiences that are different.

Similarly, “experience” elaborated on the changing nature of the desired experiences. In total, four concepts were identified including rainforest, reef, Japanese, and depth. Table 6.6 provides illustrative examples for each concept.

Table 6.6. Leximancer examples of the concepts associated with “experience” theme

Concept	Leximancer extract (speaker)
Rainforest	<p>“Chinese market as numbers increase. I truly believe it’s really just being among the rainforest”.</p> <p><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p>
Reef	<p>“They want a reef experience. They want a rainforest experience”</p> <p><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p>
Japanese	<p>“My perception is that Chinese people are not the same as Japanese tour groups, in that they are actually interested in seeing more and being a little more independent...”</p> <p><i>(Tourism authority personnel)</i></p>
Depth	<p>“...then of course, they’ve done that, and then they realise well there’s actually more to a shopping tour, and then they’ll come and seek an experience”.</p> <p><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p>

The concepts “rainforest” and “reef” highlighted stakeholders’ beliefs that the main attractions for Chinese tourists are still the traditional reef-rainforest experiences. Tourism stakeholders commented, however, that the Chinese desire more than just ‘seeing’ and want to fully experience and immerse themselves in these offerings. “Japanese” and “depth” also further strengthened the argument that Chinese tourists seek in-depth experiences (concept: depth) that are different to their Japanese counterparts (concept: Japanese). Overall, the “experience” theme once again suggests that Chinese visitors have a diverse set of needs and desired experiences.

The final theme “Japanese” reflected tourism stakeholders’ acceptance that the Chinese and Japanese markets differ. Only the one concept “market” was identified for this theme (see Table 6.7 for an example).

Table 6.7. Leximancer example of the concept associated with “Japanese” theme

Concept	Leximancer extract (speaker)
Market	“I think for our region because of the patterns we saw with the Japanese market. That took a really long time to develop and” <i>(Tourism ambassador)</i>

Interviewees discussed the remarkable differences between the Japanese and Chinese travel patterns and behaviours, stating that the rapid evolution of the Chinese served as the main distinction.

Thoughts on managing the current Chinese market

Current Chinese tourism management thoughts were explored through five pre-established, literature-informed visitor management categories. Interviewees’ responses were thematically coded, which was facilitated through repeated reading of the data and independent checks with other colleagues. Figure 6.3 displays the five visitor management categories and their associated summary themes. Quotes for the interview discussions assist in explaining tourism stakeholders’ current perspectives; subsequent frequency analysis indicates the presence of stakeholders’ comments.

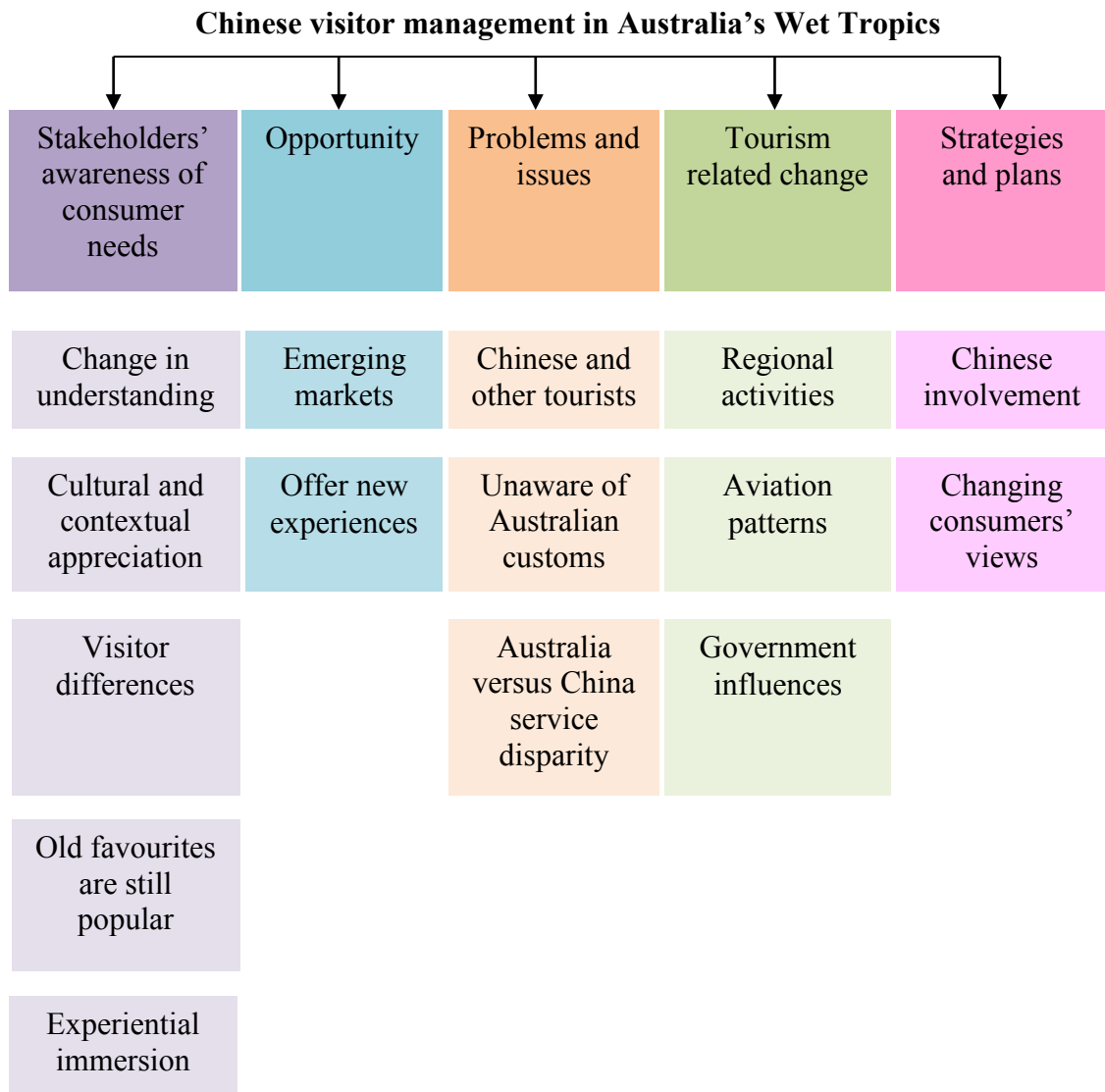


Figure 6.3. Tourism stakeholders' perspective on managing Chinese tourists

Stakeholders' awareness of consumer needs

The first visitor management category, stakeholders' awareness of consumer needs, assessed stakeholders' understanding of Chinese tourists' needs. In this study, *stakeholder awareness of consumer needs* was operationalised as:

An understanding of the Chinese tourist market's characteristics, needs, desired experiences, motivations, and expectations.

In total, five discussion themes were identified. Table 6.8 provides interview examples which explain each theme.

Table 6.8. Quotes for the themes associated with “stakeholders’ awareness” (N = 15)

Theme	Quote
Change in understanding (n = 12)	<p>“...I would say that they have probably become more sophisticated as a traveller... Probably more well-travelled than the original ones we saw”.</p> <p><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p> <p>“That they adapt, realise what is accepted and not accepted...”</p> <p><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p> <p>“...they seem to appear to be [...] very culturally aware of Australia as well”.</p> <p><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p>
Cultural and contextual appreciation (n = 10)	<p>“If... a better understanding of each other. They’re here to experience... the same things that we all experience but differently”.</p> <p><i>(Tourism authority personnel)</i></p> <p>“[...] they want to see the different life compared to China”.</p> <p><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p> <p>“...so I suppose it’s a big city... Up in the mountain among the rainforest... Miles apart isn’t it? The experience”.</p> <p><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p>
Visitor differences (n = 9)	<p>“...there [are] still so many areas being opened up every year [...] It’s people realising [...] that there are a lot of different [...] ethnic groups in China. It’s just not one homogenous...”</p> <p><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p> <p>“...If they are the mature traveller, they’re more experienced and ... more ... accustomed to western ways”.</p> <p><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p> <p>“And it seems to be progressing a lot faster than when our traditional Japanese market started”.</p> <p><i>(Tourism ambassador)</i></p>
Old favourites are still popular (n = 8)	<p>“Particularly in the Chinese market because lots of people come to Cairns [for] the Great Barrier Reef and the second thing is ‘oh I have to visit the tropics’”.</p> <p><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p> <p>“...their primary focus is to see the reef. Even if they don’t go for a swim, it’s like a bucket list thing for them”.</p> <p><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p>

Experiential immersion (n = 6)	“... They want to learn a small bit... A small amount about the culture... and for it to be interactive!
	<i>(Tourism enterprise)</i>
	“[...] literally getting that one with nature and enjoying it in its sort of true, natural raw form”.
	<i>(Tourism enterprise)</i>
	“...they actually wanted to see more. [...] If it is just the scenery, I don’t think it’s enough. And they want to know more about what they experience, what they will get”.
	<i>(Tourism enterprise)</i>

The themes identified in this visitor management category are similar to the modified Leximancer results presented previously. Therefore, the following discussion focusses on further explanation and illustration of these themes.

Firstly, over three-quarters of tourism stakeholders commented about noticeable changes in Chinese tourists’ behaviour. One common opinion (also identified in Leximancer) was that the market these days is much more sophisticated than earlier ones. Interviewees felt that the Chinese market has evolved quickly over a short duration, superseding any previous market. As one tourism ambassador explains:

“Whereas I think the market has almost over stepped the itineraries that are being put forward for them, because they’ve evolved so quickly. They’ve become so comfortable with travel”.

Some tourism stakeholders furthermore believed that current Chinese tourists have adapted their ways, and are now more culturally aware, realised what’s acceptable, and have become used to travelling in western ways.

Secondly, two-thirds of tourism stakeholders discussed Chinese tourists’ desire to understand other cultures. At one level, some interviewees believed that Chinese travellers were seeking a cultural or behavioural appreciation. That is, to participate in an experience that is offered in a different way compared to similar encounters in China. One tourism authority personnel suggested that Chinese residents might have developed a curiosity or a passion to discover things that are

different because they have possibly had less opportunity to travel. Another authority stakeholder also made a comment which alluded to potential issues:

“It’s a big wait and see to how they’re going to act, and respond, and behave. [...] It’s not as if they don’t know about wildlife and mountains and waterfalls or rainforests. [...] It’s just that they’re in our rainforest and looking at our wildlife”.

On another level, tourism stakeholders mentioned Chinese tourists’ wish for contextual or situational appreciation. That is, immersing in a lifestyle or destination setting which is distinctively different to that normally encountered. Interviewees commented about the desire for a clean, unpolluted environment such as fresh air and blue skies. In addition, several stakeholders referred to the experiential difference between China and Australia:

“[...] it’s remote, it’s a bit frontierish... it provides aspects to experiences that Chinese people can struggle to do”. (Tourism authority personnel)

“And it’s also because it’s a tropical rainforest [...] they don’t have huge suedes of tropics... Certainly not like we do up here in the north...”. (Tourism ambassador)

Thirdly, almost two-thirds of the interviewees discussed their observations of tourist differences within the Chinese market. The majority of the stakeholders felt that more Chinese tourist segments are starting to emerge. Major differences were observed particularly between independent and group travellers. Overall, free-independent travellers (FITs) were believed to be more sophisticated, more experienced, and consequently, more accustomed to western ways. One tourism ambassador suggested that “[FITs] very much fit into the international traveller pattern”. Other interviewees made further distinctions about the experiential differences sought by different Chinese travellers:

“...they want to not only experience one day [at] the reef. Maybe another day they want to go to the island – the tropic island – so they can try different styles of the reef”. (Tourism enterprise stakeholder; speaking about young generations that are FITs).

“...there is a burgeoning awareness of the world, and a wish and desire to experience it and see it as broadly and deeply as possible”. (Tourism authority personnel; speaking about the growing educated middle class).

Some stakeholders also commented about the differences between Chinese tourists and Japanese tourists. The overall perception was that the Chinese market had evolved at a much quicker pace than the Japanese market; this perception was also evident in the adapted Leximancer analysis.

Fourthly, more than half of the tourism stakeholders referred generically to Chinese tourists’ yearning to see iconic landscapes. For the Wet Tropics’ landscape, this includes the Great Barrier Reef and tropical rainforest. The general statements about Chinese tourists wanting to see the reef, wanting to see the rainforest were discussed previously in the Leximancer findings. Some additional thoughts were that these iconic experiences represent *the* destination, are on the “bucket list”, and will add value to the Chinese tourists’ experience. One tourism ambassador explains:

“...Being the oldest living rainforest, it has a certain value to go home with [...] I still think they behave in that way where it is very much about being able to go home and talk about the value of the experience you’ve had”.

Finally, less than half of the tourism stakeholders discussed Chinese tourists’ interest in experiencing things at a deeper level. Three levels of experiential immersion were identified: active experiences, feeling it, and knowledge/appreciation. Overall, tourism stakeholders believe that Chinese tourists are travelling more to experience and understand destinations:

“[...] they are not just [going] overseas to sightsee; they are more [going] to other countries to experience”. (Tourism enterprise)

“...They’re really taking their time to take in the setting”. (Tourism ambassador)

Opportunity

The second visitor management category, opportunity, assessed stakeholders' beliefs about the opportunities for Chinese tourism to the Wet Tropics. In this study, opportunity was operationalised as:

The identification of emerging trends and patterns in Chinese outbound tourism as well as the consideration of innovations or initiatives to meet these developments.

Overall, tourism stakeholders believed that the way of the future was to increase visitation levels. Interviewees believed the Chinese market could be very lucrative, commenting that “we’ve got to get the repeat visitation, grow the numbers” and “...it needs to be look[ed] after and nurtured”. In total, two themes were identified. Table 6.9 provides interview examples which explain each theme.

Table 6.9. Quotes for the themes associated with “opportunity” (N = 15)

Theme	Quote
Emerging markets (n = 8)	<p>“... and because the market [has] grown [...] there’s different demands and requirements. So people particularly in a small group like a MICE group or maybe [...] an incentive group ... They want to do something different”.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p> <p>“I think the future is really opening up the space for free and independent travel”.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism authority personnel)</i></p>
Offer new experiences (n = 7)	<p>“...the product has to be a little bit different”.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p> <p>“[...] As their market is becoming more sophisticated and developing, [wholesalers] need to offer points of difference in their tours and they need to offer different quality points”.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p>

Firstly, tourism stakeholders discussed the importance of opening up to new, emerging markets. Interviewees spoke of attracting new markets on a broad-

scale, such as the emerging middle class, the growth of tourists from secondary cities and the rise of FITs. In addition, tourism stakeholders mentioned the possibility to target smaller, individual market segments like meeting and incentive (MICE) travel and the education market. Overall, it is clear that stakeholders believe in the value of targeting specific segments emerging out of China:

“You’ve just got to play in the right segments of the market”. (Tourism enterprise)

“...international education is also a very important part of how we promote [...] So again, that’s a segment of the market that we can focus on”. (Tourism authority personnel)

“[...] we have identified ... the Chinese traveller that does want to travel ... with us. They’re the ones that we have to target”. (Tourism enterprise)

Secondly, tourism stakeholders commented on the need to offer different experiences to Chinese tourists. Some interviewees reflected on the need to create a point of difference in the experience offering and to give Chinese travellers “access to the kind of experiences which they will really relish”. Moreover, authority stakeholders provided particular examples of new experiences that could be offered:

“I think the focus that we’ve got at the moment is on edutourism... which is to put together educational packages, so that there’s a learning experience when people come here”.

“...our tropical expertise and our environmental credentials [...] I guess, it’s a potential selling point into the Chinese market”.

Another discussion point was the opportunities arising from the recently-held Australian Tourism Exchange. Tourism stakeholders’ comments reflected the necessity to better educate and work with the people selling the destination:

“[...] it was a bit of an eye-opener for a lot of the buyers here from China [...] of the breadth of product that is available to them and the areas they could still go, if they added just one more day”. (Tourism ambassador)

“[...] there seems to be opportunity, but once again, it comes down to me actually following up the guys here in Australia”. (Tourism enterprise)

Problems and issues

The third visitor management category, problems and issues, assessed tourism stakeholders' concerns with the Chinese outbound market to the Wet Tropics. In this study, opportunity was operationalised as:

A consideration of the problems, issues, concerns and risks associated with Chinese outbound tourism and tourists to the Wet Tropics.

Overall, tourism stakeholders thought that the Chinese market presented no risk “any greater than dealing with any other traveller”. Interviewees suggested that it’s perhaps just a matter of overcoming language barriers and “managing tourists in the broader sense”. In total, three over-arching themes were identified. Table 6.10 provides examples of each theme.

Table 6.10. Quotes for the themes associated with “problems and issues” (N = 15)

Theme	Quote
Chinese and other tourists (n = 8)	“It’s going to be a major part of the growth of the Australia[n] tourism industry. And if you’re a tourism operator, you need to be playing in that space...” <i>(Tourism authority personnel)</i>
	“And realising that you don’t have to change everything... but just add[ing] a few extra items to your service delivery can make a big difference”. <i>(Tourism ambassador)</i>
	“[...] like any market, you don’t want to put all your eggs in one basket”. <i>(Tourism authority personnel)</i>
	“So it’s finding a balance of making sure you look after your traditional markets... and not sort of just focus on the one

market”.

(Tourism enterprise)

Unaware of Australian customs (n = 7)	“So they don’t know much [about] what kind of behaviour they should have in our country. So sometimes it will [create] some problems...”
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(Tourism enterprise)

“[...] Really they haven’t understood the scale”.

(Tourism authority personnel)

Australia versus China service disparity (n = 5)	“[...] The service will supersede anything that we can offer here”.
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(Tourism enterprise)

“... They expect these things to work! So it’s no good saying there’s a mobile [...] black spot... Because they’ve probably never come across a mobile black spot before”.

(Tourism authority personnel)

“... all these diverse range of experiences are just not being presented and made available to people in general and particularly the Chinese market”.

(Tourism authority personnel)

Firstly, just over half of the stakeholders commented that it is a necessity to be planning for Chinese tourism. Stakeholders believed that businesses needed only to change some of their practices to cater for Chinese tourists; by not doing anything, businesses would be doing themselves a disservice (paraphrased from tourism authority personnel). A tourism enterprise stakeholder further elaborated about how everyone is getting on board: “so people who typically wouldn’t play in that Chinese market for fear of alienating their western market... are now going ‘you know what, we’ve got to be in it’...”. Some tourism authority personnel, however, felt that businesses are not quite ready for the Chinese market:

“I don’t know if our tourism businesses are ready for the Chinese market, because it’s not been a big part of their business”.

“I have this overwhelming perception that we are so poorly equipped to cater to this growing market segment”.

In summary, tourism stakeholders thought that businesses should not focus solely on the Chinese market and should not forget about traditional markets.

A second conversational theme mentioned by more than half the interview participants is that of Chinese tourists being unaware of Australian customs. Some interviewees expressed concern that Chinese travellers did not understand some of the behaviours and rules in Australia. In particular, smoking was an identified issue:

“You certainly need to up the smoking ante. So you need to have plenty of smoking facilities”. (Tourism enterprise)

“And that’s been a couple of cultural things for them as well. In terms of obviously having dosas – designated outdoor smoking areas – and things like that”. (Tourism enterprise)

Interviewees further elaborated suggesting that perhaps language barriers were sometimes attributed to lack of awareness and misunderstanding:

“I think with the Chinese as well again it comes back to that language barrier. Just in the sense of little things like taking glass around by the pool area”. (Tourism enterprise)

In addition, stakeholders also felt that Chinese tourists were sometimes not fully aware of what exactly is involved in Australian tourism experiences. Some interviewees commented that travellers did not appreciate the difference between Chinese versus Australian options and were not aware of what they would be doing.

Thirdly, one-third of the tourism stakeholders discussed discrepancies between Chinese and Australian service delivery. The most noted difference was in hotel standards. One tourism enterprise stakeholder stated: “Probably the only... I think that most, not complain but they feel [a little bit of] difference to China is the hotel”. Another interviewee felt that the full range of experiences is just not being presented to the Chinese visitor: “[...] And current ease of access would mean that

people will primarily ... go to things that are accessible and available” (tourism authority personnel).

Tourism-related change

The fourth visitor management category, tourism-related change, sought stakeholders’ opinions on how they felt Chinese outbound tourism to the Wet Tropics had evolved. In this study, tourism-related change was operationalised as:

An evaluation of the events and other outcomes that may have shaped Chinese outbound tourism to the Wet Tropics, including both structural and temporary changes within the industry and from outside forces.

On the whole, tourism stakeholders had difficulty generating conversations that linked to this theme. After some prompting, the majority responded by stating there were no outcomes that they were aware of, and/or listing specific events or projects such as Chinese New Year or the proposed Aquis development (a Chinese-owned integrated mega resort). Some interviewees commented in general that businesses were taking more notice of the Chinese market’s rapid growth, making concerted efforts, and embracing it better. Consequently, tourism stakeholders’ responses were grouped into three generic themes (see Table 6.11).

Table 6.11. Quotes for the themes associated with “tourism-related change” (N = 15)

Theme	Quote
Regional activities (n = 9)	<p>“Chinese New Year is definitely the biggest event of the year. And because we’re [...] so close to China, the number of charter flights that come into town [...] is certainly getting bigger and bigger year on year”.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p> <p>“[...] But [Aquis] is going to impact on our tourism markets. Not least of which there’ll be more direct flights coming in and out of China”.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism authority personnel)</i></p>
Aviation	“Having that enabling infrastructure and we talk about

patterns (n = 5)	<p>infrastructure ... the international airport. If we didn't have that we wouldn't be where we are today".</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism authority personnel)</i></p> <p>"[...] And a regional destination like this one hangs by our access".</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism ambassador)</i></p>
Government influences (n = 5)	<p>"Since the change of the consumer laws on 1st October in China, the group shopping market has certainly decreased. However, the group market itself hasn't".</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism ambassador)</i></p> <p>"...there's been a gradual process of liberalising visa conditions which is letting the emergence of a new free and independent traveller category starting to present".</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism authority personnel)</i></p> <p>"[...] if the entry conditions and provisions are free, then it's a sleeping giant ready to come in".</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p>

Firstly, tourism stakeholders discussed some specific regional events and developments that have shaped or will shape Chinese tourism. Generally, the interviewees' responses were relatively simplistic, for example,

"We certainly get our peak during Chinese New Year". (Tourism enterprise)

"If [Aquis] comes off, then face of Cairns and tourism will change forever".
(Tourism authority personnel)

Tourism stakeholders, however, provided interesting perspectives about the outcomes associated with Chinese New Year and Aquis. For Chinese New Year, interviewees felt that the timing of the holiday is relatively favourable. Some interviewees expressed that it is simply unfortunate that this period falls during wet season and cyclone season, as some activities may be cancelled due to poor weather conditions. Despite this, these stakeholders as well as others further suggested that visitation during this period was great as Chinese New Year is during off-peak season for domestic tourists. The following statement captures the complexity of the situation:

“You would argue how well would it be looked after if it was in the high season. It’s probably good that Chinese New Year does happen to fall in that, even though it’s our cyclone season and wet season which causes a bit of disappointment because things get cancelled”. (Tourism enterprise)

Interviewees also discussed aviation-related changes resulting from Chinese New Year. Basically, stakeholders stated that the influx of Chinese tourists, and the scale of the impact from Chinese New Year, is directly attributed to the charter flights which operate during this time. Furthermore, two different stakeholders explain that the size of the market is supported through non-direct, domestic services:

“...we’ve had Chinese New Year celebrated here with charter flights for... I think this was the fifth year, and they’re grown admittedly, but we’re still getting the constant flow of Chinese not directly but they’re coming through other ports”. (Tourism ambassador)

“[...] everyone was lamenting the loss of China Southern up here and the direct flights [...] but they’re certainly [finding their] way through domestic”. (Tourism enterprise)

Another topic of local concern within this category is the proposed mega resort currently known as the Aquis proposal. With respect to Aquis, a few stakeholders further elaborated on their thoughts of why the proposed development will have such an impact on the region. On a positive note, the stakeholders believed that it’s going to be very attractive to the Chinese market, bringing more direct flights into the region. On the negative side, however, stakeholders expressed concern that the benefits might not be felt very far beyond the resort.

Secondly, tourism stakeholders described more broad factors or circumstances which might have shaped, or will influence, Chinese outbound tourism. One major factor was the change in aviation patterns. Stakeholders collectively felt that airport access and direct connections from China were critical to the region’s continued and further success. Some stakeholders, however, highlighted their concerns about capacity:

“[...] well the 150,000 that we get currently, we know that they cannot all come in on direct flights because there simply isn't enough direct. So we know they're on domestic services coming from elsewhere...” (Tourism ambassador).

“[...] the thing that is going to be most significant for us long term is direct flights. [...] If we can get direct flights and maintain direct flights, all year round, it will be huge!” (Tourism enterprise)

“[...] If you haven't direct flights, it doesn't become a very attractive destination. So direct flights by the airlines ex China is really ... a key thing in developing the Chinese market here”. (Tourism authority personnel)

Other circumstances identified by interviewees as playing a role in shaping Chinese tourism were influenced by governmental actions. Several stakeholders commented that Chinese visitation had certainly fluctuated since the introduced changes in the consumer shopping laws on October 1st 2014. Overall, stakeholders felt that the shopping market had definitely decreased while other tourists such as FITs and the group market (in general) had remained the same or increased. Some interviewees also commented about visa and entry conditions stating that the relaxation in the rules was opening up Chinese tourism.

With respect to the outcomes associated with Chinese tourism, stakeholders discussed few (if any), in a very generic and simplified manner. Firstly, comments about social outcomes were linked to the sheer size of the market:

“[...] in Cairns particularly, it's more common place to see Asian tourists and I think the tourism industry [...] has become very understanding of that fact. So there's no social impacts anymore”. (Tourism enterprise)

“[...] the fact that they're coming and they're coming in decent numbers ... obviously creates a good awareness of the destination as a whole”. (Tourism ambassador)

Secondly, interviewees discussed three areas of economic outcomes including the development of the Chinese economy, the issue of using limited suppliers and the seasonality of Chinese tourism:

“[...] going back to the change in the whole Chinese economy and political sphere... That was what changed it for everyone... Was that Chinese were more able to travel internationally”. (Tourism ambassador)

“[...] I think it’s been slowly as the Chinese economy has grown and developed and the middle class has evolved, then I think it’s a logical destination”. (Tourism authority personnel)

“It was very controlled and it went through just a few suppliers. So there wasn’t a huge regional impact”. (Tourism enterprise, speaking of subsidised shopping tours)

“[...] our staffing levels go up and down as season demands”. (Tourism enterprise)

Finally, no tourism stakeholders identified any specific environmental outcomes from Chinese visitation.

Strategies and plans

The final visitor management category, strategies and plans, assessed tourism stakeholders’ intentions for continuing to attract and manage Chinese tourists in the Wet Tropics. In this study, strategies and plans was operationalised as:

Current and future intentions to attract and subsequently manage Chinese tourists including plans, strategies, monitoring practices, as well as education- and marketing-based initiatives.

Once again, tourism stakeholders discussed some basic strategies and plans relating to the management of Chinese tourism. For example, majority of the stakeholders are currently attending events organised by Tourism Australia or Tourism Queensland and employing Mandarin-speaking staff. Other comments relating to this category could be grouped under two themes. Table 6.12 provides examples of each theme.

Table 6.12. Quotes for the themes associated with “strategies and plans” (N = 15)

Event	Quote
Chinese involvement (n = 4)	<p>“We still need to connect to the wholesalers in China and improve our image”.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p> <p>“So we’re going to be concentrating digitally in China. We’ll engage a third party to manage our SEM and social platforms”.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p>
Changing consumers’ views (n = 2)	<p>“[...] well you’ve got the reef, you’ve got wet tropics, you’ve got dry tropics, and you’ve got the outback. All of that within ... an hour radiance of Townsville”.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism authority personnel)</i></p> <p>“...it’s a very good advantage for us to put all the attractions as a destination. So when we try to promote the products, they will know the whole idea of what we can provide”.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>(Tourism enterprise)</i></p>

Firstly, tourism stakeholders discussed plans to continue and even increase their China-based efforts in attracting Chinese travellers. Interviewees commented on the need to stay connected with Chinese wholesalers “because it still is predominately a wholesaler-driven business” and “because they got good volume for the groups”. In addition, stakeholders mentioned the desire to continue visiting China to meet suppliers and to subsequently increase China-based marketing.

Secondly, tourism stakeholders commented about the potential to market the Wet Tropics as an all-inclusive experience. One tourism authority personnel suggested the idea of using major cities in the Wet Tropics, such as Townsville, as a base city: “[...] you can base yourself in a city, with all the aspects that go with a city, and be able to do all of [these] ... daytrips”. Furthermore, a tourism enterprise stakeholder explained that it would be advantageous to package and promote the attractions as a destination, primarily due to travel distance but also because the customers won’t “have to deal with too many companies”.

TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS FUTURE SITUATIONS

Thirdly, the concept of optimism-pessimism was utilised to explore stakeholders' responses towards four different Chinese outbound futures. Respondents were assigned a score along four optimism dimensions, through repeated readings of the interview data and independent checks with another colleague. Table 6.13 provides a description of the five-point optimism scale. A researcher-driven clustering built in the optimism scores and the responses to the scenarios was then implemented. Appendix 6.4 documents the approaches undertaken and highlights initial patterns. Overall, no definitive patterns emerged; therefore, a more qualitative approach of identifying conversation themes according to the scenarios was implemented. Tourism stakeholders' mean levels of optimism towards the four different scenarios are depicted in Figure 6.4.

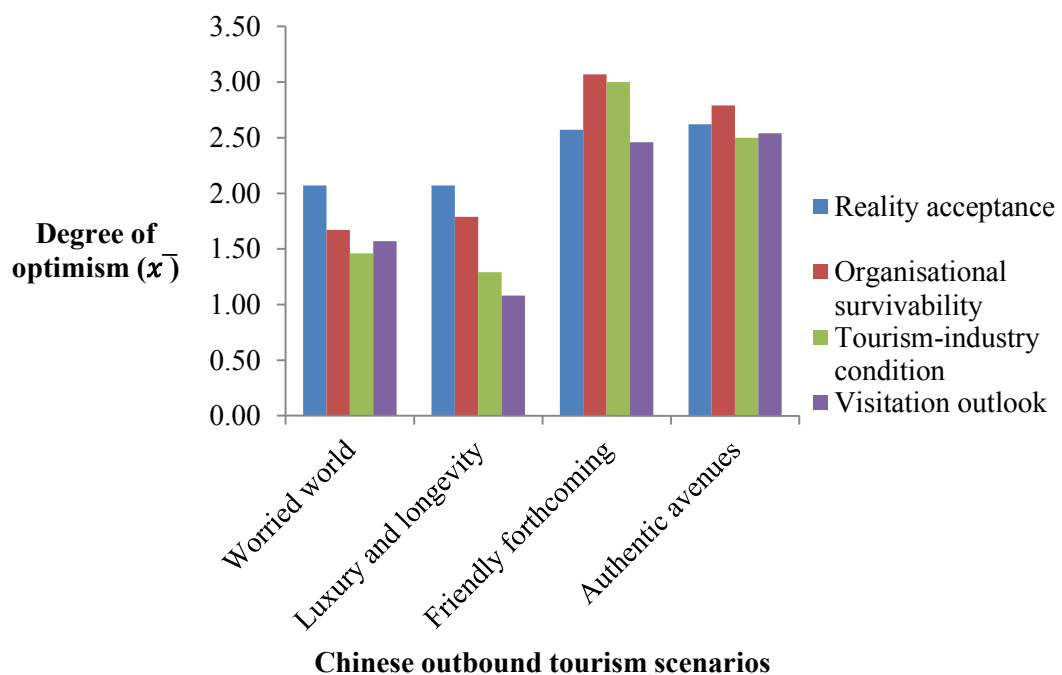


Figure 6.4. Tourism stakeholders' level of optimism towards four Chinese futures

Table 6.13. Degree of optimism according to four dimensions

Optimism dimension	0 Somewhat pessimistic	1 Neutral	2 Somewhat optimistic	3 Mostly optimistic	4 Exceedingly optimistic
Reality acceptance	Reflected on negative outcomes of environmental change. Didn't believe patterns would evolve in the timeframe set.	Neutral stance.	Uncertain feeling. Expressed some doubt in environmental change, visitor behaviour, and/or timeframe of events.	Positive attitude. Could envisage most of the environmental change, visitor behaviour, timeframe of events described.	High-spirit. Discussed actions that would have been undertaken. Reflected on past/current events and practices.
Organisational survivability	Negative attitude. Suggested it would be challenging and that there would be reduced offerings.	Neutral attitude. No plans to change.	Positive attitude with some uncertainty. Believed situation to be logical progression.	Positive attitude. Discussed ability to cater to visitor.	Proactive attitude. Identified actions. Specific reference to current experience.
Tourism-industry condition	Negative attitude. Described a loss of tourism product.	Neutral attitude. Identified other outside influences / issues.	Positive attitude. Some concern about environmental factors.	Positive attitude. Believed destination is well-suited for traveller.	Enthusiastic attitude. Reflected on Australia's previous success and favourable position.
Visitation outlook	Reduced numbers. Commented about visitor restrictions. Expressed doubt in visitation by that visitor type.	No change.	Slight increase. Reflected on general upward trend, and other influencing circumstances.	Good increase. Commented about safeness of Australia. Believed visitation would increase due to demise of other countries.	Good increase. Expressed desire / willingness to see many visitors.

Tourism stakeholders were relatively optimistic towards different futures of Chinese outbound tourism. Composite variables were computed to assign respondents a total optimism score for each scenario. Overall, interviewees were most optimistic towards *Friendly Forthcoming* ($\bar{x} = 11.30$) and *Authentic Avenues* ($\bar{x} = 10.18$), and less optimistic about *Worried World* ($\bar{x} = 6.83$) and *Luxury and Longevity* ($\bar{x} = 6.80$). This demonstrates a preference towards seeing China outbound travel become less restricted by the Chinese government. The level of optimism associated with each dimension, however, varied slightly according to the individual scenarios (see Figure 6.4 above). *Reality acceptance* and *organisational survivability* were generally ranked higher than *tourism-industry condition* and *visitation outlook*. Consequently, tourism stakeholders appear to be more optimistic about the individual scenarios playing out and their capacity to respond, than they are about the future state of Australia's tourism industry and the potential number of tourists coming.

Further exploration of the differences among optimism dimensions was conducted using the combined scores. The small sample size, however, impeded reliable analysis. The following discussion, therefore, presents a qualitative analysis of tourism stakeholders' perspectives. This is segmented into five sections. A holistic view of the future of Chinese outbound tourism is firstly provided. These perspectives represent common themes identified across multiple scenarios. Then, the four futures are individually explored for distinguishing features. Hardy and Beeton (2001) similarly identified divergence and convergence in tourism stakeholders' perceptions about whether tourism in the Daintree region (far north Queensland, Australia) is operating in a sustainable or maintainable manner.

Tourism stakeholders' overall attitudes – instead of their perspectives towards each optimism dimension – are presented. This is due to several reasons. Firstly, interviewees primarily responded to the four questions in a generic manner. For example, 'it seems quite realistic', 'we could manage them', 'I think Australia would be doing well', and 'we will see growth in that market'. These responses made it challenging to distinguish differences in attitudes among both the scenarios and the optimism dimensions. Secondly, tourism stakeholders additionally provided an extensive array of perspectives. The identification of commonly-held perceptions was therefore almost impractical for some optimism dimensions. Thirdly,

interviewees' responses to "how well do you think your organisation would cope?" and "how would you describe the state of Australia's tourism industry based?" revealed overlapping perspectives. Tourism stakeholders may not actively perceive much difference between their organisation's position and functionality and the wider Australian tourism industry⁸. Therefore, a more superficial, over-arching analysis of tourism stakeholders' attitudes is presented below. Figure 6.5 displays emerging perspectives towards different futures of Chinese outbound tourism.

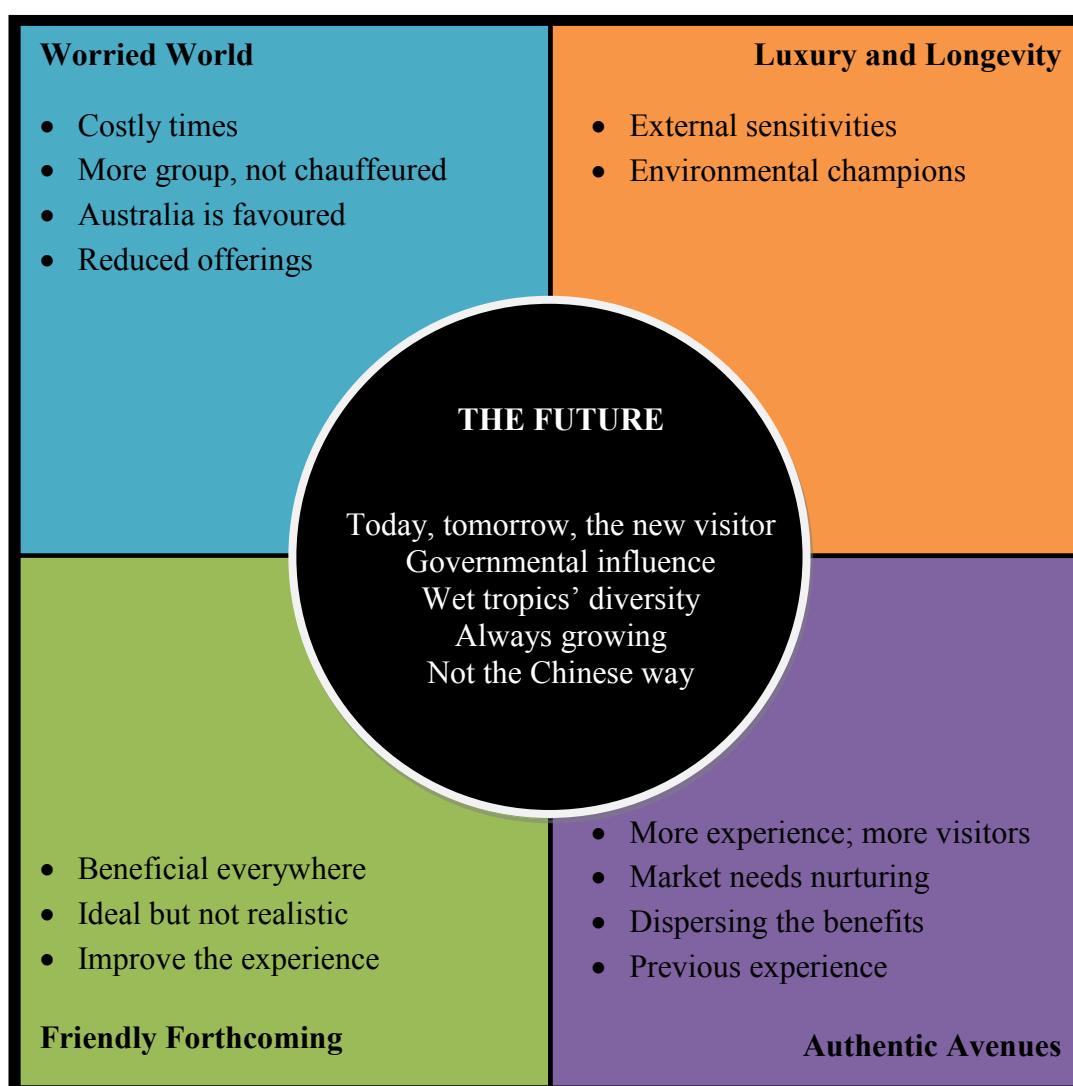


Figure 6.5. Tourism stakeholders' attitudes towards Chinese tourism futures

⁸ In order to score tourism stakeholders along the optimism scale (as depicted in Figure 6.4), the definitions for each optimism dimension were utilised to categorise interviewee statements.

The future of Chinese outbound tourism

Tourism stakeholders provided a wide variety of perspectives on the future of Chinese outbound tourism to Australia's Wet Tropics. Overall, interviewees believed that any future would be significantly shaped primarily by governmental influence and direct access. Furthermore, tourism stakeholders felt that each scenario somewhat exists in today's world, that their current experience can help with future visitor management, that the Wet Tropics suits all types of Chinese travellers, and that Chinese tourists may not exhibit such travel behaviour patterns. These themes which are discussed below provide general representations of the future; sometimes, specific statements for each scenario might indicate a slightly different perspective.

Today's happenings, tomorrow's projections - just a new market

The majority of tourism stakeholders commented about the timeline of change and its likely occurrence. Generally, tourism stakeholders believed that the timeline of change for each scenario was quite realistic and probable ($n = 7$). Interviewees sometimes commented that particular events were not realistic:

“...I think it's entirely unlikely. I think that we still have world best practice when it comes to reef and rainforest”. (Tourism ambassador, speaking of the deterioration of the Great Barrier Reef in *Worried World*)

Tourism stakeholders justified the eventuality of these events simply on the belief that these changes are evident now ($n = 9$). Furthermore, interviewees believed that tourists could currently engage in the activities and that they could provide the services described under each respective scenario:

“So it's quite likely. It's what we see now”. (Tourism ambassador, *Luxury and Longevity*)

“I think it's developed enough to be able to provide those sorts of services”. (Tourism authority personnel, *Worried World*)

“There's definitely this mix travelling already”. (Tourism enterprise, *Friendly Forthcoming*)

In particular, eight interviewees felt that their current experience would assist with the future management of Chinese tourists. Two tourism enterprises commented that everyone would have a much more mature experience with the Chinese market and would be ready for what the future entailed. One-third of tourism stakeholders also suggested that the evolution depicted in the scenarios is similar to other current markets, and therefore they just need to fine tune their management finesse:

“...we’ve done it in the past. Once you’ve done it for other nationalities, you’re just fine tuning it”. (Tourism enterprise, *Luxury and Longevity*)

“And really that scenario isn’t a great deal different from the ones that we’re getting from the western markets already ... It’s just tweaking that existing product to suit a new market”. (Tourism ambassador, *Friendly Forthcoming*)

The impact of government actions

Almost two-thirds of tourism stakeholders provided perspectives on the influence of both Chinese and Australian governmental actions (n = 9). Some interviewees were uncertain in which way the Chinese government will go, whilst others were more optimistic:

“I’m not too familiar with which way the Chinese government is going to go as far as their travel policy”. (Tourism enterprise, *Worried World*)

“I think this comes back down to ... how relaxed the government is going to be on the Chinese traveller”. (Tourism enterprise, *Authentic Avenues*)

“I really hope we don’t deteriorate our relationship with the Chinese government too much”. (Tourism enterprise, *Luxury and Longevity*)

Tourism stakeholders mainly reflected on the negative outcomes of different government actions, especially the reduction in visitor numbers. One tourism authority personnel believed there would be less tourists coming if visitors have to apply to get approved (i.e. Australian government action), whilst a tourism enterprise

stakeholder discussed Chinese travellers' reduced interest in travelling if the Chinese government tried to regulate itineraries.

The Wet Tropics is a versatile destination

Eight tourism stakeholders shared their perspectives on the versatility of the destination, with respect to hosting different tourists. For *Worried World*, interviewees felt that the destination is well suited for business travellers, albeit our current limited share of this market from China. They believed our size and diversity in activities positions us well as a business location:

“...being able to use places like Cairns or Townsville to actually do business makes better sense than going to a place like Sydney, and then spending hours trying to get from one place to the next”. (Tourism authority personnel)

“Australia conducts itself very [well] throughout the days and evenings as well. And I think particularly in a regional place such as far north Queensland, that’s when we come to life!” (Tourism enterprise)

For *Friendly Forthcoming* and *Authentic Avenues*, tourism stakeholders felt that we’re a suitable destination for independent travel by Chinese tourists:

“...we’re quite geared up for people travelling with children, in terms of things to see and do...” (Tourism authority personnel, *Friendly Forthcoming*)

“Australia’s very well positioned with the diverse range of experiences and with all the different environments and climates, we’re well positioned for longer stays”. (Tourism ambassador, *Authentic Avenues*)

Some interviewees further suggested that the Wet Tropics will grow in popularity as a destination to seek authentic, out-of-the-way experiences.

“...when they realise that something is a must do I believe they will come back to do it”. (Tourism enterprise, *Authentic Avenues*)

“There’s definitely the possibility of destination fatigue... So moving out into the west is probably the next area ... and definitely a possibility because of our proximity”. (Tourism enterprise, *Authentic Avenues*)

Always increasing numbers, with direct access the key to exponential growth

Six tourism stakeholders commented that the number of Chinese tourists would always grow irrespective of the future condition. These perspectives appear to be based off current experience and trends of the past:

“I think because we as a country have targeted China...” (Tourism authority personnel, *Worried World*)

“I honestly think this is only [the tip] of the iceberg, so I think you’re going to see growth everywhere, all markets”. (Tourism enterprise, *Worried World*)

Some stakeholders also described a change in visitation patterns, mainly, the increase of FIT and decrease of group travel:

“I think we’ll see a change in their travelling patterns. Less of the group tours, and I think a little bit more of the branching out into a bit more independent travel”. (Tourism enterprise, *Friendly Forthcoming*)

One-third of tourism stakeholders also made reference to the importance of direct access for increasing visitor numbers:

“...that’s very much dependent on getting direct flights again back to our region”. (Tourism enterprise, *Worried World*)

“if we can get direct air links from a couple of those cities, you’re likely to see numbers skyrocket”. (Tourism authority personnel, *Friendly Forthcoming*)

Not experienced enough to behave in such ways

Less than half the tourism stakeholders expressed concern that these future experiences are not necessarily the Chinese way ($n = 6$). Basically, interviewees felt that Chinese tourists would not progress to such levels (given their relatively shallow travel history):

“...that whole concept of strolling along the beach for the sense of relaxation. I don’t know if that’s necessarily the Chinese way”. (Tourism authority personnel, *Worried World*)

“I personally couldn’t see them do this itinerary. It’s too laid back, relaxed... I just don’t see them doing this thing”. (Tourism enterprise, *Worried World*)

A few tourism stakeholders believed that Chinese travellers might still be seeking the main attractions and ordinary experiences, to “tick off the box, not so much the immersion” (Tourism ambassador, *Authentic Avenues*).

Friendly Forthcoming

Tourism stakeholders responded the most positively towards *Friendly Forthcoming*. This scenario portrayed a young Chinese family – on their second outbound trip - who is seeking to experience similar things to China but in a different context and in a more independent way. *Organisational survivability* was the highest rated optimism dimension ($\bar{x} = 3.07$), followed closely by *tourism-industry condition* ($\bar{x} = 3.00$), then *reality acceptance* ($\bar{x} = 2.57$), and *visitation outlook* ($\bar{x} = 2.46$). Overall, no strong emerging themes were identified from the stakeholder discussions. Interview participants were quite broad in their perspectives towards this scenario; however, three overarching attitudes can be recognised.

Firstly, tourism stakeholders believed that this scenario would be a good situation for Australia and the Wet Tropics region. Interviewees discussed a myriad of benefits including increased visitation and monetary dispersal outside of regional centres, the capability of Chinese tourists booking through local companies, and the travellers’ interest in learning and interacting more in the Australian context.

Secondly, interviewees felt that while this scenario may be ideal, it is not necessarily realistic. A number of reasons were suggested as to why it may not eventuate including those linked to macro forces and other internal influences. With respect to macro forces, tourism stakeholders felt that this future could be shaped by the strength of the Yuan, political issues, and the movements of other markets impacted by external events. Alternatively, some internal forces such as the need for careful management, the tourists' travel experience and level of English competence, and promotional efforts in this market were also discussed.

Thirdly, tourism stakeholders highlighted the need to improve the tourism product. Some suggestions were to develop stories associated with the tourism experiences, introduce more self-booking channels for Chinese tourists, enhance ease of access to these experiences, increase awareness of the variety of things to do, and to work with Chinese travel agents. Evidently, tourism stakeholders consider this scenario to be beneficial and prosperous – something to strive for – but express a necessity for careful, strategic planning for it to eventuate.

Authentic Avenues

Authentic Avenues was the second-most positively viewed scenario by tourism stakeholders. In this situation, a young Chinese lady returns – previously studied at a university here – to visit friends, and decides to go on a nine day Townsville to Cairns road-trip with her friend. Tourism stakeholders were most optimistic about *organisational survivability* ($\bar{x} = 2.79$), then *reality acceptance* ($\bar{x} = 2.62$), *visitation outlook* ($\bar{x} = 2.54$), and finally, *tourism-industry condition* ($\bar{x} = 2.50$). Overall, interviewees' commonly-held perceptions were relatively positive, whilst explaining some of the realities and necessities of the situation. The following discussion explains four emerging themes on this scenario.

Numbers will grow as travellers' experience does

Seven stakeholders commented about the potential rise in visitor numbers as Chinese gain more travel experience. There was a general perception that relatively low numbers of this independent style traveller would exist in 2020:

“It could be a little bit slower than some of the other markets taking hold”
(Tourism enterprise)

“I think there’ll be a small increase, but I think that will be over time”.
(Tourism enterprise)

However, tourism stakeholders were adamant that as Chinese tourists gain more experience, there would be long-term growth:

“Long term if the scenario is right, there will be growth. As people explore and adventure further”. (Tourism ambassador)

“Well if they become more experienced and as the market matures, true FIT visitation will occur”. (Tourism enterprise)

Another perspective was that growth in this type of traveller would be attributable to a rise in popularity and familiarity as a destination. One tourism authority personnel said “...we’re not an ancient place, we’re only [a] young city”, whilst a tourism enterprise stakeholder explained “it might be the most popular thing in the future, when they do come to Cairns”.

A market that needs to be nurtured

One-third of tourism stakeholders also believed that visitation levels will be dependent on how well we look after the market. Some interviewees felt that the tourism industry needs to actively push for this market:

“If we put time and effort into it, we will. If we sit back and go ‘it’s just going to happen’, no. So we actively have to drive the tourism industry.
(Tourism authority personnel)

“You can’t take it for granted. You need policies to help it develop this way. You need intervention. It’s not a natural course”. (Tourism authority personnel)

Interviewees also mentioned that we need to make improvements and learn more if we are to successfully capture this market:

“I just think there needs to be a greater learning from everybody”. (Tourism enterprise)

“...we need to [make] more improvements [...]. We have the product, we have everything, but we need to make it smooth and make it popular”. (Tourism enterprise)

Furthermore, it was suggested that we need to embrace these people, and perhaps facilitate them in spreading the message for us, in order to increase visitation.

Benefits reaching beyond the regional centre

Five tourism stakeholders discussed the positive impact of these tourists to all areas of the region. Basically, interviewees expressed delight that the spread will extend beyond regional centres:

“These are well behaved, interested travellers who are wanting to see and do everything. [...]. I think the benefits to our region would be huge...”. (Tourism authority personnel)

“She’s going all the areas that I’m sure some of these smaller operators, they need. So she’s spreading good money around”. (Tourism enterprise)

Another tourism enterprise stakeholder further suggested that this market might become an important one to these smaller operators who may not have dealt with Chinese tourists before. In addition, a tourism enterprise stakeholder believed whilst the current situation provided a limited offering, the conditions in this scenario would facilitate opportunities for longer stays and seeing more areas.

Travel facilitated through previous links and experience

Five tourism stakeholders indicated that this scenario is likely only due to the traveller's previous extended experience in the region. As a tourism ambassador stated "for someone who has lived here, yes; but others who may have visited before but not have had that immersion experience, I don't think it's as likely". Other interviewees commented on the need to know the destination to know about these experiences:

"...the comfort of knowing the destination but knowing that other experiences are within reach..." (Tourism enterprise)

"...she's highly educated, she's been in the country before, so she knows the layout of the land". (Tourism enterprise)

This second interviewee further suggested that perhaps the reason for low numbers is due to sheer unawareness of these experiences:

"I would find it hard to believe that the hundred plus that we get here now would know a number of the places you have mentioned in this scenario".

"I would find it hard to imagine that that sort of itinerary would be common place in the China market".

Worried World

The third-most optimistic scenario, albeit a significantly lower level, was *Worried World*. In this scenario, a senior couple were travelling on a government bursary and engaging in more luxurious travel, as a reward for their tireless work efforts. *Reality acceptance* ($\bar{x} = 2.07$) received the highest optimism score, followed by *organisational survivability* ($\bar{x} = 1.67$), *visitation outlook* ($\bar{x} = 1.57$), and *tourism-industry condition* ($\bar{x} = 1.46$). Overall, tourism stakeholders felt that the experience might not have changed much or perhaps might have even lessened. Four emerging perspectives are explained below in more detail.

Activities are beyond travellers' price range

Seven tourism stakeholders commented on the fact that this type of experience appeared too costly for senior travellers. Two tourism stakeholders explained that it might not be a realistic situation,

“...it comes back to disposable income at the end of the day... We’re not seeing it now”. (Tourism enterprise)

“It’s not necessarily the norm for the tourism experience. And if it became the norm, it would perpetuate my perception that we are an extraordinary high cost destination”. (Tourism authority personnel)

Other interviewees further suggested that travel would indeed become cheaper, if it is a concerned world:

“If for the economical way, they’ll probably travel with a group”. (Tourism stakeholder)

“...if international travel’s lessened, then everyone’s going to be fighting over the same dollars so it becomes cheapened”. (Tourism ambassador)

Will travel more in a group, not chauffeured

Four tourism stakeholders expressed their belief that senior travellers will still be reliant on group travel. Basically, interviewees felt Chinese tourists’ lack of previous travel history and issues with language would warrant group travel. Some interviewee statements were:

“I do think for the ageing population, definitely the tours will remain very, very high... I don’t think that group thing will ever change”. (Tourism enterprise)

“...they’re more likely to be in a group than sort of travelling with a chauffeur thing, especially if they’re not sophisticated travellers who haven’t done a lot of travel”. (Tourism enterprise)

Australia becomes a favourable destination

One-third of tourism stakeholders discussed Australia’s increased favourability in this troubled time. The majority of the comments were that Australia was seen as a safe destination. Furthermore, interviewees believed that Australia would be one of the last countries affected if this world should eventuate; Australia stands to benefit from the demise of others:

“I can understand that scenario, but I don’t think it’s going to be a disincentive for people to come to Australia. I think maybe it’s going to see Australia as being a place that’s even more attractive”. (Tourism authority personnel)

“...subject to any other disasters or any of these attacks... we would possibly benefit more. These things look like they play to our advantage not disadvantage”. (Tourism enterprise)

Another perspective why Australia’s environment would be conducive is because we have a good, stable offering:

“I think Australia is quite friendly to Chinese, not only for the customer... but also to the government side as well”. (Tourism enterprise)

“...the quality for the environment will be even more important to people. And because ours [has] been listed for so long and protected...”. (Tourism ambassador)

Reduced offerings; industry will crumble

Five tourism stakeholders also discussed the issue of having a reduced tourism offering. Interviewees firstly expressed concern over the degradation of the natural environment:

“...our whole model is based around the rainforest experience – the Wet Tropics. If the Wet Tropics goes, so do we!” (Tourism enterprise)

“If something should happen to the reef, I think that the industry would find it very hard to continue. It is by far our biggest drawcard”. (Tourism ambassador)

It was further explained that this would lead to a rationalisation of operators:

“It would mean ... not such a big range of opportunities of things to do in Cairns anyway. A lot of businesses would be gone...” (Tourism authority personnel)

Tourism stakeholders felt that this rationalisation could then lead towards providing a high-level service, of perhaps a mature product.

“If our industry was to contract [...] you’d only be left with the players that have good business models, delivering a good product of service”. (Tourism authority personnel)

“So at the end of the day it’s the consumer that loses out. If you don’t reinvest in product, it deteriorates. If there is no new product, the experience ages”. (Tourism enterprise)

“I think that means as a destination, Australia will be a very mature market to Chinese customers”. (Tourism enterprise)

Luxury and Longevity

Lastly, tourism stakeholders were the least optimistic towards *Luxury and Longevity*. This scenario presented a corporate traveller coming on a five-day working-leisure trip, in an expensive world where eco-products are valued. The highest rated optimism dimension was *reality acceptance* ($\bar{x} = 2.07$), followed by *organisational*

survivability ($\bar{x} = 1.79$), *tourism-industry condition* ($\bar{x} = 1.29$), and *visitation outlook* ($\bar{x} = 1.08$). Two perspectives emerging from this scenario were that the industry would be quite susceptible to external forces, and that Wet Tropics' tourism operators currently do the 'green thing' well.

Australia is sensitive to external forces

Six tourism stakeholders discussed the ramifications of external forces on Australia's tourism industry. Majority of the interviewees held a negative attitude; however, some positive thoughts also emerged:

"... we've still got the high dollar and high fuel prices, so again, we would be focusing more on the domestic traveller". (Tourism authority personnel)

"We tend to protect, preserve, and sustain our environment. So that would be an advantage but obviously Australian dollar, increased costs of getting here, is going to probably negatively impact international tourism". (Tourism authority personnel)

"I think the Australian dollar is always strong compared to [Yuan]. [...] before they come here, they [are] already aware it will be expensive trip. People are actually happy to pay the money to come to Australia". (Tourism enterprise)

Australians are champions of environmental quality

One-third of tourism stakeholders held some perspectives about environmental regulation. Generally, Australia is believed to have a 'very strong eco-accreditation program' (tourism ambassador), where 'most operators... abide by environmental regulations already' (tourism authority personnel). Other interviewees, however, highlighted the more negative side of environmental laws:

"...environmental accreditations have sort of lapsed in the last couple of years. It used to be really up there...". (Tourism enterprise)

“...there’s already a move towards insuring and branding quality experiences [...]. It just makes the tourism experience more costly”.
(Tourism authority personnel)

“What brand value, what influence does all that environmental certification have in the consumers’ mind? ...None. [...]. Comes back to rate. Doesn’t matter what market it is. The typical psyche of most people is to allocate a budget to as holiday and fit things around the budget”. (Tourism enterprise)

DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to pursue two main research aims. Firstly, tourism stakeholders’ perspectives towards current management of Chinese tourists were explored. In particular, the focus of this first aim was two-fold; to identify tourism stakeholders’ overall representation of current tourists, and to explore tourism stakeholders’ perceptions on current management. Secondly, tourism stakeholders’ attitudes towards the future management of Chinese tourists were considered. In both research aims, visitor management reflects the procedures and policies associated with a group of visitors, including their general treatment. Several discussion points can be drawn from the findings; these are firstly considered separately according to the specific research aims, and then common conclusions are presented thereafter.

It is important, however, to note one implication that might influence further interpretations of the results. That is, the commentary provided above is representative of three types of stakeholders: tourism ambassadors, tourism enterprises and tourism authority personnel. Despite the researcher’s efforts to incorporate a diversity of tourism stakeholders, the opinions of some key personnel might be absent from the current work. For example, protected area managers and park rangers – who are at the front line of visitor management – would have personal knowledge of the environmental impacts resulting from Chinese outbound tourism. Similarly, Chinese wholesaler travel agents might offer additional perspectives about Chinese tourists’ motivations, desires and interests to visit the Wet Tropics region. Thus, further research could seek to include a more varied range of tourism

stakeholders – or to interview other stakeholder types – to determine if these are the collective opinions, representative of the majority of stakeholders.

OVERALL REPRESENTATION OF THE CURRENT CHINESE MARKET

This study identified five themes that represent how tourism stakeholders view the current Chinese leisure market. The Leximancer adapted concept map when read in order of prominence, captures the essence of the conversations. That is, **Chinese** tourists (still predominately **group**-based) seek **different**, richer **experiences**, continuing to distinguish them from the **Japanese** cohort. Tourism stakeholders' astonishment with the market's rapid evolution was apparent across all concepts. In particular, the differentness to the Japanese market and the diversification within the Chinese market was prominent in stakeholder discussions.

The five themes suggest a superficial and stereotypical representation of the current Chinese market. Overall, tourism stakeholders identified noticeable changes in the market; however, these changes were not described at any length. For example, interviewees simply stated there were changes among the dynamics of Chinese tourists including preferences for more in-depth experiences. Unconscious processing of these new Chinese tourists suggests tourism stakeholders are currently *mindless* to the full extent of the changes occurring around them (cf. van Winkle & Backman, 2009). Tourism stakeholders' surprise with the quick evolution and increasing sophistication of the Chinese market also indicates that they are possibly unfamiliar with market trends. Recently, research into the Chinese market has increasingly demonstrated the emergence of new markets and diversification of travel patterns and behaviours (cf. Arlt, 2013). In addition, it is evident that tourism stakeholders were relying on previous experience with the Japanese market to manage Chinese tourists. This suggests a shallow and perhaps misleading representation of the current Chinese market. Consequently, tourism stakeholders' capacity to respond and effectively manage Chinese tourists might be dampened due to incapability to consider alternative viewpoints (Moscardo, 1996).

Tourism stakeholders' representation of the current market suggests that mundane activities are an important part of the Wet Tropics' experience for Chinese

travellers. Interview participants described the desire of Chinese tourists to experience differentness (compared to China-based experiences); aspects of daily life and clean blue skies in particular were frequently documented. Pearce, Wu and Chen (2015) suggested that mundane experiences (a set of non-transformative but worthwhile insights into local practices) might be readily transmitted and understood by others. While these experiences are ordinary to everyday Australians, Chinese tourists' importance on consuming such places might be indicative of the fact they're visually distinct to those in China (cf. Urry, 1995).

CURRENT MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVES

Tourism stakeholders' current management perspectives were further explored using five pre-established, literature-informed visitor management categories. Firstly, for consumer awareness, interviewees described Chinese tourists' change in understanding, characteristic differences, and an interest in exploring differences. Secondly, in regards to opportunities, tourism stakeholders discussed two themes; that is, emerging markets and offering new experiences. Thirdly, concerning problems and issues, interviewees reflected on not focusing solely on the Chinese market, Chinese tourists' unawareness of Australian customs, and the differences between the level and type of services in China versus Australia. Fourthly, for tourism-related change, tourism stakeholders had difficulty generating conversations around this topic. However, four themes including regional activities, aviation patterns, government influences, and outcomes were explored. Finally, with respect to strategies and plans, interviewees alluded to the need for Chinese involvement and changing consumers' views. Consequently, tourism stakeholders' overall perceptions about managing the current Chinese market is three-fold; these visitors are evolving fast with new markets emerging; there needs to be continuous efforts to learn and understand by both the stakeholder and the tourist; and, external influences impact and shape visitation patterns.

Interviewee discussions on current management perspectives indicated a basic understanding of the Chinese market. Overall, this understanding appears to be industry-driven and potentially of limited foresight in four main ways. Firstly, interviewees had difficulties in recognising any risks, problems, and outcomes

associated with Chinese tourism to the Wet Tropics. All forms of travel, however, inevitably place added pressures on local resources which may result in environment damage, littering, congestion and other community outcomes. Tourism stakeholders' general impression was that Chinese travellers presented no issues greater than any other market. On the contrary, different markets bring distinctive traits and learn about areas differently (Urry, 1992). Accordingly, information about tourists' characteristics, motivations and expectations are needed (Eagles & McCool, 2002), therefore, presenting distinct managerial challenges.

Secondly, when asked what events have shaped Chinese outbound tourism, the majority of tourism stakeholders responded with specific events such as Chinese New Year. Relatively few interviewees could identify wider macro and minor forces. Inability to identify and question the larger forces shaping Chinese outbound tourism again suggests a mindless state (cf. Moscardo, 1999; van Winkle & Backman, 2009). Furthermore, not being able to recognise global outcomes reinforces a somewhat localised and narrow view. Tourism stakeholders' representation of the Chinese market, therefore, is also being shaped by how the Wet Tropics' destination controls Chinese visitation as well as how host people interact with Chinese tourists.

Thirdly, tourism stakeholders recognised the need to provide a more targeted approach and to offer something different. Despite this, only generic management strategies and plans were discussed. Interviewees struggled to provide clear ideas on how to target individual Chinese segments and to differentiate the experience. Providers need to have an understanding of tourists' characteristics as well as what opportunities and experiences tourists seek in order to develop management strategies that will enhance learning, appreciation, adventure and challenge (Eagles & McCool, 2002).

Finally, it is evident that tourism stakeholders' perspectives about managing Chinese tourists are being shaped by their previous experience with other markets. Interviewees collectively mentioned that it's just a matter of 'tweaking' your product to suit a new market. Simple adaption to experience delivery does not necessarily account for some of the complex cultural issues surrounding different travellers. Collectively, tourism stakeholders' perspectives appear to be driven more so by industry beliefs and third-party actions than personal experience.

FUTURE CHINESE MANAGEMENT ATTITUDES

Secondly, tourism stakeholders' attitudes towards the management of future Chinese tourists were explored through the concept of optimism-pessimism. Interviewees were presented with four different scenarios – *Worried World*, *Luxury and Longevity*, *Friendly Forthcoming*, and *Authentic Avenues*. Tourism stakeholders were most optimistic towards *Friendly Forthcoming* and *Authentic Avenues*, followed by *Worried World* and *Luxury and Longevity*, although in quite lesser levels. The preference for *friendly forthcoming* and *authentic avenues* suggests that interviewees are more optimistic towards a future where the Chinese government lessens travel restrictions, and effectively sanctions and encourages outbound tourism.

Overall, interviewees discussed five topics shaping all futures of Chinese outbound tourism. That is, tomorrow's world is already happening today, governmental influence on shaping outbound travel, diversity of the Wet Tropics, visitor numbers are always on the rise, and, these experiences don't seem to be the Chinese way. Other perspectives helped to distinguish among the four scenarios. For *Friendly Forthcoming*, tourism stakeholders believed the benefits would reach everywhere, it's ideal but not realistic, and the experience needs to be improved. With respect to *Authentic Avenues*, interviewees commented that visitor numbers will grow as visitors become more experienced, the market needs to be nurtured, benefits will be widely felt, and it depends on tourists' previous experience. In *Worried World*, tourism stakeholders felt that cost extended the travellers' means, tourists would be more group oriented, Australia would become a favoured destination, and there would be reduced tourism offerings. Finally, *Luxury and Longevity* was thought to be susceptible to external sensitivities, and stakeholders are environmental champions. Therefore, it appears that different futures warrant different management styles and distinctiveness in experience offerings for Chinese tourists.

Despite this, the diversity in perspectives for individual scenarios coupled with the similarities identified across scenarios indicates that interviewees more so reflected on the future in general. Essentially, tourism stakeholders revealed overall attitudes towards the future of Chinese outbound tourism. This suggests a limited appreciation and understanding for how different events will impact the way Chinese

tourism unfolds. Scenario planning, however, is designed to inform users of behaviours and states of affairs that might eventuate under different circumstances of the future (Moriarty, 2012).

Furthermore, tourism stakeholders had a tendency to relate their current and previous experience towards managing future situations. Firstly, interviewees mentioned that they are already seeing some of these changes and suggested it is just a matter of continuing their current management style. Reliance on existing or past behaviour routines, however, conceals the ability to respond to new situations and/or circumstances (Moscardo, 1999). Secondly, interviewees linked some of these futures to other previous markets such as Japanese and European travellers; the overarching impression was that they could manage Chinese tourists in the same manner. Failure to recognise alternative perspectives may hinder tourism stakeholders response to Chinese tourism situations (cf. van Winkle & Backman, 2009). Overall, tourism stakeholders' attitudes towards future management appear to be a manifestation of past trends and current experience. Nevertheless, tourism stakeholders provided some degree of individual and collective reflection on the different aspects (e.g. risks, opportunities, aspirations) arising from alternative future visions (cf. Bohensky et al., 2011).

In particular, the focus was to identify tourism stakeholders' attitude toward four optimism dimensions. The four dimensions included *reality acceptance*, *organisational survivability*, *tourism-industry condition*, and *visitation outlook*. Interviewees generally viewed *reality acceptance* and *organisational survivability* higher than *tourism-industry condition* and *visitation outlook*. Overall, this might indicate a somewhat pessimistic viewpoint as lower rankings of *tourism-industry condition* and *visitation outlook* imply negativity and unfavourable outcomes towards future Chinese tourism (cf. Chen, 2011). Higher scores of *organisational survivability*, on the other hand, indicate that tourism stakeholders believed they individually would be fine in different future states. This positive expectation might assist tourism stakeholders in being more adaptive to the complexities and adversities that arise from future Chinese tourism (Carver et al., 2010). Nevertheless, the identification (to some degree) of all four facets of optimism supports Peterson and Seligman's (2004) idea that different stances towards the future co-exist. Results of

the study show that future-orientation (e.g. reality acceptance) and future-mindedness (e.g. organisational survivability) are stronger dimensions than expectations (e.g. visitation outlook) and emotions (e.g. tourism-industry condition).

The degree of difference in the individual dimensions across scenarios, however, was less discernible. Tourism stakeholders showed the least variance in their attitudes towards *reality acceptance*. Therefore, the likelihood of one scenario eventuating was viewed in relatively the same level as any other occurring. On the other hand, *visitation outlook* was the attitude demonstrating the most variance. Consequently, it is believed that the number of future Chinese tourists will be significantly determined by the way that the world evolves. Thus, optimism can explain how individuals diverge in the manner they approach and predict future outcomes (Burke et al., 2000); however, this process might become distinctively more challenging when faced with alternative futures.

On the whole, scenario planning appeared to be an effective mechanism for exploring the uncertain world of future Chinese tourism. Individual narratives of four alternative futures demonstrated somewhat different perspectives of how combinations of highly influential and uncertain drivers (e.g. China government support and traveller experience) interact with more certain driving forces (e.g. increased desire for travel, growing middle class, improved accessibility through the internet (informed)) (cf. Bohensky et al., 2011).

CURRENT VERSUS FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

In comparing tourism stakeholders' perspectives towards current and future management of Chinese outbound tourism, two further points can be identified. Firstly, tourism stakeholders are demonstrating a reactive stance towards the management of Chinese tourism. Interviewees' superficial and limited understanding of the current situation, coupled with the difficulty in being able to situate themselves in different future scenarios, suggests tourism stakeholders continue to operate with a 'wait-and-see' mindset. Secondly, it appears tourism stakeholders may not potentially be ready for the future of Chinese outbound tourism. It is evident that interviewees had difficulty in describing some specific challenges of Chinese

visitation as well as differences among different tourists and different futures. The diverse and changing market nature of Chinese travellers, however, suggests that key cultural forces may be present which oscillate according to situation and individual (cf. Pearce et al., 2013).

STUDY CONCLUSIONS

In summary, this study contributed knowledge towards understanding the *managerial* aspect of Chinese tourists' experiences. This was explored through tourism stakeholders' perceptions about current and future management of Chinese outbound tourism to the Wet Tropics.

Clearly, there is a strong need to differentiate product offerings if tourism stakeholders are to successfully capture an increasingly distinct and sophisticated tourism market like the Chinese. All destinations are actively seeking Chinese outbound tourists due to the sheer volume of potential tourists and the already-demonstrated benefits and profitability of the market. One way tourism stakeholders can differentiate themselves is through sharing stories of the landscapes. Chinese people have strong connections to their home land (see Chapter one discussion), and are increasingly showing interest in the history of other lands whilst engaging in tourist related activities. Secondly, tourism stakeholders need to broaden their understanding of the market and become more proactive than reactive. There is potential in education based collaborations between academia and industry to better prepare tourism stakeholders for future challenges.

Chapter seven will provide a succinct account of the major conclusions learned about Chinese tourists' views, interests and understanding of different Australian landscapes. The purpose of this chapter will be to integrate the three guiding perspectives explored within the individual research projects. That is, the observational and describing stage (Chapter four), the assessing and explaining stage (Chapter five) and the managerial stage (Chapter six). Drawing together these three perspectives creates a holistic representation of the Wet Tropics experience for Chinese tourists and highlights directions for future work.

Chapter 7 Lessons learned, implications and the future: Chinese tourists in nature

CONFUCIUS SAYS...

“Learning without thought is labour lost; thought without learning is perilous”

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INTRODUCTION

The current thesis investigated Chinese tourists' views, interests and understanding of Australian landscapes. This was explored through three inter-linked research studies with the following aims: (1) **to investigate how Chinese (and other) tourists portray Australian landscapes**; (2) **to explore what Chinese tourists gain from their Wet Tropics experiences**; and (3) **to examine Wet Tropics' tourism stakeholders' perspectives towards managing Chinese tourists**. Chapter seven presents the conclusions to the thesis work and consists of four sections. Firstly, a synthesis of the research findings is presented. Secondly, the contributions of the research are offered. Thirdly, further perspectives arising from the research will be discussed. Finally, the thesis concludes with an overall viewpoint of an ideal Chinese world.

SYNTHESIS OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Three empirical studies were conducted to address the overall research question and identified opportunities as presented in Chapter two. More specifically, tailored use of etic and emic approaches, as well as quantitative and qualitative methods, allowed collection of a wide spectrum of research insights from multiple stakeholders. The following section provides a succinct summary of the major conclusions arising from the three empirical studies and how well the overall thesis question was addressed. Major research conclusions will be considered more fully as discussion points in the thesis contributions section detailed later in Chapter seven. Figure 7.1 illustrates the connections between the research question, thesis goals and empirical studies.

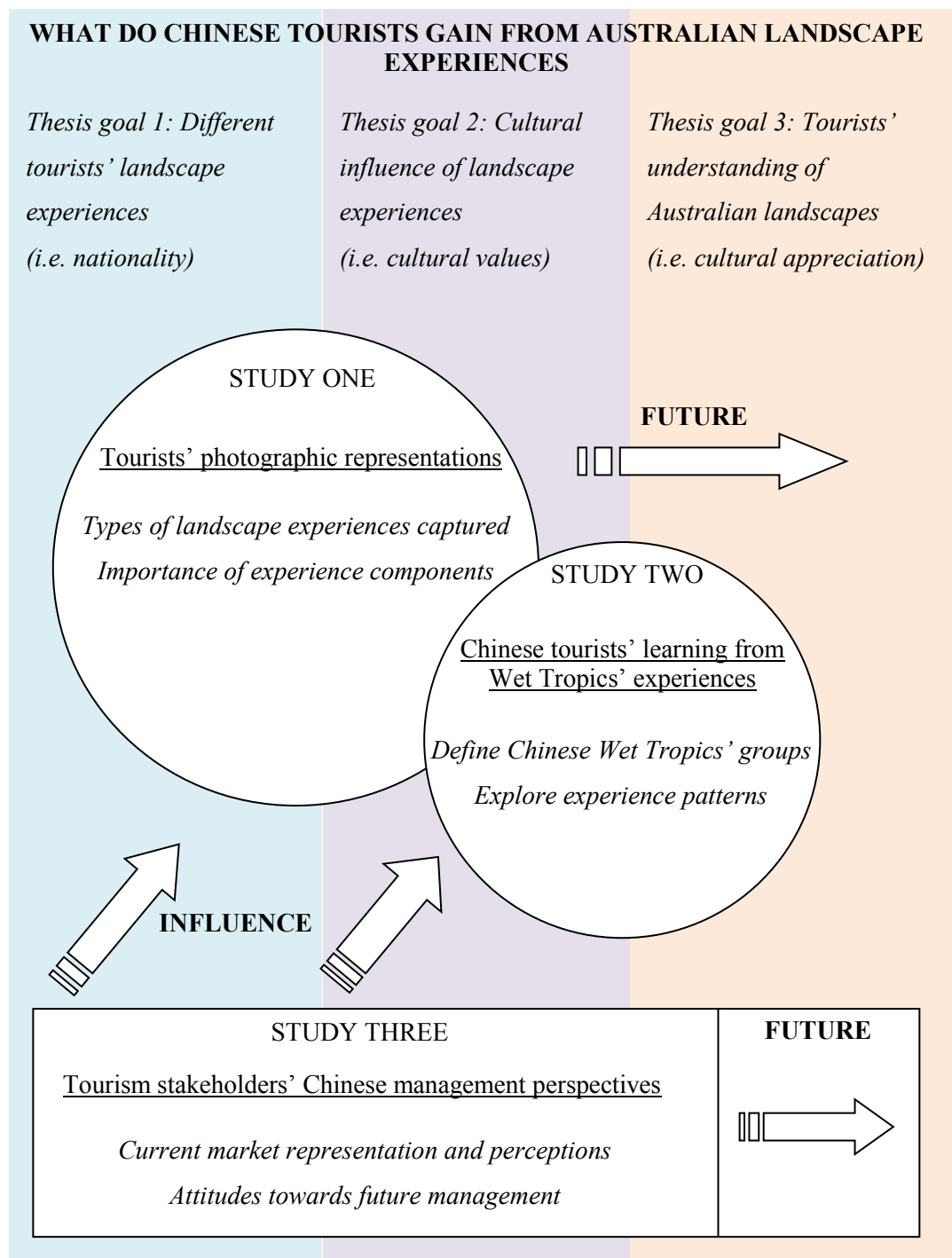


Figure 7.1. Connections between overall research question, aims and studies

PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATIONS: INTERGROUP DIFFERENCES

Firstly, this thesis sought to investigate how Chinese (and other) tourists portray Australian landscapes. Different tourists held different gazes of the Great Ocean Road, Red Centre and Wet Tropics. Experiences linked to the natural environment, additional setting features, tourism infrastructure and Australian lifestyles and

relationships were captured with varying levels of importance among Chinese, International and Australian tourists. In particular, landscape experiences were identified as *star attractions*, *low-lights* or not represented at all. These findings addressed thesis goal one – to identify different tourists’ landscape experiences.

In addition, some research insights can be provided towards thesis goal two – to explore the cultural influence on landscape experiences. Overall, tourists who were closest to the culture being experienced (i.e. Internationals and Australians) focussed on portraying key situational / contextual differences to everyday life, whereas tourists who were culturally-distant (i.e. Chinese) appreciated photographing the more mundane (ordinary) experiences. Specifically, Chinese tourists photographed Australian lifestyles at higher levels than Internationals and Australians.

WET TROPICS’ QUESTIONNAIRES: CHINESE TRAVEL LENS

Secondly, the current research sought to explore what Chinese tourists’ learn from their experiences in the Wet Tropics. Chinese tourists to the Wet Tropics were found to significantly differ according to a *tourist travel lens*⁹. *Novice Explorers* had limited prior knowledge and travel experience but were willing to learn, whereas *Established Travellers* had relatively similar levels of prior association and willingness to learn. Furthermore, different groups of Chinese tourists progressed through Wet Tropics’ experiences differently. In regards to *overall tourist experiences*, *Novice Explorers* benefitted more from comparative knowledge in contrast to *Established Travellers* who favoured emotional orientations. These findings primarily addressed thesis goal two, while identifying implications for thesis goal three – to identify tourists’ understanding of Australian landscapes. That is, Chinese tourists’ understanding of Australian landscapes might change according to their *tourist travel lens*.

⁹ Tourist travel lens was assessed as the combination of domestic-international familiarity, group-independent familiarity, nature-skill specialisation, existing knowledge and interest in learning.

CHINESE MANAGEMENT: THE RESPONSE

Thirdly, the thesis sought to understand Wet Tropics' tourism stakeholders' perspectives towards managing Chinese tourists. Tourism stakeholders believed more Chinese segments were arriving which showed different preferences and a diverse set of needs. Chinese travellers want deeper, richer experiences, demonstrating contrasts to earlier Chinese travellers and distinctiveness to prior Japanese tourists. Tourism stakeholders further commented that Chinese tourists were sophisticated, culturally aware and seeking cultural and/or behavioural understanding. Chinese tourists were described to have a curiosity to discover things that are different through three levels of experiential immersion: (1) active experiences; (2) feeling it; and (3) knowledge / appreciation. These conclusions addressed thesis goals one and two.

In addition, it was believed that future Chinese tourists' experiences will be determined through careful management practices. For *Authentic Avenues*, the consensus is that tourism experiences need to be improved and operators need to learn more about the Chinese market. *Friendly Forthcoming* and *Worried World* were considered not to be realistic due to Chinese tourists' level of travel experience and English competence. These conclusions have implications for thesis goal three; Chinese tourists' understanding might be improved through efforts of the hosts.

OVERALL RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

The thesis findings presented above can be further discussed in terms of overall contributions. Specifically, three areas are examined: (1) an updated appraisal of the literature; (2) theoretical perspectives; and (3) methodological innovations.

CHINESE OUTBOUND TOURISTS' EXPERIENCES – A LITERATURE UPDATE

Chinese outbound tourism has developed into a major global tourism source market. The diversification and emergence of new market segments has occurred at a faster pace than the likes of traditional European and North American outbound markets (Arlt, 2013). Thus, research attention is being guided away from simplistic reviews

of China outbound tourism which quote numbers and profile the market. Nowadays, increasing interest is directed towards understanding Chinese outbound tourists' experiences. Table 7.1 provides a summary of recent work linked to this theme.

Table 7.1. A selection of English literature on China outbound tourists' experience

Research themes	Representative work
Behaviour / attitude studies	Packer, Ballantyne & Hughes (2014)
Consumer preference studies	Sun, Zhang & Ryan (2015); Zeng & Go (2013)
Market profile studies	Wu & Pearce (2014a); Taunay (2013); Xiang (2013)
Market segmentation studies	Prayag, Cohen & Yan (2015); Chen, Bao & Huang (2014); Li, Meng, Uysal & Mihalik (2013)
Motivation studies	Wu & Pearce (2014b); Wu & Pearce (2014c)
On-site experience studies	Pearce, Wu & Chen (2015); Pearce, Wu, De Carlo & Rossi (2013)
Other studies	Sun, Ryan & Pan (2015); Chen, Lehto & Cai (2013); Mao & Zhang (2012); Ong & du Cros (2012)

Note. Literature included in Table 7.1 was published after the conceptualisation of this research.

In particular, Chinese tourists' experience of landscapes is one topic gaining increased attention albeit in its early days. Hence, an overarching contribution of this thesis is to provide some preliminary insight into this research topic, but the present achievements need to be set in this contemporary context. In Table 7.1, three recent studies have also explored Chinese tourists' experience of natural environments. Pearce et al. (2015) as well as Sun, Zhang and Ryan (2015) both utilised a form of photographic analysis to explore Chinese tourists' experiences. Pearce et al. (2015) categorised and interpreted Chinese tourists' online visual representation of Australia's Great Ocean Road by drawing on social representations theory and new work linked to mundane experience components. Sun et al. (2015a) employed a Q-sort photographic technique to identify landscape preferences of Chinese tourists who were visiting Queenstown in New Zealand. Study one in the current thesis is methodologically linked to these works and provides additional insights into Chinese tourists' landscape experiences as represented through travel photographs.

Additionally, Packer et al. (2014) investigated the similarities and differences between Chinese and Australian visitors' attitudes towards nature, animals and environmental issues. Links between Packer et al.'s (2014) work and this thesis are evident in studies one and two. Study one explored differences between Chinese and Australian tourists' online representations of landscape experiences, whereas study two investigated relationships among experience dimensions using respondent-completion questionnaires. Further evaluations between the achievements of the current research and these studies – as well as the wider literature documented in Chapter two – are discussed below.

THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The theoretical contributions of the research – according to different literature themes – are identified in Table 7.2. The following sections document in detail the contributions connected to each literature area respectively.

Table 7.2. Key contributions to the tourism literature

Literature	Contribution	Research method
Interpretation and information presentation	Chinese tourists place different levels of importance on particular types of information in Australia landscape experiences	Tourist questionnaire Photographic representations
	Chinese tourists' travel lens can influence the effectiveness of interpretation when experiencing Australia's Wet Tropics	Stakeholder interviews
Mundane authenticity	Tourists from distant cultures (i.e. Chinese) take more notice of the simple, everyday events and contacts associated with others (cf. Pearce, 2011) while exploring Australian landscapes	Stakeholder interviews Photographic representations
Mindfulness-mindlessness	Degree of mindfulness and its influence on other experience dimensions in Australian Wet Tropics' experiences changes according to	Tourist questionnaire
		Stakeholder interviews

	tourist travel lens	
	Wet Tropics' managers' perspectives towards current and future actions display both mindful and mindless states of thinking	
Tourist gaze	Tourists from different cultures (i.e. Chinese, International and Australian) gaze differently on Australian landscapes overall, and in terms of level of emphasis and focal points	Photographic representations Tourist questionnaire

Interpretation and information presentation

The first research contribution concerning information presentation is that tourists place different amounts of importance on various informational aspects in Australian landscape experiences. Chinese tourists' self-reported experiences of the Wet Tropics revealed that as travel experience increases, interest in learning slightly decreases. *Novice Explorers* indicated higher interest to learn than their current degree of familiarity with nature-based activities whilst *Established Travellers* expressed higher familiarity with nature than an interest to learn. In addition, interpretation level was the biggest difference (among experience dimensions) noted between Chinese Wet Tropics' groups (mean difference = 1.14; *Established Travellers* higher \bar{x} = 5.31).

Photographic analysis also revealed that tourists place some emphasis on capturing informational aspects linked to Australian landscape experiences. Chinese, Australian and International tourists posted a selection of images which contained signs, maps and prices among other informational items. Signs, in particular, had an important role in tourists' photographic representations. This finding opposes previous work (e.g. Caton & Santos, 2008; Markwell, 1997) which have identified relatively few photographs showing signs. In the present study, photographs of signs tended to depict novel rather than informative experiences. One example from the Wet Tropics includes a warning sign that displays a vertical 'before' cassowary and a horizontal 'after' cassowary. 'Novel' signs such as these might interest tourists as they may not have encountered this before. On the other hand, Sun et al. (2015a) suggest that a sign of a penguin crossing the road had a meaning as a significant

attraction, one unlikely to be noted as such by local residents. This ‘warning’ sign evoked high levels of recognition as Chinese tourists had participated in penguin experiences during their Australian travel and understood its link to animal protection.

Place names and location information also featured in tourists’ photographs of signs. The popularity of capturing such information may be linked to its capacity to assist tourists’ recall of the increasingly larger number of destinations visited throughout one holiday. Interestingly, signs were identified as a star attraction for different tourists across different landscapes. Chinese visitors captured Red Centre signs at high levels, as did Internationals for the Great Ocean Road and Australians for the Wet Tropics. Information preferences may therefore oscillate according to the situation tourists find themselves in. For Chinese tourists, in particular, Packer et al. (2014) suggest that interpretation needs to take into account the Chinese philosophical orientation towards nature, animals and the environment.

Furthermore, Wet Tropics’ tourism stakeholders commented about differences across the Chinese market regarding English skill levels and Mandarin information provision. Stakeholders believed that group segments generally still required Chinese information provision while other more independent travellers are now “quite comfortable in their surrounds”. The rise of the independent Chinese traveller – who is more educated, travel-aware and can speak English – is attracting increasing academic attention (see Arlt, 2013; Zeng & Go, 2013). Furthermore, interview conversations highlighted that Chinese tourists are unaware of Australian customs which could be attributed to language barriers and lack of information provision. Tourism stakeholders felt that more signage (and increased management attention) may be needed regarding several examples of Australian etiquette including advocating responsible smoking practice (e.g. smoking in designated areas, placing cigarette butts in the bins provided) and explaining other safety issues (e.g. no glassware around pools, correct snorkelling procedures).

Secondly, in regards to contributions towards the interpretation literature, the Chinese *tourists’ travel lens* shaped the effectiveness of interpretation towards their overall Wet Tropics’ experience. For *Novice Explorers*, interpretation was significantly linked to degree of involvement (mindfulness), satisfaction with

tangible aspects (instrumental-expressive qualities) and experiential outcomes in terms of comparative knowledge and emotional orientation. On the other hand, for *Established Travellers*, significant links were identified between interpretation and mindfulness, instrumental-expressive qualities and economic value. Information therefore appears to contribute more towards experiential reflection for travellers with less experience but high interest to learn, and satisfaction ratings for travellers with relatively equal amounts of prior experience and interest to learn.

Mundane authenticity

The thesis contribution towards the concept of mundane authenticity includes a consideration of cultural distance. The key finding is that tourists from China, a culturally distant country to Australia, desire to experience ordinary activities throughout their travels in Australian landscapes. In particular, Chinese tourists are seeking to experience ‘the different life’ during their visits to Australia. Tourism stakeholders’ perception about current Chinese tourists to the Wet Tropics is that they enjoy experiencing the contrasting differences between Australia and China. In particular, experiences linked to weather, food and daily life which demonstrate divergences from Chinese life are desired. Tourism stakeholders also highlighted that Chinese tourists are seeking a cultural or contextual appreciation from their experiences in the Wet Tropics. Specifically, Chinese tourists yearn for lifestyle immersion and destination understanding. This type of tourist is similar to Chen, Bao and Huang’s (2014) “destination experiences” group, who engaged in travel primarily to understand the destination’s culture, history and society, to communicate with the locals and to experience the local lifestyle.

In addition, analysis of tourists’ travel blog photographs further portrayed an interest in the Australian way of living. More specifically, percentage differences noted in Table 4.4 revealed that tourists from more distant cultures (i.e. Chinese) place more emphasis on capturing the mundane activities compared to more ‘familiar’ (i.e. International) and local (i.e. Australian) tourists. Robinson and Picard (2009) suggested that “the power of a photograph is amplified by the very distance between the place of its capture and the tourists’ home” (p.21). Indeed, understanding mundane authenticity requires less effort on the tourist’s behalf and

can serve as genuine souvenirs of the tourist experience (Pearce et al., 2015). Li et al.'s (2013) study about understanding China's long-haul outbound travel market identified a similar tourist group called "life-seeing experience / culture explorers". These tourists desire unique experiential and cultural exploration through observing people, feeling the destination's atmosphere and experiencing something new and fresh.

Overall, Chinese tourists want to experience countries which are different, and in doing so, obtain a better understanding of foreign cultures (Zeng & Go, 2013). In this thesis, Chinese tourists' understanding of the mundane aspects of Australian culture was shaped through sensory components, lifestyle observation and experiential immersion.

Mindfulness (mindlessness)

The first thesis contribution towards the mindfulness literature is that the degree of mindfulness in Australia's Wet Tropics changes according to Chinese *tourists' travel lens*. For *Novice Explorers* – who reported a medium level of having their curiosity provoked (mindfulness $\bar{x} = 4.33$) – mindfulness had the highest significant influence on other experience dimensions. In particular, mindfulness was linked to sensory components of the experience (visitor experience), ratings of destination atmosphere (intangibles), and overall knowledge acquisition (comparative knowledge). *Established Travellers*, on the contrary, reported a high level of mindfulness ($\bar{x} = 5.14$) with significant links identified between mindfulness and visitor experience, instrumental-expressive qualities, intangibles, comparative knowledge and emotional orientation. Therefore, a tourist's capacity to respond to and actively absorb experiences (e.g. degree of mindfulness) influences somewhat select dimensions for early travellers and almost all experiences for already-committed travellers.

A second contribution of this research is that Australian Wet Tropics' hosts can simultaneously portray both mindful and mindless states towards different stages of visitor management. With respect to current management perspectives, tourism stakeholder interview discussions highlighted a clear recognition that the Chinese market is changing with new visitor segments emerging. Consequently, tourism

stakeholders described a need for continuous efforts on both the host's and tourist's behalf to learn and understand.

On the same note, however, tourism stakeholders exhibited a degree of mindlessness in that they were astonished by the Chinese market's rapid evolution. Recent work is emerging which clearly portrays the changing nature of the Chinese market (see Arlt, 2013) including empirical work (see Pearce et al., 2013). Tourism stakeholders struggled to identify new ways to cater to different and distinct Chinese markets. Furthermore, interview participants had difficulty in identifying risks, problems and outcomes associated with Chinese tourism.

Additionally, Wet Tropics' tourism stakeholders appear to be behaving reactively towards current Chinese tourism. There was a tendency by tourism stakeholders to describe Chinese tourists as 'like any other tourist' where management perspectives were being shaped by prior experience with other markets. Moreover, tourism stakeholders could only describe regional events that might be shaping Chinese tourism. Wider macro events were rarely identified in interview discussions. Furthermore, while some tourism stakeholders recognised a need to provide new experiences, only generic insight was provided. The challenge in identifying strategic directions might be linked to the issue of not fully understanding (and appreciating) current Chinese markets.

For future management attitudes, tourism stakeholders again exhibited mindful and mindless states. Overall, tourism stakeholders reflected on the four scenarios in a general sense which indicates a mindless state. Specifically, five shared perspectives were identified through individual discussion on each of the different scenarios. In addition, the generic comments provided from some interview participants made it difficult to distinguish differences among several levels of optimism. Overall, tourism stakeholders illustrated future management perspectives through current experience practices.

In comparison, emerging themes linked to each scenario identified some degree of mindfulness. Specifically, tourism stakeholders identified slightly different management styles and distinctiveness in the experience offerings for individual scenarios. These perspectives which identify differences among the scenarios link

closely to the picture painted by the researcher. Therefore, interview stakeholders demonstrated general agreement with the scenarios, and struggled to critically process the situation for themselves.

Tourist gaze

The major contribution towards the tourist gaze literature is that tourists from different cultures gaze differently upon Australian landscapes. On a broad scale, Chinese, International and Australian tourists' overall photographic representations significantly differed across all landscapes and experience categories (see Table 4.5). Saarinen (2004, p.440) suggests that landscapes are not readily 'out there'; instead, what is seen and valued are 'cultural projections' individually shaped through our and others' constructions. Further analyses of the individual experience components according to the degree of photographic emphasis identified special landscape interests of Chinese, International and Australian tourists (see Chapter four). Specifically, 49 *star attractions* were identified across the Great Ocean Road, Red Centre and Wet Tropics experiences (Chinese: 19, International: 15, Australian: 15). The collective landscape experience specialities of the individual tourist markets portray a specific Chinese versus *western* gaze towards Australian landscapes.

In particular, Chinese tourists' Australian landscape photographic representations reflected a collective and/or spectatorial gaze. For a collective gaze, focus is directed towards communal activities and shared encounters (Urry, 1992), where the presence of people gives atmosphere to the experience of the place (Crawshaw & Urry, 1997). Chinese tourists' posted more photographs (than Australians and Internationals) of themselves, members from their travel party, and other *western* and/or Asian tourists. The capture of themselves and other travelling companions serves as proof that they have visited these iconic destinations and participated in Australian experiences. By portraying other tourists, particularly *western* people (together with themselves), Chinese tourists may be representing their relationships with Australian people, places and culture (cf. Edensor, 2000) in order to narrate a story of their Australian experience (cf. Pan et al., 2014; Belk & Yeh, 2011).

With respect to a spectatorial gaze, emphasis is attributed towards communal activities, brief encounters and glancing at and collecting different signs (Urry, 1992). As previously discussed, elements of Australian lifestyle and Aboriginal culture were represented more by Chinese tourists, portraying an emphasis in part on experiencing the ‘mundane or distinctive Australian life’. In addition, the driving lifestyle was another highlight for Chinese tourists. Overall, these photographic specialities reinforces that Chinese tourists desire to experience the western life, demonstrating a spectatorial gaze.

On the contrary, Australians’ and Internationals’ overall photographic representations portrayed a romantic gaze. A romantic gaze is characterised by solitary, sustained immersion and gaze involving vision, awe and aura (Urry, 1992), where the presence of other people detract from the quality of the experience (Crawshaw & Urry, 1997). Landscape experiences linked to the natural environment and additional setting features were well represented in Australians’ and Internationals’ travel blogs. These features generally represent iconic and unique elements (natural and man-made) of the individual landscapes. Therefore, Australians and Internationals may have developed some of the cultural capital required when viewing such landscapes due to previous encounters with similar ones (cf. Urry, 1992). Furthermore, Australians and Internationals did not place much importance on portraying people. Occasionally, photographs of themselves or of the travel group would appear; however images of other tourists (westerners, Asians or a combination) were much less frequent.

Furthermore, differences in tourist gazes were evident across different photographic styles or ‘framing’ of landscape experiences. Overall, Chinese tourists preferred to capture close-up shots which centre around particular features while Internationals and Australians portrayed other features / background settings. The Chinese “collective/spectatorial” – western “romantic” gaze distinction above suggests that some tourists actively position themselves to achieve the best view while others take time to reframe pictures without people (Robinson & Picard, 2009). Furthermore, tourists are provided a degree of control in selecting particular images (Markwell, 1997) where the ‘gaze’ behaviour is disrupted through the act of using technology (Pearce, 2011).

Exploration of Chinese tourists' experiences of the Wet Tropics, furthermore, revealed somewhat different gazes between members of the same culture. Two distinct tourist clusters were recognised according to a *tourist travel lens*. *Novice Explorers* reported medium levels of all experience dimensions with the exception of comparative knowledge which was high. *Established Travellers* appear to gaze on all experience dimensions in higher levels than their counterparts (i.e. *Novice Explorers*). Consequently, responding to and interpreting nature appears to be something that is learned, which may vary not only across societies but between members of different social groups (Urry, 1995). In addition, Chinese *tourists' travel lens* impacted the effect of individual experience dimensions in shaping the *overall tourist experience*. *Novice Explorers* compared to *Established Travellers* displayed reversed ordering of individual dimensions. For example, in terms of satisfaction, tourists with less familiarity with nature but a willingness to learn (e.g. *Novice Explorers*) were more satisfied with value for money (economic value) than intangibles (instrumental-expressive qualities), compared to tourists who had relatively similar nature-based familiarity and interest in learning (e.g. *Established Travellers*) who rated intangibles higher than economic value. In summary, Chinese tourists visualise and appreciate Australia's Wet Tropics through distinctive cultural lens (cf. Pearce et al., 2013).

METHODOLOGICAL AND ANALYTICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

Insights from the empirical research can also be discussed in terms of methodological approaches. Specifically, supplementary directions for developing and implementing ways to analyse tourist experiences were discovered. Firstly, travel blogs can effectively delineate differences in tourist experiences. Tourist travel blogs have received modest attention from the research community (Robinson & Picard, 2009). Frequency analysis of the posted images revealed a rich account of the numerous components of tourist experience (Pan et al., 2007). Furthermore, study one appropriately identified what visual themes bloggers consider important (Wenger, 2008) through mean calculations and the subsequent identification of *star attractions* and *low-lights*.

Secondly, patterns between experience dimensions were successfully explored through a detailed self-completion questionnaire. Findings from the Wet Tropics' experience identified two distinct Chinese groups and demonstrated how tourists differed in both early and later stages of the experience. In particular, the combination of correlation, descriptive statistics and mean difference analysis represented an insightful approach to map patterns among experience dimensions when small sample sizes are encountered.

Lastly, in-depth, semi-structured interview conversations with tourism stakeholders simultaneously gathered current and future perspectives towards Chinese tourism management. Although tourism stakeholders had difficulty generating conversations around some topics, many similar and contrasting themes were identified within the interview data. In particular, the use of scenario planning appears to be appropriately suited for harnessing future perspectives. Conversational topics highlighted overarching shared ideas as well as scenario-specific viewpoints.

Furthermore, the current research suggests value in a new segmentation approach – the *tourist travel lens*. In this study, the *tourist travel lens* was conceptualised as the individual's degree of travel experience, level of existing knowledge about the destination and interest to learn. These characteristics were successfully utilised to profile Chinese market segments, revealing the unique behaviours that are shaping individual tourists (Cai et al., 2008). For example, interest to learn changed according to the level of travel experience of Chinese tourists. *Established Travellers* reported similarly high levels of travel experience and interest to learn while *Novice Explorers* recorded a substantially higher level of interest to learn compared to their current experience. Hua and Yoo (2011) found, on the other hand, that the more exposed Chinese tourists are to the outside world, the more interested they are in exploring that world. Furthermore, McIntyre and Prigram's (1992) idea of recreation specialisation appears to be a useful concept to identify the many emerging Chinese tourist markets. Nature-skill familiarisation was the highest or second highest recorded level among the five *tourist travel lens* variables for *Novice Explorers* and *Established Travellers*. Level of domestic-international familiarity and group-independent familiarity, however, were substantially different between the two Chinese markets.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR MANAGERS

With respect to a more industry-practitioner focus, some findings with direct potential application can be identified. The tourists' photographic representations revealed many distinct market commonalities and differences which suggests different points of interest. Specifically, tourists from more distant cultures seem to enjoy all aspects of Australian settings including the mundane or distinctive Australian life, while travellers from cultures similar to that observed prefer unique features they may not have encountered.

Presenters of information also need to consider personalising content for different Chinese tourists. Self-reported experiences of Chinese tourists in the Wet Tropics suggested that interpretation plays different roles according to a *tourist's travel lens*. In particular, for developing tourists, interpretation (and mindfulness) has a more important role towards the *overall tourist experience*, whereas for already-established tourists, in-depth involvement contributes more towards the *overall tourist experience*.

Additionally, tourism stakeholders may be able to present creative and differentiated products to cater to the many emerging Chinese tourist segments. Interview discussions concerning current management perspectives highlighted the unique characteristics and subtleties of the Chinese market, as well as the distinctiveness to other markets and previous Chinese tourists. Recent work (e.g. Arlt, 2013; Pearce et al., 2013) is starting to delineate emerging Chinese segments, which supports tourism stakeholders' views and reinforces the necessity for a differentiated and possibly targeted approach.

Furthermore, tourism stakeholders might benefit from being proactive towards – and broadening their understanding of – the Chinese outbound market. Conversational analysis revealed that Wet Tropics' tourism stakeholders generally hold a limited and potentially naïve representation of Chinese tourism. Specifically, interview participants had difficulty in describing ways to differentiate product offerings albeit a common recognition to provide new experiences. Similarly, the sheer surprise about the Chinese market's rapid evolution suggests tourism stakeholders are currently not familiar with wider market trends (as reported in academic circles); instead, tourism stakeholders exhibit a reactive stance informed by

industry communications. The potential for researcher-manager cooperation in this study of Chinese tourist space is an opportunity for both parties.

RESEARCH ORIENTED IMPLICATIONS

Researchers must recognise how personal values, attitudes, beliefs and experiences might influence data collection and ultimately shape research interpretations (cf. Goodson & Phillimore, 2004, p.33). The tailored research approach in this thesis (as documented in Chapter three) allowed increased flexibility to assess a difficult, novel and understudied topic while catering to the researcher's creativity and diverse thinking style. In particular, the researcher's preference for a-priori clustering to identify patterns among tourists' experiences appeared to be intuitive in the current work. Findings from the empirical research supported existing studies as well as suggested new insights worthy of further consideration.

Importantly, the current thesis employed a western-oriented research approach to understand an eastern phenomenon. Specifically, the research was conceptualised by a young *western* academic, drawing on arguably western-based existing research. As previously recognised, a full emic perspective could not be achieved in the current thesis. Consequently, the initial emic-oriented study on tourists' photographic representations was supported by a researcher-driven grouping of Wet Tropics experiences for different Chinese tourists (etic perspective), and stakeholder-reported experiences of Chinese tourism management in the Wet Tropics (emic approach). This emic-etic combination allowed input from a diversity of tourism stakeholders to support / dispute the western-research orientation. Furthermore, the researcher's "Chinese experience" (see Chapter one) and personal acquaintance with Australian landscapes assisted research interpretations.

LIMITATIONS AND THE FUTURE

Challenges are inevitable in the conduct of research projects. This section describes the thesis limitations. In particular, several mini research projects are identified that draw on the limitations and new opportunities arising from the current research.

Moreover, the researcher's capacity to recognise (and respond to) external factors which may have had an influence on data collection / research outputs is important.

Overall, three events / initiatives forced slight adaption of the study plan. Firstly, changes in aviation patterns from several Chinese airline companies delayed data collection for study two. In August 2013, China Eastern announced a temporary suspension of their Shanghai-Cairns direct flight until November 1st 2013. The suspension was due to low profit margins of this flight (Ying, 2013). China Southern also revealed plans to increase flights into Australia. A daily direct flight between Guangzhou and Brisbane was introduced from November 21st 2013 (The Cairns Post, 2013). In addition, Guangzhou-Sydney services were upgraded to an A380 aircraft from October 27th 2013, increasing capacity into Australia by 41 per cent (Tourism Australia, 2013c). Consequently, data collection for study two was delayed until April 2014 with subsequent collection during July-October 2014 (the summer break and Golden Week travel period). Secondly, Chinese investors are drafting a proposal to construct a mega-resort in Yorkey's Knob, Cairns region. This development, currently called Aquis, featured predominately in tourism stakeholders' conversations about managing Chinese tourism (study three), potentially concealing other perspectives. Thirdly, the Australian Tourism Exchange staged in Cairns during June 2014 also impacted study three. Overall, tourism stakeholders' participation in the Australian Tourism Exchange made it challenging to schedule interviews. A reduced sample size was eventually decided upon due to resource constraints; however, the 18 interviews conducted suggested saturation of concepts.

With respect to limitations, the first set resulted from sampling issues. Firstly, photographic representations data were sourced from one English site (travelblog.org) and two Chinese sites (Sina.com and Qyer.com). Inevitably, this might exclude different perspectives from users of other sites. The three travel blog platforms, nevertheless, are reported as popular in the literature and were selected after an intensive procedure. Secondly, questionnaires about Chinese tourists' Wet Tropics' experience were collected from a smaller than desired number of respondents. This small sample size might be attributed to less Chinese travellers to the Wet Tropics region overall as well as the more pressing issue in that accessing

the Chinese market still remains a challenge for *western* researchers. Location specific analysis, however, allowed the researcher to explore specific experiences appropriate to the region. Thirdly, interview conversations with tourism stakeholders also identified a geographic-specific focus. That is, majority of the participants were based out of Cairns – the major gateway to the Wet Tropics. A variety of tourism stakeholders were involved in the study, where some indicated growing visitation from the Chinese market suggesting potential study candidates in future work. Overall, issues with sampling restricted the generalisability of the results. Therefore, future work could consider sampling additional (other) landscapes, employing different sampling approaches or extending data collection.

A second set of shortfalls is linked to methodological approaches and individual research methods. Firstly, visual content analysis was conducted in study one. This researcher-driven approach of categorising tourists' experiences might produce some subjectivity; however, it also allows for reliable comparisons of experiences across different tourist markets and landscapes. Secondly, self-completion questionnaires implemented in study two were designed according to the principles of Structural Equation Modelling. Adaption of data analytical procedures (due to small sample size) revealed interesting patterns among experience dimensions which suggested a modest but statistically appropriate alternative. Thirdly, tourism stakeholder interviews were investigated using textual content analysis. Similar to study one, the researcher's assignment of data to categories resulted in potential bias or subjectivity. Frequency counts were, however, conducted to illustrate the degree of agreement. Furthermore, while the use of scenarios to identify future management perspectives proved to be a time-consuming process (where some respondents did not participate), it allowed for free-elicitation and unsolicited responses. Altogether, other methodological approaches and research methods such as focus groups, tourist interviews or observation might supplement the current work with more in-depth, emic and voluntary responses.

A final set of weaknesses is associated with the data collected for the three empirical studies. Firstly, studies one and two resulted in non-normally distributed data that had limited demographics as well as missing data. Non-parametric tests were appropriate for tourists' photographic representations (study one) as the focus

was to identify themes (e.g. categorise data) and to investigate the level of representation across tourist markets (e.g. percentage levels of data through chi-square analysis). For study two, non-parametric testing provided a modest but statistical robust alternative. Similarly, interviews with tourism stakeholders resulted in data that was limited in scope and depth. Commonalities in interviewees' responses made it challenging to distinguish groups of respondents. Thus, an extensive and lengthy qualitative reporting of data was presented in Chapter six. Despite these limitations, findings from the thesis support existing research.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

One useful way in determining future projects is to consider study weaknesses alongside of research strengths to improve upon current work and develop more comprehensive studies. Thus, the purpose of this section is to draw together the above challenges to describe future research projects in three different avenues: (1) **expand** on the current research; (2) explore the current findings in **more depth**; (3) conduct similar research through **new methods**.

Looking at different worlds (expand current research)

Empirical work from the three studies provided more directed analyses of select Australian landscape experiences. Findings indicate that different groups of Chinese tourists progress through Wet Tropics' experiences differently. Furthermore, Australians compared to other *westerners* and also Chinese tourists portrayed landscape experiences differently. Consequently, this research could be replicated in several other geographic and social-cultural settings. One recommendation is to expand research on how individual tourist markets gaze upon different landscapes. Further Australian landscape experiences could be explored to understand what Chinese tourists gain from different regional experiences as well as for Australian landscapes collectively. A different application might be to conduct a comparison between how Chinese tourists' experience landscapes 'at home' (e.g. China) compared to those encountered while 'away' (e.g. Australia). Alternatively, new research could reverse the current thesis focus and explore the *westerners'* gaze of

selected Asian landscapes. For example, how do Australian tourists experience Chinese landscapes.

Mapping patterns of landscape experiences (explore in more depth)

Overall, the thesis contributed more insights into the relatively unexplored phenomenon of how Chinese tourists experience Australian landscapes. Empirical work in the three studies identified (1) what landscape experience dimensions are important, (3) how different experience dimensions contribute towards the *overall tourist experience* and (c) how tourism stakeholders perceive Chinese tourists' experiences. These findings typically describe the 'what' but necessarily don't explain the 'why'. Therefore, different research directions could consider exploring the findings presented in more depth. One potential avenue could be a deeper analysis of the individual elements that contribute to tourists' landscape experiences. Visual analysis of travel blogs might be supplemented by textual analysis to further reveal underlying patterns or motives in tourists' landscape experiences. Another research path might be to explore the features of individual experience dimensions. For example, how do different types, styles and delivery of interpretive material play different roles in tourists' landscape experiences.

Living landscape experiences (research through new methods)

Travel blogs, tourist questionnaires and stakeholder interviews were employed in the current thesis. Etic and emic perspectives as well as qualitative and quantitative approaches were explored in order to provide an overarching understanding of Chinese tourists' experiences of Australian landscapes. Unavoidably, the three empirical studies have some level of researcher subjectivity and influence. Current findings could be embellished with additional research conducted through alternative methods. In particular, approaches which explore the individuals' direct and on-site responses could be rewarding. One possibility is to observe or interview tourists who are taking photographs, participating in experiences or visiting the destination. In addition, focus groups with attraction operators might provide a more specific analysis of Chinese tourists' experiences. Experimental research might also shed

insight into how different segments of tourist markets differ in landscape experiences. For example, developing distinct stories based on different landscapes features (e.g. history, ecological significance, fauna, flora) and implementing them across tours with different groups might highlight intra-market preferences for different experience aspects.

AN IDEAL CHINESE WORLD

Australia is a land of many diverse environments that tourists travel the world to gaze upon. Iconic destinations like Uluru (Northern Territory), the Great Ocean Road (Victoria) and Sydney Harbour Bridge and Opera House (New South Wales) no longer command tourists' sole attention albeit still holding much importance. China outbound tourists – now recognised as Australia's second largest tourism market – increasingly seek nature-based experiences. The Chinese landscape experience story documented above illustrated how Chinese tourists differ to *western* counterparts as well as across different segments of the market, and described the increasing sophistication of Chinese travellers (characteristically and experientially). In particular, Chinese tourists yearn to immerse in blue skies, green lands and the different life. Portrayal of these Australian differences to Chinese life need creative embedding in tourism offerings. Environmental immersion with Australian storytelling and connections to host communities creates an ideal Chinese world.

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APPENDIX 4.1. CODEBOOK EXPLANATION

Majority of the variables explored in the photographic representations work were coded according to whether there were photographs present (code = 1) or not (code = 0). Other variables were coded according to the appropriate options. The table below demonstrates the overall coding given to the three landscapes and four experience categories explored.

Classifying codes for photographic representation analysis

Code (label) ^a	Experience category
GNE	Great Ocean Road natural environment
GALR	Great Ocean Road Australian lifestyles and relationships
GASF	Great Ocean Road additional setting features
GTI	Great Ocean Road tourism infrastructure
RNE	Red Centre natural environment
RALR	Red Centre Australian lifestyles and relationships
RASF	Red Centre additional setting features
RTI	Red Centre tourism infrastructure
WTNE	Wet Tropics natural environment
WTALR	Wet Tropics Australian lifestyles and relationships
WTASF	Wet Tropics additional setting features
WTTI	Wet Tropics tourism infrastructure

^aThis coding represents whether the experience was photographed or not. Additional coding – as to how many times the experience was photographed – was coded with a small a on the end, for example, GNE1a represented how many times sunrise/sunset shots of the 12 Apostles were photographed.

The code book is not presented here; however, all variables are displayed in the frequency analysis presented in Appendix 4.4. Instead, some explanatory notes about the four experience categories, the individual variables and justifications as to why variables are included under the respective experience category, are offered.

Natural environment experience all aspects that portrayed the geological and physical features of the destination. This category represented the natural

resources and experiences that are connected to enjoying them. Twenty-four variables across the three landscapes were identified, including:

Description of natural environment variables

Code	Variable description and/or explanation
GNE1, GNE2, GNE3, GNE4, GNE5, RNE1, RNE2, RNE3, RNE4, RNE5	Iconic landmarks: well recognised geological features. For example, the Twelve Apostles, Loch Ard George and London Bridge (Great Ocean Road), and Uluru, Kings Canyon and Kata Tjuta (Red Centre). Three separate variables were developed for the Twelve Apostles and Uluru to represent the diversity of experiences: (1) sunrise-sunset views; (2) views from different angles/air/ground; and (3) distance/close-up views
GNE6, GNE9, WTNE2, WTNE3	Water: different bodies of water depending on the particular landscape. For example, coastline and surfs/oceans (Great Ocean Road), and lakes/rivers and waterfalls (Wet Tropics)
GNE11, RNE9, WTNE1, WTNE5	Vegetation: different types of flora including flowers, plants and trees. Additional sub-variables were included to represent if tourists took photographs of multiple types of vegetation, for example, photographs of flowers and plants. In addition, images of rainforest were categorised separately in the Wet Tropics landscape to distinguish between tourists who might have visited botanic gardens or other natural areas, compared to those specifically visiting the rainforest.
GNE7, RNE8	Personalised landscape: This variable was included as an attempt to portray whether tourists actively interact with the landscape; that is, do they position themselves strategically in the frame. Some examples of <i>personalised landscapes</i> include tourists holding up mountains or tourists walking on water. In addition, landscapes which were described by tourists as particular shapes e.g. dog, elephant were coded as this variable.
GNE8	Beach: Sand is the main element of the photograph, albeit there may be some presence of water and/or other vegetation. Includes coastal views and images taken on-site.
GNE10	Farms: Rural and/or commercial landscapes where farming practices are evident e.g. crops, herds of cattle, windmill.
RNE6	Burrow/dropping: Caves, crevices and other dug-out cavities that are stand alone and/or part of a mountain/rock face.
RNE7	Colourful horizon: Stark contrasts in the colours of the landscape; this includes the sky alone and/or the sky against other natural features. Red Centre was the only landscape coded for this variable

as it is believed to represent a special experience in that setting.

WTNE4	City outline/village view: Distant view of a township e.g. photograph captured from a lookout. This variable was included in the natural environment category because the surrounding landscape was a feature, and, in general, people have to encounter nature in order to be presented with an opportunity to photograph this aspect.
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Australian lifestyle and relationships included aspects of Australian living and human interactions. That is, photographs which depicted people and everyday activities typical to life in Australia. For this category, the same 10 variables were measured across all three landscapes, including:

Description of Australian lifestyle and relationship variables

Code	Variable description and/or explanation
GALR1, RALR1, WTALR1	Australian lifestyle 1: People walking dogs in public.
GALR2, RALR2, WTALR2	Australian lifestyle 2: Western children playing on playgrounds, in parks or in any other social setting.
GALR3, RALR3, WTALR3	Australian lifestyle 3: Activities that represented Australian leisurely lifestyle including barbeques, playing sports on the beach, bicycle riding.
GALR4, RALR4, WTALR4	Australian lifestyle 4: Aspects linked to the driving lifestyle in Australia including driving on roads lined with nature corridors / coastline, and typical Australian cars e.g. utes, four-wheel-drives.
GALR5, RALR5, WTALR5	Australian lifestyle 5: All other lifestyles including pubs, watching sporting events, surfing, fishing, surf life saving.
GALR6, RALR6, WTALR6	Individuals from travel party: One member with / without a scenic background (or photograph of self if travelling solo).
GALR7, RALR7, WTALR7	Blogger's travel group: More than one member of the travel group with / without a scenic background.
GALR8, RALR8, WTALR8	Asian and Westerners: At least one Asian and one Western person with / without a scenic background.

GALR9, RALR9, WTALR9	Westerners: At least one Western person with / without a scenic background.
GALR10, RALR10, WTALR10	Western children: At least one Western child, not participating in a leisurely activity e.g. natural stance.

Additional setting features contained aspects and/or activities that are unique to that setting. Whilst these activities might be available in other settings, they were believed to be iconic or must-do activities in that particular landscape environment. Altogether, 20 unique experiences were identified, including:

Description of additional setting features variables

Code	Variable description and/or explanation
GASF1, RASF1, WTASF1	Wild animals: All types of animals that were in a non-captive setting. Captive animals (e.g. aquariums, zoos) were not coded for because these facilities are not available in the studied landscape areas.
GASF2, RASF2, WTASF2	Interaction with animals: Any type of physical connection between the tourist and an animal e.g. holding, patting, standing next to.
GASF3, RASF3, WTASF3	Aboriginal culture: All aspects of Indigenous culture including rock art, boomerang throwing, hunting, didgeridoo.
GASF4, RASF4	Driving / walking experience: Diving and/or walking activities that are special to the area e.g. driving through the desert, walking along rock face (Red Centre), and walking along the coast (Wet Tropics).
GASF5, RASF5	Helicopter / camel experience and camel (RC) experience: All activities / experiences that are representative of a camel ride (Red Centre only) or helicopter flight. For example, aerial views of the landscape, camels with harnesses.
GASF6	Lighthouse: Distant and/or close ups of lighthouses. Includes photographs taken from insight the lighthouse looking out.
GASF7, RASF6, WTASF6	Paths: designated walking tracks of all surfaces including unmarked/unsurfaced nature trails. Roads for vehicular use were designated under “driving lifestyle”. This variable was included as an ‘additional setting feature’ because the walking tracks in each landscape are rather special experiences. For example, boardwalks in

	the rainforest (Wet Tropics), dirt tracks in the desert (Red Centre).
WTASF4	Sky rail (operation) / scenic train / army duck: Experiences associated with these three key attractions including standing beside vehicle, being inside the vehicle, and the mechanisms that make the attraction work (cabling, train tracks).
WTASF5	Sky rail (with forest): Scenic views from the Sky rail cable car depicting mainly the Wet Tropics rainforest.
WTASF7	Bush walk / sky dive / hot air balloon: Experiences associated with these three activities including the vehicle / mechanism of transport, aerial views, trekking through the bush.

Tourism infrastructure included all aspects that support the tourist experience such as infrastructure, information, food and drinks. In total, the same eight variables were coded for across each of the three landscapes, including:

Description of tourism infrastructure variables

Code	Variable description and/or explanation
GTI1, RTI1, WTTI1	Transport: Mode of transport by itself and/or with people standing next to / sitting inside.
GTI2, RTI2, WTTI2	Airport and/or train station: Areas that are representative of these services e.g. runways, platforms, ticket booths, timetables.
GTI3, GTI4, GTI5, RTI3, RTI4, RTI5, WTTI3, WTTI4, WTTI5	Accommodation: Experiences associated with place of residency during travel. Three separate variables were developed to represent special features: (1) type / style of accommodation e.g. bed and breakfast, motel, hotel; (2) interior – bedroom, bathroom, kitchen; and (3) service aspects e.g. tour booking desk, bicycle hire, pool.
GTI6, RTI6, WTTI6	Prices: Displays of monetary value including supermarket shelf prices, fuel pumps, and receipts.
GTI7, RTI7, WTTI7	Signs: Any type of information displayed through signs including place names, road signs, and information boards.
GTI8, RTI8, WTTI8	Maps: Graphical displays of the region / area / attraction or driving route encountered during the experience.

APPENDIX 4.2. IDENTIFYING THE INTERNATIONAL AND AUSTRALIAN BLOG DATA

International and Australian blog data were identified in a two-stage process. Part A involved the selection of appropriate blog sites. Firstly, the Lonely Planet Thorntree forum and Lonely Planet blog web pages were reviewed. The Thorntree Forum posts generally had no photos and were seeking travel advice; whereas the Lonely Planet blogs generally had photos but the blogs were drawn from other sites. Neither of these web pages were considered suitable for the study. Secondly, the search terms ‘Australian travel stories’ and ‘Australian travel experience blogs’ were entered into Google. In both searches, the first 30 links were reviewed; however, no suitable travel blog site was identified from this process. Thirdly, an appraisal of tourism literature for commonly used sites and/or opinions on website suitability, functionality and so forth was conducted. Several travel blog sites were identified; after a quick review of each site, the travelblog.org site was selected for this study.

Then, Part B was to determine if the individual blogs matched the National Landscape area. The 2,373 remaining blogs were reviewed. Firstly, the text from each blog was read and any town/s visited was/were noted. Secondly, the individual towns were entered into the search field on Google maps to determine their location. This was then viewed with the individual National Landscape maps (available from the National Landscapes website). If any of the towns were inside the National Landscape boundary, then the blog was coded as that National Landscape. In the case where one blog would specify locations under two or more National Landscapes, it would be coded as ‘two or more landscapes’. A further 1,904 blogs were excluded from this second stage of filtering. Finally, the photographs (and associated captions) of the remaining blogs were examined. Blogs that only had photographs taken of locations outside of the selected National Landscapes or photographs that focused only on particular events were excluded. In total, another 43 blogs were excluded from the study.

The purpose of this study is to determine if different tourists view Australian National Landscapes differently. Therefore, the blogs (and bloggers) were then sorted into two demographic categories: Australian bloggers and International bloggers.

APPENDIX 4.3. DEVELOPING EXCLUSION CATEGORIES FOR TRAVELBLOG.ORG DATA

The increase of people adopting Web 2.0 technologies means that there is a wealth of information available for social researchers. For travel blogs in particular, researchers need to efficiently locate relevant and useful information. For this study, 4,301 Travelblog blogs were originally sourced. The blog text of each one was then reviewed to determine if the content would be useful in analysing the landscape experience. Five categories were developed to reduce the dataset to a manageable level; the categories include: not enough information; language other than English, work/live/study; overseas trips; and, other. In total, 1,928 blogs (including 25,584 photographs) were excluded from further analysis. The table below describes each category, the reason for exclusion, and the amount of data excluded.

Exclusion categories for Australian and International blog data.

Exclusion factor	Explanation
Not enough information ^a	Includes blogs which had less than five photos and/or 100 words.
<i>Excluded blogs: 1,262</i> <i>Excluded photos: 10,279</i>	<u>Reason for exclusion:</u> These blogs were thought to not provide enough detail about their holiday experience.
Language other than English	Includes blogs which have been written in a different language to English.
<i>Excluded blogs: 291</i> <i>Excluded photos: 6,977</i>	<u>Reason for exclusion:</u> It was not feasible to include these blogs in the current study.
Work/live/study blog	Includes bloggers who have come to Australia for the purpose of work, study, or to live for an extended period in one location (more than four months). Bloggers who are travelling around Australia and occasionally take up temporary work to help fund travel were not included.
<i>Excluded blogs: 217</i> <i>Excluded photos: 4,519</i>	<u>Reason for exclusion:</u> These bloggers' primary intention of visiting Australia was not holiday related, and therefore, may have different opinions to travellers. In addition, they generally talked about their work days and posted a lot of similar photos between

	blogs.
Overseas trip	Includes blogs which were posted under an ‘Oceania-Australia’ blog but discussed an overseas trip.
<i>Excluded blogs: 45</i>	Generally, these bloggers posted about their overseas trip under their home town.
<i>Excluded photos: 907</i>	
	<u>Reason for exclusion:</u> this study only focuses on Australian National Landscape experiences.
Other	Includes any other blogs which did not fit the study focus, such as blogs that discussed particular events (e.g. birthdays, festivals, public holiday celebrations), provided travel tips, or were not travel related (e.g. bought a house, poem).
<i>Excluded blogs: 113</i>	
<i>Excluded photos: 2,902</i>	
	<u>Reason for exclusion:</u> These blogs did not focus on natural landscape experiences.

^aNot enough information was the first exclusion category to eliminate blogs from further analysis; then all other categories were considered.

APPENDIX 4.4. FREQUENCY ANALYSIS OF TOURISTS' PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATIONS

Great Ocean Road (Chinese: 185 blogs, 10,912 photos; Australians: 9 blogs, 190 photos; Internationals: 73 blogs, 2,721 photos)

			Chinese tourists		Australian tourists		International tourists	
	Description	Variable	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos
Natural environment	Are there photos of sunrise /sunset views of 12 Apostles?	Yes	78 (42.2)	351	0 (0.0)	0	9 (12.3)	32
		No	107 (57.8)	NA	9 (100.0)	NA	64 (87.7)	NA
	Are there photos showing views of 12 Apostles from different angles/ air/ground?	Yes	48 (25.9)	213	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	137 (74.1)	NA	9 (100.0)	NA	73 (100.0)	NA
	Are there photos showing distance/close up views of 12 Apostles?	Yes	166 (89.7)	828	5 (55.6)	10	51 (69.9)	114
		No	19 (10.3)	NA	4 (44.4)	NA	22 (30.1)	NA
	Are there photos of Loch Ard George?	Yes	71 (38.4)	153	1 (11.1)	2	29 (39.7)	89
		No	114 (61.6)	NA	8 (88.9)	NA	44 (60.3)	NA
	Are there photos of London Bridge?	Yes	108 (58.4)	179	2 (22.2)	3	25 (34.2)	34
		No	77 (41.6)	NA	7 (77.8)	NA	48 (65.8)	NA
	Are there photos of the coastline?	Yes	149 (80.5)	228	5 (55.6)	10	46 (63.0)	101
		No	36 (19.5)	NA	4 (44.4)	NA	27 (37.0)	NA
	Are there photos of personalized landscapes, associated with captions?	Yes	23 (12.4)	24	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	162 (87.6)	NA	9 (100.0)	NA	73 (100.0)	NA
	Are there photos of sandy beaches?	Yes	127 (68.6)	282	1 (11.1)	2	30 (41.1)	83
		No	58 (31.4)	NA	8 (88.9)	NA	43 (58.9)	NA
	Are there photos of surfs/oceans?	Yes	168 (90.8)	892	2 (22.2)	8	28 (38.3)	56
		No	17 (9.2)	NA	7 (77.8)	NA	45 (61.6)	NA
	Are there photos of simply farms?	Yes	101 (54.6)	445	1 (11.1)	2	1 (1.4)	1
		No	84 (45.4)	NA	8 (88.9)	NA	72 (98.6)	NA
	Are there photos of rainforest?	Flowers	15 (8.1)	30	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Plants	2 (1.1)	5	0 (0.0)	0	1 (1.4)	1
		Individual tree	5 (2.7)	8	0 (0.0)	0	4 (5.5)	11
		Sections of forest	60 (32.4)	206	1 (11.1)	1	5 (6.8)	6

			Chinese tourists		Australian tourists		International tourists	
	Description	Variable	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos
Natural environment	Are there photos of rainforest? CONT.	Both 1 & 2	8 (4.3)	45	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Both 3 & 4	4 (2.2)	19	0 (0.0)	0	3 (4.1)	11
		No	91 (49.2)	NA	8 (88.9)	NA	60 (82.2)	NA
Australian lifestyles and relationships	AL1 – Are there photos showing Australians walking dogs or other pets?	Yes	40 (21.6)	62	0 (0.0)	0	1 (1.4)	1
		No	145 (78.4)	NA	9 (100.0)	NA	72 (98.6)	NA
	AL2 – Are there photos showing Western children playing?	Yes	37 (20.0)	51	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	148 (80.0)	NA	9 (100.0)	NA	73 (100.0)	NA
	AL3 – Are there photos showing leisure lifestyle in parks such as BBQ, games, etc?	Yes	38 (20.5)	71	0 (0.0)	0	5 (6.8)	7
		No	147 (79.5)	NA	9 (100.0)	NA	68 (93.2)	NA
	AL4 – Are there photos showing driving lifestyle – 4WD, ute, trucks, etc?	Yes	48 (25.9)	111	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	137 (74.1)	NA	9 (100.0)	NA	73 (100.0)	NA
	AL5 – Are there photos showing other lifestyle –pub, football, surfing, fishing?	Yes	81 (43.8)	238	1 (11.1)	1	5 (6.8)	6
		No	104 (56.2)	NA	8 (88.9)	NA	68 (93.2)	NA
	Are there photos of individuals from blogger’s travel party?	Yes	96 (51.9)	693	2 (22.2)	3	9 (12.3)	14
		No	89 (48.1)	NA	7 (77.8)	NA	64 (87.7)	NA
	Are there photos of blogger’s travel group?	Yes	58 (31.4)	271	1 (11.1)	1	8 (11.0)	12
		No	127 (68.6)	NA	8 (88.9)	NA	65 (89.0)	NA
	Are there photos of Asians and Westerners?	Yes	36 (19.5)	56	0 (0.0)	0	3 (4.1)	4
		No	149 (80.5)	NA	9 (100.0)	NA	70 (95.9)	NA
	Are there photos of any Westerners (not including children only)?	Yes	96 (51.9)	178	1 (11.1)	3	4 (5.5)	9
		No	89 (48.1)	NA	8 (88.9)	NA	69 (94.5)	NA
	Are there photos of Western children?	Yes	40 (21.6)	49	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	145 (78.4)	NA	9 (100.0)	NA	73 (100.0)	NA
Additional setting features	Are there photos of wild animals?	Australian specific	47 (25.4)	229	3 (33.3)	3	18 (24.7)	36
		Generic	32 (17.3)	71	0 (0.0)	0	12 (16.4)	20
		Both	66 (35.7)	560	1 (11.1)	5	8 (11.0)	37
		No	40 (21.6)	NA	5 (55.6)	NA	35 (47.9)	NA

			Chinese tourists		Australian tourists		International tourists	
	Description	Variable	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos
Additional setting features	Are there photos of interaction with wild animals?	Yes	45 (24.3)	104	0 (0.0)	0	9 (12.3)	11
		No	140 (75.7)	NA	9 (100.0)	NA	64 (87.7)	NA
	Are there photos of Aboriginal cultures?	Boomerang throwing	3 (1.6)	3	0 (0.0)	0	1 (1.4)	1
		Didgeridoo playing	3 (1.6)	3	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Stones house	1 (0.5)	2	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Others	4 (2.2)	5	0 (0.0)	0	1 (1.4)	1
		No	174 (94.1)	NA	9 (100.0)	NA	71 (97.3)	NA
	Are there photos showing GOR driving experience?	Yes	126 (68.1)	589	3 (33.3)	3	15 (20.5)	54
		No	59 (31.9)	NA	6 (66.7)	NA	58 (79.5)	NA
	Are there photos showing their/other's helicopter experience?	Yes	54 (29.2)	87	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	131 (70.8)	NA	9 (100.0)	NA	73 (100.0)	NA
	Are there photos of Lighthouse?	Yes	88 (47.6)	238	1 (11.1)	2	19 (26.0)	25
		No	97 (52.4)	NA	8 (88.9)	NA	54 (74.0)	NA
	Are there photos of road/path?	Yes	125 (67.6)	254	1 (11.1)	1	21 (28.8)	38
		No	60 (32.4)	NA	8 (88.9)	NA	52 (71.2)	NA
Tourism infrastructure	Are there photos showing their transport of this trip at GOR?	Car	77 (41.6)	156	1 (11.1)	1	3 (4.1)	3
		4WD	5 (2.7)	12	1 (11.1)	2	2 (2.7)	2
		Van	8 (4.3)	57	0 (0.0)	0	7 (9.6)	12
		Tour bus	10 (5.4)	14	0 (0.0)	0	1 (1.4)	1
		Others	2 (1.1)	3	0 (0.0)	0	1 (1.4)	2
		No	83 (44.9)	NA	6 (66.7)	NA	59 (80.8)	NA
	Are there photos of the airport of Melbourne?	Yes	6 (3.2)	7	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	179 (96.8)	NA	9 (100.0)	NA	73 (100.0)	NA
	Are there photos showing the type of their accommodation?	Motel	47 (25.4)	118	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Hotel	12 (6.5)	20	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Camping site	0 (0.0)	0	3 (33.3)	6	1 (1.4)	1
		Caravan park	5 (2.7)	34	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Apartment/house	5 (2.7)	10	0 (0.0)	0	1 (1.4)	1

			Chinese tourists		Australian tourists		International tourists	
	Description	Variable	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos
Tourism infrastructure	Are there photos showing the type of their accommodation? CONT.	B & B	9 (4.9)	19	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Guest house	5 (2.7)	11	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Farm stay	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Other	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	1 (1.4)	1
		No	101 (54.6)	NA	6 (66.7)	NA	70 (95.9)	NA
	Are there photos showing the interior of their accommodation?	Yes	67 (36.2)	313	0 (0.0)	0	4 (5.5)	10
		No	118 (63.8)	NA	9 (100.0)	NA	69 (94.5)	NA
	Are there photos showing the service features of their accommodation?	Yes	35 (18.9)	52	0 (0.0)	0	1 (1.4)	1
		No	150 (81.1)	NA	9 (100.0)	NA	72 (98.6)	NA
	Are there photos of prices?	P. of food	21 (11.4)	35	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of trips	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of petrol	5 (2.7)	7	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of accommodation	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of transports	1 (0.5)	1	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of shopping / gifts	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of attractions	2 (1.1)	2	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of parking	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Other	3 (1.6)	4	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	153 (82.7)	NA	9 (100.0)	NA	73 (100.0)	NA
	Are there photos of signs?	Yes	130 (70.3)	394	3 (33.3)	3	28 (38.4)	75
		No	55 (29.7)	NA	6 (66.7)	NA	45 (61.6)	NA
	Are there photos of maps?	Yes	50 (27.0)	114	1 (11.1)	1	0 (0.0)	0
		No	135 (73.0)	NA	8 (88.9)	NA	73 (100.0)	NA
	Are there photos of food?	Meals	62 (33.5)	209	2 (22.2)	2	7 (9.6)	9
		Coffee/drinks	2 (1.1)	4	0 (0.0)	0	3 (4.1)	3
		Both	15 (8.1)	114	0 (0.0)	0	2 (2.7)	2
		No	106 (57.3)	NA	7 (77.8)	NA	61 (83.6)	NA

			Chinese tourists		Australian tourists		International tourists	
	Description	Variable	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos
Tourism infrastructure	Are there photos of restaurant/café?	Restaurant	29 (15.7)	58	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Café	21 (11.4)	39	0 (0.0)	0	1 (1.4)	1
		Both	2 (1.1)	6	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	133 (71.9)	NA	9 (100.0)	NA	72 (98.6)	NA
Total photos	The number of photos on GOR trip of this blog reviewed?	Total	10,912		190		2,721	
		Average per blog	59		21		37	

Australia's Red Centre (Chinese: 35 blogs, 2,102 photos; Australians: 43 blogs, 902 photos; Internationals: 61 blogs, 1,704 photos)

			Chinese tourists		Australian tourists		International tourists	
	Description	Variable	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos
Natural environment	Are there photos of sunrise / sunset views of Uluru?	Yes	30 (85.7)	222	18 (41.9)	39	35 (57.4)	113
		No	5 (14.3)	NA	25 (58.1)	NA	26 (42.6)	NA
	Are there photos showing views of Uluru from different angles/air/ground?	Yes	15 (42.9)	42	1 (2.3)	1	1 (1.6)	1
		No	20 (57.1)	NA	42 (97.7)	NA	60 (98.4)	NA
	Are there photos showing distance/close up views of Uluru?	Yes	31 (88.6)	126	19 (44.2)	67	30 (49.2)	141
		No	4 (11.4)	NA	24 (55.8)	NA	31 (50.8)	NA
	Are there photos of Kings Canyon?	Yes	13 (37.1)	91	13 (30.2)	85	17 (27.9)	186
		No	22 (62.9)	NA	30 (69.8)	NA	44 (72.1)	NA
	Are there photos of Kata Tjuta?	Yes	22 (62.9)	72	18 (41.9)	98	32 (52.5)	149
		No	13 (37.1)	NA	25 (58.1)	NA	29 (47.5)	NA
	Are there photos of burrow/droppings?	Yes	16 (45.7)	44	9 (20.9)	21	20 (32.8)	48
		No	19 (54.3)	NA	34 (79.1)	NA	41 (67.2)	NA
	Are there photos of colourful horizon?	Yes	32 (91.4)	132	5 (11.6)	10	18 (29.5)	29
		No	3 (8.6)	NA	38 (88.4)	NA	43 (70.5)	NA
	Are there photos of personalized landscapes, associated with captions?	Yes	13 (37.1)	16	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	22 (62.9)	NA	43 (100.0)	NA	61 (100.0)	NA
	Are there photos of plants/trees?	Flowers	2 (5.7)	3	4 (9.3)	13	5 (8.2)	5
		Plants	0 (0.0)	0	1 (2.3)	1	1 (1.6)	1
		Individual tree	15 (42.9)	93	2 (4.7)	2	5 (8.2)	6
		Sections of forest	2 (5.7)	6	0 (0.0)	0	1 (1.6)	1
		Both 1 & 2	2 (5.7)	8	1 (2.3)	5	0 (0.0)	0
		Both 3 & 4	1 (2.9)	2	1 (2.3)	3	0 (0.0)	0
		No	13 (37.1)	NA	31 (72.1)	NA	48 (78.7)	NA
Australian lifestyles and relationships	AL1 – Are there photos showing Australians walking dogs or other pets?	Yes	3 (8.6)	4	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	32 (91.4)	NA	43 (100.0)	NA	61 (100.0)	NA

			Chinese tourists		Australian tourists		International tourists	
	Description	Variable	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos
Australian lifestyles and relationships	AL2 – Are there photos showing Western children playing?	Yes	8 (22.9)	9	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	27 (77.1)	NA	43 (100.0)	NA	61 (100.0)	NA
	AL3 – Are there photos showing leisure lifestyle in parks such as BBQ, games?	Yes	9 (25.7)	15	2 (4.7)	2	2 (3.3)	2
		No	26 (74.3)	NA	41 (95.3)	NA	59 (96.7)	NA
	AL4 – Are there photos showing driving lifestyle – 4WD, ute, trucks?	Yes	8 (22.9)	23	0 (0.0)	0	1 (1.6)	1
		No	27 (77.1)	NA	43 (100.0)	NA	60 (98.4)	NA
	AL5 – Are there photos showing other lifestyle –pub, football, surfing, fishing?	Yes	13 (37.1)	18	2 (4.7)	2	6 (9.8)	6
		No	22 (62.9)	NA	41 (95.3)	NA	55 (90.2)	NA
	Are there photos of individuals from blogger’s travel party?	Yes	21 (60.0)	137	12 (27.9)	16	15 (24.6)	21
		No	14 (40.0)	NA	31 (72.1)	NA	46 (75.4)	NA
	Are there photos of blogger’s travel group?	Yes	17 (48.6)	57	13 (30.2)	22	6 (9.8)	7
		No	18 (51.4)	NA	30 (69.8)	NA	55 (90.2)	NA
	Are there photos of Asians and Westerners?	Yes	13 (37.1)	21	0 (0.0)	0	8 (13.1)	12
		No	22 (62.9)	NA	43 (100.0)	NA	53 (86.9)	NA
	Are there photos of any Westerners (not including children only)?	Yes	25 (71.4)	59	2 (4.7)	2	7 (11.5)	17
		No	10 (28.6)	NA	41 (95.3)	NA	54 (88.5)	NA
	Are there photos of Western children?	Yes	6 (17.1)	6	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	29 (82.9)	NA	43 (100.0)	NA	61 (100.0)	NA
Additional setting features	Are there photos of wild animals?	Australian specific	1 (2.9)	14	4 (9.3)	6	6 (9.8)	10
		Generic	10 (28.6)	22	10 (23.3)	16	19 (31.1)	44
		Both	6 (17.1)	44	5 (11.6)	18	10 (16.4)	66
		No	18 (51.4)	NA	24 (55.8)	NA	26 (42.6)	NA
	Are there photos of interaction with wild animals?	Yes	5 (14.3)	9	4 (9.3)	9	8 (13.1)	28
		No	30 (85.7)	NA	39 (90.7)	NA	53 (86.9)	NA
	Are there photos of Aboriginal cultures?	Rock arts	11 (31.4)	18	8 (18.6)	16	14 (23.0)	24
		Pioneering history	8 (22.9)	17	1 (2.3)	1	0 (0.0)	0
		Afghan cameleers	1 (2.9)	2	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	15 (42.9)	NA	32 (74.4)	NA	46 (75.4)	NA

			Chinese tourists		Australian tourists		International tourists	
	Description	Variable	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos
Additional setting features	Are there photos showing walking / driving experience?	Walking	19 (54.3)	49	9 (20.9)	17	2 (3.3)	2
		Driving	9 (25.7)	24	7 (16.3)	9	9 (14.8)	14
		Walking-driving	0 (0.0)	0	1 (2.3)	2	4 (6.6)	13
		No	7 (20.0)	NA	20 (46.5)	NA	37 (60.7)	NA
	Are there photos showing their/other's helicopter/camel experience?	Helicopter	1 (2.9)	1	3 (7.0)	7	2 (3.3)	3
		Camel	9 (25.7)	27	0 (0.0)	0	9 (14.8)	17
		Both	1 (2.9)	5	1 (2.3)	2	0 (0.0)	0
		No	24 (68.6)	NA	39 (90.7)	NA	50 (82.0)	NA
	Are there photos of road/path?	Yes	32 (91.4)	100	9 (20.9)	14	17 (27.9)	39
		No	3 (8.6)	NA	34 (79.1)	NA	44 (72.1)	NA
Tourism infrastructure	Are there photos showing their transport of this trip at RC?	Car	6 (17.1)	9	0 (0.0)	0	1 (1.6)	1
		4WD	6 (17.1)	13	2 (4.7)	3	0 (0.0)	0
		Van	1 (2.9)	2	1 (2.3)	1	3 (4.9)	3
		Tour bus	5 (14.3)	9	0 (0.0)	0	5 (8.2)	8
		Others	1 (2.9)	4	2 (4.7)	2	2 (3.3)	4
		No	16 (45.7)	NA	36 (83.7)	NA	48 (78.7)	NA
	Are there photos of the airport of RC?	Yes	11 (31.4)	34	0 (0.0)	0	2 (3.3)	3
		No	24 (68.6)	NA	43 (100.0)	NA	59 (96.7)	NA
	Are there photos showing the type of their accommodation?	Motel	1 (2.9)	3	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Hotel	13 (37.1)	34	2 (4.7)	2	2 (3.3)	3
		Camping site	3 (8.6)	9	9 (20.9)	15	7 (11.5)	13
		Caravan park	3 (8.6)	3	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Apartment/house	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		B & B	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Guest house	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Farm stay	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Other	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	1 (1.6)	1
		No	15 (42.9)	NA	32 (74.4)	NA	49 (80.3)	NA

			Chinese tourists		Australian tourists		International tourists	
	Description	Variable	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos
Tourism infrastructure	Are there photos showing the interior of their accommodation?	Yes	10 (28.6)	24	1 (2.3)	1	6 (9.8)	8
		No	25 (71.4)	NA	42 (97.7)	NA	55 (90.2)	NA
	Are there photos showing the service features of their accommodation?	Yes	12 (34.3)	19	3 (7.0)	4	5 (8.2)	10
		No	23 (65.7)	NA	40 (93.0)	NA	56 (91.8)	NA
	Are there photos of prices?	P. of food	4 (11.4)	4	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of trips	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of petrol	1 (2.9)	1	2 (4.7)	2	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of accommodation	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of transports	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of shopping / gifts	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of attractions	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of parking	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Other	1 (2.9)	10	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	29 (82.9)	NA	41 (95.3)	NA	61 (100.0)	NA
	Are there photos of signs?	Yes	21 (60.0)	68	12 (27.9)	16	19 (31.1)	30
		No	14 (40.0)	NA	31 (72.1)	NA	42 (68.9)	NA
	Are there photos of maps?	Yes	7 (20.0)	23	1 (2.3)	1	1 (1.6)	1
		No	28 (80.0)	NA	42 (97.7)	NA	60 (98.4)	NA
	Are there photos of food?	Meals	11 (31.4)	36	6 (14.0)	7	1 (1.6)	1
		Coffee/drinks	2 (5.7)	2	4 (9.3)	4	10 (16.4)	10
		Both	3 (8.6)	6	2 (4.7)	2	1 (1.6)	1
		No	19 (54.3)	NA	31 (72.1)	NA	49 (80.3)	NA
	Are there photos of restaurant/café?	Restaurant	5 (14.3)	10	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Café	3 (8.6)	4	0 (0.0)	0	1 (1.6)	1
		Both	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	27 (77.1)	NA	43 (100.0)	NA	60 (98.4)	NA
Total photos	The number of photos on RC trip of this blog reviewed?	Total	2,102		902		1,704	
		Average per blog	60		21		28	

Wet Tropics (Chinese: 71 blogs, 2,706 photos; Australians: 63 blogs, 879 photos; Internationals: 149 blogs, 4,130 photos)

			Chinese tourists		Australian tourists		International tourists	
	Description	Variable	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos
Natural environment	Are there photos of tropical vegetation?	Flowers	6 (8.5)	24	3 (4.8)	3	4 (2.7)	7
		Plants	11 (15.5)	68	1 (1.6)	2	12 (8.1)	15
		Individual tree	3 (4.2)	8	7 (11.1)	8	22 (14.8)	29
		Sections of forest	17 (23.9)	53	2 (3.2)	3	1 (0.7)	1
		Both 1 & 2	17 (23.9)	139	1 (1.6)	2	3 (2.0)	12
		Both 3 & 4	5 (7.0)	18	2 (3.2)	5	5 (3.4)	20
		No	12 (16.9)	NA	45 (71.4)	NA	96 (64.4)	NA
	Are there photos of water (lake/river)?	Yes	54 (76.1)	138	16 (25.4)	30	37 (24.8)	76
		No	17 (23.9)	NA	47 (74.6)	NA	112 (75.2)	NA
	Are there photos of waterfalls?	Yes	40 (56.3)	99	25 (39.7)	40	44 (29.5)	116
		No	31 (43.7)	NA	38 (60.3)	NA	105 (70.5)	NA
	Are there photos of city outline/village view?	Yes	39 (54.9)	90	3 (4.8)	4	11 (7.4)	16
		No	32 (45.1)	NA	60 (95.2)	NA	138 (92.6)	NA
	Are there photos of deep in the rainforest?	Yes	38 (53.5)	61	3 (4.8)	5	20 (13.4)	30
		No	33 (46.5)	NA	60 (95.2)	NA	129 (86.6)	NA
Australian lifestyles and relationships	AL1 – Are there photos showing Australians walking dogs or other pets?	Yes	4 (5.6)	5	1 (1.6)	1	0 (0.0)	0
		No	67 (94.4)	NA	62 (8.4)	NA	149 (100.0)	NA
	AL2 – Are there photos showing Western children playing?	Yes	8 (11.3)	11	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	63 (88.7)	NA	63 (100.0)	NA	149 (100.0)	NA
	AL3 – Are there photos showing leisure lifestyle in parks such as BBQ, games?	Yes	8 (11.3)	16	5 (7.9)	6	15 (10.1)	23
		No	63 (88.7)	NA	58 (92.1)	NA	134 (89.9)	NA
	AL4 – Are there photos showing driving lifestyle – 4WD, ute, trucks?	Yes	6 (8.5)	10	0 (0.0)	0	6 (4.0)	7
		No	65 (91.5)	NA	63 (100.0)	NA	143 (96.0)	NA
	AL5 – Are there photos showing other lifestyle –pub, football, surfing, fishing?	Yes	5 (7.0)	10	6 (9.5)	9	6 (4.0)	10
		No	66 (93.0)	NA	57 (90.5)	NA	143 (96.0)	NA

			Chinese tourists		Australian tourists		International tourists	
	Description	Variable	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos
Australian lifestyles and relationships	Are there photos of individuals from blogger's travel party?	Yes	35 (49.3)	143	9 (14.3)	14	25 (16.8)	38
		No	36 (50.7)	NA	54 (85.7)	NA	124 (83.2)	NA
	Are there photos of blogger's travel group?	Yes	17 (23.9)	25	8 (12.7)	14	18 (12.1)	22
		No	54 (76.1)	NA	55 (87.3)	NA	131 (87.9)	NA
	Are there photos of Asians and Westerners?	Yes	20 (28.2)	48	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	51 (71.8)	NA	63 (100.0)	NA	149 (100.0)	NA
	Are there photos of any Westerners (not including children only)?	Yes	38 (53.5)	63	2 (3.2)	3	12 (8.1)	20
		No	33 (46.5)	NA	61 (96.8)	NA	137 (91.9)	NA
Additional setting features	Are there photos of Western children?	Yes	9 (12.7)	14	0 (0.0)	0	2 (1.3)	2
		No	62 (87.3)	NA	63 (100.0)	NA	147 (98.7)	NA
	Are there photos of wild animals?	Australian specific	8 (11.3)	21	10 (15.9)	16	23 (15.4)	62
		Generic	18 (25.4)	91	12 (19.0)	27	30 (20.1)	69
		Both	20 (28.2)	164	6 (9.5)	48	45 (30.2)	336
		No	25 (35.2)	NA	35 (55.6)	NA	51 (34.2)	NA
	Are there photos of interaction with wild animals?	Yes	21 (29.6)	68	8 (12.7)	35	56 (37.6)	214
		No	50 (70.4)	NA	55 (87.3)	NA	93 (62.4)	NA
	Are there photos of Aboriginal cultures?	Indigenous dance	6 (8.5)	26	0 (0.0)	0	1 (0.7)	1
		Boomerang throwing	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Didgeridoo playing	1 (1.4)	1	0 (0.0)	0	1 (0.7)	1
		Hunting tools/skills	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		All of the above	16 (22.5)	106	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	48 (67.6)	NA	61 (96.8)	NA	146 (98.0)	NA
	Are there photos of sky rail (cableway operation)/ scenic train / army duck?	Yes	50 (70.4)	170	6 (9.5)	17	8 (5.4)	39
		No	21 (29.6)	NA	57 (90.5)	NA	141 (94.6)	NA
	Are there photos of sky rail cabins with lots of background of forest?	Yes	32 (45.1)	78	4 (6.3)	4	6 (4.0)	12
		No	39 (54.9)	NA	59 (93.7)	NA	143 (96.0)	NA

			Chinese tourists		Australian tourists		International tourists	
	Description	Variable	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos
Additional setting features	Are there photos of path in the bush or stairway?	Yes	32 (45.1)	58	13 (20.6)	17	33 (22.1)	61
		No	39 (54.9)	NA	50 (79.4)	NA	116 (77.9)	NA
	Are there photos showing their/other's bush walking / sky diving / hot air balloon experience?	Bushwalking	4 (5.6)	5	1 (1.6)	1	2 (1.3)	3
		Sky diving	1 (1.4)	3	2 (3.2)	2	3 (2.0)	14
		Hot air balloon	8 (11.3)	128	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	58 (81.7)	NA	59 (93.7)	NA	141 (94.6)	NA
Tourism infrastructure	Are there photos showing their transport of this trip at Cairns?	Car	3 (4.2)	3	4 (6.3)	5	11 (7.4)	13
		4WD	4 (5.6)	5	2 (3.2)	2	4 (2.7)	5
		Van	0 (0.0)	0	2 (3.2)	2	16 (10.7)	25
		Tour bus	8 (11.3)	12	1 (1.6)	1	3 (2.0)	3
		Others	0 (0.0)	0	5 (7.9)	5	4 (2.7)	5
		No	56 (78.9)	NA	44 (69.8)	NA	110 (73.8)	NA
	Are there photos of the airport / train station platform at Cairns?	Yes	30 (42.3)	47	2 (3.2)	4	2 (1.3)	2
		No	41 (57.7)	NA	61 (96.8)	NA	147 (98.7)	NA
	Are there photos showing the type of their accommodation?	Motel	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Hotel	17 (23.9)	30	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Camping site	1 (1.4)	3	14 (22.2)	20	6 (4.0)	12
		Caravan park	1 (1.4)	1	2 (3.2)	2	8 (5.4)	10
		Apartment/house	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	1 (0.7)	3
		B & B	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Guest house	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Farm stay	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	1 (0.7)	1
		Other	0 (0)	0	2 (3.2)	4	1 (0.7)	1
		No	52 (73.2)	NA	41 (65.1)	NA	123 (82.6)	NA
	Are there photos showing the interior of their accommodation?	Yes	10 (14.1)	22	2 (3.2)	2	14 (9.4)	35
		No	61 (85.9)	NA	61 (96.8)	NA	135 (90.6)	NA
	Are there photos showing the service features of their accommodation?	Yes	8 (11.3)	14	6 (9.5)	8	19 (12.8)	36
		No	63 (88.7)	NA	57 (90.5)	NA	130 (87.2)	NA

			Chinese tourists		Australian tourists		International tourists	
	Description	Variable	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos	Frequency (%)	No. of photos
Tourism infrastructure	Are there photos of prices?	P. of food	1 (1.4)	1	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of trips	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of petrol	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of accommodation	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of transports	2 (2.8)	2	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of shopping / gifts	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of attractions	2 (2.8)	3	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		P. of parking	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		Other	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0
		No	66 (93.0)	NA	63 (100.0)	NA	149 (100.0)	NA
	Are there photos of signs?	Yes	35 (49.3)	96	17 (27.0)	32	56 (37.6)	116
		No	36 (50.7)	NA	46 (73.0)	NA	93 (62.4)	NA
	Are there photos of maps?	Yes	4 (5.6)	7	0 (0.0)	0	1 (0.7)	1
		No	67 (94.4)	NA	63 (100.0)	NA	148 (99.3)	NA
	Are there photos of souvenir shops / markets?	Yes	27 (38.0)	86	4 (6.3)	5	8 (5.4)	10
		No	44 (62.0)	NA	59 (93.7)	NA	141 (94.6)	NA
	Are there photos of food?	Meals	13 (18.3)	42	6 (9.5)	8	19 (12.8)	33
		Coffee/drinks	1 (1.4)	1	4 (6.3)	4	15 (10.1)	17
		Both	6 (8.5)	37	5 (7.9)	5	14 (9.4)	30
		No	51 (71.8)	NA	48 (76.2)	NA	101 (67.8)	NA
	Are there photos of restaurant/café?	Restaurant	6 (8.5)	7	3 (4.8)	4	5 (3.4)	5
		Café	8 (11.3)	14	3 (4.8)	3	3 (2.0)	5
		Both	0 (0.0)	0	0 (0.0)	0	1 (0.7)	3
		No	57 (80.3)	NA	57 (90.5)	NA	140 (94.0)	NA
Total photos	The number of photos on CNS trip of this blog reviewed?	Total	2,706		879		4,130	
		Average per blog	38		14		28	

APPENDIX 5.1 TOURIST QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH)

This questionnaire will collect information about your leisure experiences in the wet tropics, Queensland, Australia. The questionnaire is six pages, however, it is relatively easy and quick to complete. A majority of the questions involve answering statements on a variety of 1 to 7-point scales. In general, these points correspond to: 1 = a lot (negative); 2 = somewhat (negative); 3 = a little (negative); 4 = neutral; 5 = a little (positive); 6 = somewhat (positive); 7 = a lot (positive). For example, 1 = poor to 7 = excellent. The questionnaire has three parts and will take approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. We hope your answers can help make the region better for visitors and the environment.

PART A: We would like to know about your previous travel history and travel preferences.

1) Based on your previous holidays, how experienced do you feel with the following destinations? (Scale: 1 = not at all experienced to 7 = extremely experienced).

Destinations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
China							
Asia (including Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan)							
Other overseas							

2) Based on your previous holidays, how much experience do you feel you have in travelling by the following ways? (Scale: 1 = very little experience to 7 = lots of experience).

Travel modes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Independently							
On a packaged tour							
Both independently and packaged tour							

3) In general, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Scale: 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I enjoy spending my leisure time in nature more than anywhere else							
I am interested in learning about environmental issues							
I purchase a lot of items that I only use when I explore natural areas (e.g. hiking boots, binoculars, backpack etc.)							
I like to discuss my visits to natural places with my friends							
I always try to learn new nature skills							
I travel long distances to immerse myself in nature							

PART B: We would like to learn about your leisure experiences of the wet tropics region.

1) Before your visit, how much do you feel you knew about the following items? (Scale: 1 = not at all knowledgeable to 7 = extremely knowledgeable).

Wet tropics' nature-related topics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Plant life of tropical rainforests							
Indigenous history and culture							
Birds in the Wet Tropics							
Tablelands and mountain areas							
Animals of the Wet Tropics							
Waterfalls							
Aboriginal tribal groups							
Tropical fruits and food plants							

2) How well do the below statements describe your reason for visiting the wet tropics? (Scale: 1 = doesn't describe my visit at all to 7 = describes my visit very well).

I travelled to the wet tropics region...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
To go somewhere famous							
To increase my nature skills							
Because others wanted to go							
To increase my knowledge							
To go somewhere different							
Because someone recommended it							

3) How often did you use the below sources of information whilst visiting areas in the Wet Tropics? (Scale: 1 = never used to 7 = always used).

Information sources	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Signs, panels and displays							
Guidebooks							
Tour guides and information talks							
Friends or families as informants							
Brochures and handouts							
Information centres							
Websites or information on the internet							

4) To what extent did the below sources of information assist with your understanding about the areas you visited? (Scale: 1 = not at all helpful to 7 = extremely helpful).

Information sources	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Signs, panels and displays							
Guidebooks							
Tour guides and information talks							
Friends or families as informants							
Brochures and handouts							
Information centres							
Websites or information on the internet							

5) In general, how would you rate your feelings during your visit? (Scale: 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

Mostly when in the wet tropics, I was...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Interested							
Feeling lazy							
Sleepy							
Involved							

6) Thinking about your visit, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Scale: 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

Mostly during my visit to the wet tropics...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I liked investigating things							
I asked lots of questions							
I seldom noticed what other people were up to							
I changed my understanding							
I was very curious							
I didn't take notice of details							
I liked to figure out how things worked							

7) How well do the below statements describe yourself and/or your wet tropics visit? (Scale: 1 = doesn't describe me/my visit at all to 7 = describes me/my visit very well).

Throughout my wet tropics visit, I...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Talked with guides and park rangers							
Learned some new facts							
Felt a sense of wonder							
Thought of ways that I can protect and conserve nature							
Enjoyed the smells, sights, sounds, touches, and tastes of nature							

8) As a result of your visit, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Scale: 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When humans interfere with nature it often produces disastrous consequences							
My visit helped me realise my place in the world							
Nature is a place to renew the human spirit							
When I think about threats to the environment I experience mild feelings of anxiety							
I am part of the solution to nature's problem							
My senses were awakened by the natural environment							
Nature helps define Australia's national heritage and character							
It is very important to have places where plants and animals are preserved							
I want to share my nature knowledge with others							
The balance of nature is delicate and easily upset							

9) How important were the following facilities, services, and activities during your visit? (Scale: 1 = not very important to 7 = extremely important).

Facility, service, or activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Places to see animals							
Visitor centre exhibits							
Aboriginal guided tour/s							
Places to see special trees/plants							
Great Tropical Drive roads							
Bird watching							
Picnic/rest areas							
Self-guided walks							

10) How would you rate the following facilities, services, and activities at the destinations you visited? (Scale: 1 = poor to 7 = excellent).

Facility, service, or activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Places to see animals							
Visitor centre exhibits							
Aboriginal guided tour/s							
Places to see special trees/plants							
Great Tropical Drive roads							
Bird watching							
Picnic/rest areas							
Self-guided walks							

11) How much do you feel you have benefitted from your visit? (Scale: 0 = felt you learned nothing and did not enjoy yourself to 70 = felt you learned lots and thoroughly enjoyed yourself).

Overall score (please specify a number between 0 - 70): _____

12) How much do you feel you could teach others about the region? (Scale: 0 = don't feel very educated or understand the experience to 70 = feel you know the region well and could educate others).

Overall score (please specify a number between 0 - 70): _____

13) How much do you feel that being in the Wet Tropics helps to learn about the region? Please rate the following statements. (Scale: 0 = not at all useful and doesn't assist with learning to 70 = extremely useful and assists with learning greatly).

A visit to the Wet Tropics helps the learning process by...

Expanding general knowledge about the region: _____

Personal experience (touching and seeing): _____

Comparing it to previous thoughts of the region: _____

14) Overall, how satisfied were you with the following aspects of your visit?
(Scale: 1 = very dissatisfied to 7 = very satisfied).

Aspect of your visit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Natural environment							
Safe and secure destination							
Weather conditions							
Friendliness of locals							
History and culture							

15) Overall, how much do you consider the following aspects of your visit to be value for money? (Scale: 1 = very poor value to 7 = very good value).

Aspect of your visit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Cultural activities							
Other leisure activities							
Local food and drinks							
Tours/tourist attractions							
Shopping							

16) In regards to your overall opinion of your Wet Tropics visit, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Scale: 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree).

Overall I thought that my trip...	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Made me feel so good that I will come again							
Satisfied me so much that I will recommend the area to others							
Engaged me so much that my senses were always stimulated							
Provoked a wide range of feelings (e.g., happy, scared, caring)							
Provided an escape and allowed me to dream of another world							

17) Overall do you think in 5 years' time that, because of its management, the Australian Wet Tropics environment will be:

- ☐ A lot worse than it is now
- ☐ Somewhat worse than it is now
- ☐ A little bit worse than it is now
- ☐ About the same as now
- ☐ A little bit better than it is now
- ☐ Somewhat better than it is now
- ☐ A lot better than it is now

PART C: For our comparisons, we would like to know about you and your travel.

- 1) What is your gender?
☐ Male ☐ Female
- 2) What is your age?
☐ 18-29 years ☐ 30-39 years ☐ 40-49 years ☐ 50+ years
- 3) Where do you live? (Please specify city). _____
- 4) What is your highest level of education?
☐ Junior school ☐ Middle school
☐ Senior school ☐ Tafe/certificate
☐ University – undergraduate ☐ University – Postgraduate
- 5) Have you visited the Wet Tropics region before?
☐ No, this was my first visit ☐ Yes, I have visited before
- 6) How did you find out about the Wet Tropics region?
☐ Internet ☐ Travel agent
☐ Friends/relatives in the region ☐ Brochures
☐ Other, please specify _____
- 7) How did you travel around the wet tropics? (Please select the most appropriate option).
☐ Independently ☐ On a packaged tour
☐ Both independently and packaged tour
- 8) Who did you travel around the wet tropics with? (Please select all appropriate options).
☐ No one (I travelled alone) ☐ A spouse or partner
☐ Other family members ☐ Friends and/or relatives
☐ Colleagues and/or business associates
- 9) Can you remember visiting any of the following areas in the Wet Tropics?

<input type="checkbox"/> Atherton	<input type="checkbox"/> Cairns
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooktown	<input type="checkbox"/> Daintree
<input type="checkbox"/> Ingham	<input type="checkbox"/> Innisfail
<input type="checkbox"/> Kuranda	<input type="checkbox"/> Magnetic Island
<input type="checkbox"/> Mareeba	<input type="checkbox"/> Mission Beach
<input type="checkbox"/> Port Douglas	<input type="checkbox"/> Townsville
<input type="checkbox"/> Tully	<input type="checkbox"/> Undara
- 10) Can you remember visiting any of the following attractions in the Wet Tropics?

<input type="checkbox"/> Paronella Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Mamu canopy walk
<input type="checkbox"/> Tyto Wetlands	<input type="checkbox"/> Daintree Rainforest
<input type="checkbox"/> Tully River	<input type="checkbox"/> Mossman Gorge
<input type="checkbox"/> Kuranda skyrail and/or scenic train	<input type="checkbox"/> Waterfall circuit
- 11) Length of trip in this region? (Please specify total number of days).

APPENDIX 5.2 PROPOSED STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING

In order to explore the influences of various experience components in contributing to the overall success of Wet Tropics' experiences for Chinese tourists, a Structural Equation Model was proposed. Structural equation modelling allows researchers to test complex models incorporating a number of independent and dependent variables, which influence one another simultaneously (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012). The table below highlights the independent (latent) and dependent (observed) variables to be tested in this study.

Hypothesised eight construct measurement model

Latent construct	Manifest (observed) variable	Items	Measurement
Travel experience	TE1: group-independency level*	3	1-7 Likert
	TE2: domestic-international familiarity*	3	1-7 Likert
	TE3: nature-skill specialisation level	6	1-7 Likert
Existing knowledge	K1: flora	2	1-7 Likert
	K2: fauna and birds	2	1-7 Likert
	K3: Australian contemporary communities	2	1-7 Likert
	K4: landscape beauty	2	1-7 Likert
Interest in learning	L1: socio-cultural	3	1-7 Likert
	L2: understanding/curiosity	3	1-7 Likert
On-site interpretation	I1: presence	7	1-7 Likert
	I2: notice	7	1-7 Likert
Mindfulness-mindlessness	M1: visitor feelings	4	1-7 Likert
	M2: experience (curiosity)	4	1-7 Likert
	M3: experience (involvement)	3	1-7 Likert
Visitor experience	VE1: cognitive	3	1-7 Likert
	VE2: sensory	3	1-7 Likert
	VE3: affective	3	1-7 Likert
	VE4: relationship	3	1-7 Likert
	VE5: behavioural	3	1-7 Likert

Satisfaction	S1: instrumental qualities (performance)	4	1-7 Likert
	S2: expressive qualities (performance)	4	1-7 Likert
	S3: economic value	5	1-7 Likert
	S4: overall satisfaction	5	1-7 Likert
Overall success	OS1: learning value	5	1-70 rating
	OS2: hedonic value	3	1-7 Likert
	OS3: future orientation	3	1-7 scale

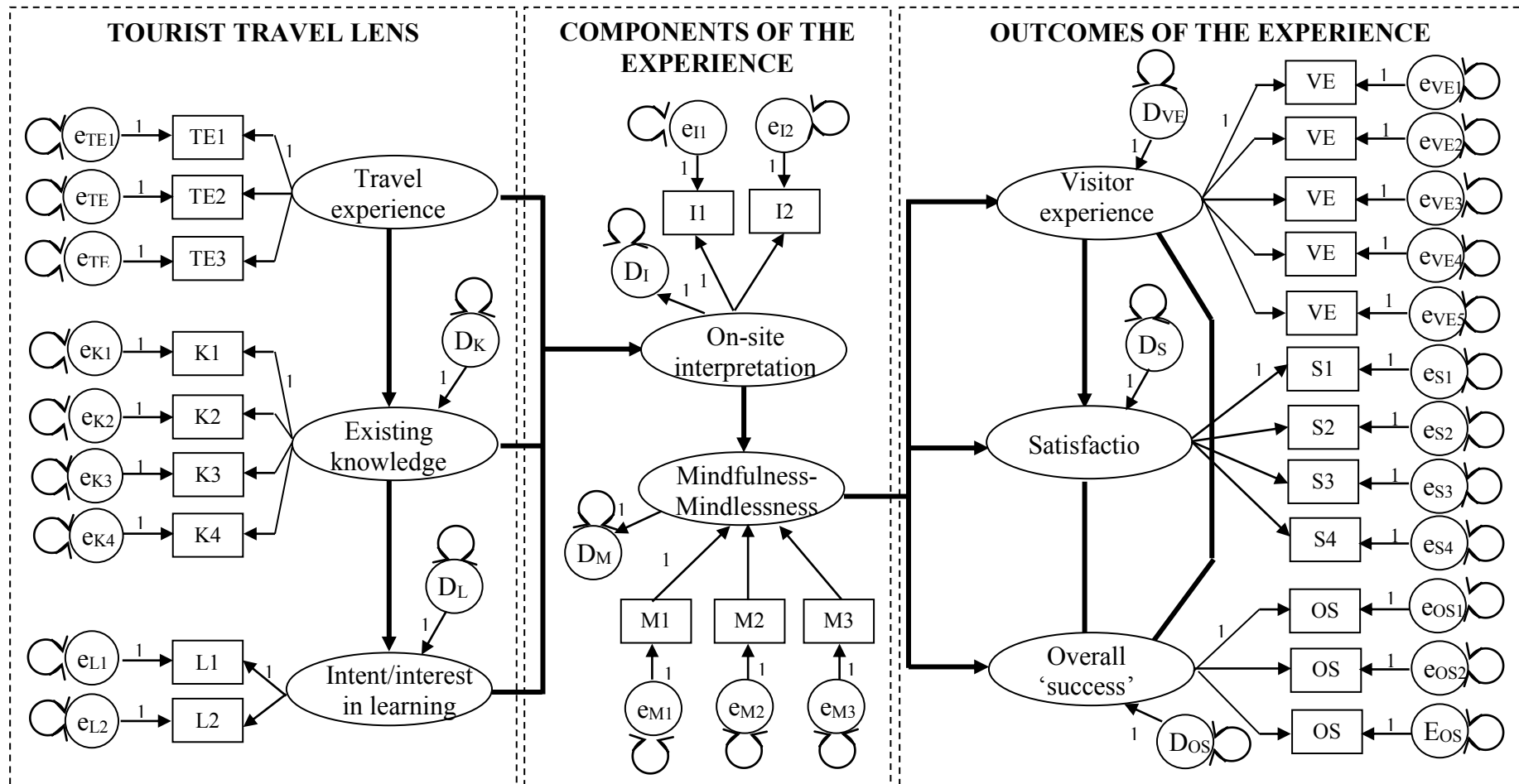
Note. *Respondents scored on a single continuum by developing comparison ratings.

The structural regression model was developed using a strictly confirmatory approach. Kline (2011) defines this approach as when “a single a priori model is studied using SEM good of fit tests to test whether or not the model is accepted based on its correspondence to the data” (p.8). Furthermore, the model is recursive as disturbances are uncorrelated and all causal effects are unidirectional. The relationships between latent constructs and observed variables are reflexive; “reflective measures reflect or manifest a latent construct or are caused by latent constructs” (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2007, p.49). Tourist questionnaires were designed around the number of items that measured each manifest variable. The following figure displays the Structural Equation model developed for this study. It is proposed that learning experiences evolve in a generally linear fashion.

Additional references (not included in the main text):

Kline, R. (2011). *Principles and practices of Structural Equation Modeling* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: The Guildford Press.

Nunkoo, R., & Ramkisson, H. (2012). Structural equation modelling and regression analysis in tourism research. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 15(8), 777-802. doi: 10.1080/13683500.2011.64194



Hypothesised measurement model with direct relationships connecting latent constructs and manifest variables.

Note. e = measurement error (residuals); D = disturbance (unexplained variance). ○ = latent variables; □ = observed variables; ↻ free to vary. Latent variables (including residuals and disturbances) have been scaled using a Unit Identification Loading (ULI) constraint of 1.

APPENDIX 6.1. CHINESE TOURISM SCENARIO PLANNING CONSTRUCTION PROCEDURE

Scenario planning involves the construction of different futures based on trends and wider industry influences. Based on a literature review, a nine-stage procedure was implemented to develop four scenarios of Chinese outbound tourism to the Wet Tropics. The table below discusses each step.

Nine stage procedure in scenario planning

Step	Stage	Description	References
1	Define the topic of research	Decide upon the focus, timeframe, geographic scope and key decision factors.	Schoemaker (1991), (1993), (1995); Ralston & Wilson (2006); Duinker & Greig (2007); Varum, Melo, Alvarenga & Soeiro de Carvalho (2011).
2	Identify key trends/drivers of change	Identify the significant underlying and impacting factors that set the pattern of events and determine outcomes in the selected business environment. Consider both macro- and micro-level trends.	Schoemaker (1991), (1993), (1995); Ralston & Wilson (2006); Duinker & Greig (2007); Varum et al. (2011).
3	Identify and prioritise critical uncertainties	Identify critical events whose outcomes are likely to shape the key decision arena significantly. Prioritise uncertainties by analysing each trend and event as to its future importance/impact to the decision arena and the degree of uncertainty that exists about future outcomes (cf. Ratson and Wilson, 2006).	Schoemaker (1993), (1995); Ralston & Wilson (2006); Duinker & Greig (2007); Varum et al. (2011).
4	Gather data, information and projections	Investigate the research area by reviewing the latest publications and statistical information.	Ralston & Wilson (2006).
5	Define scenario logics and identify key axis of uncertainty	Select two drivers whose long term evolution is considered to be the most uncertain and difficult to control. Drivers are derived from prominent clusters of trends and events in high uncertainty-high	Schoemaker (1991), (1995); Ralston & Wilson (2006); Duinker & Greig (2007); Varum et al. (2011).

importance grid developed in step 3.			
6	Check for internal consistency and plausibility		Schoemaker (1991), (1993), (1995).
7	Create/flesh out the scenarios	Integrate the threads of alternative logics into coherent, distinctive patterns, exploring the cause-and-effect relationships among a multitude of macro and micro forces. This is done in three stages: devise a comparison table, write the scenarios, and evaluate the scenarios.	Ralston & Wilson (2006); Duinker & Greig (2007); Schoemaker (1995); Varum et al. (2011).
8*	Assess implications for business, government and the community		Duinker & Greig (2007).
9*	Propose action and policy directions		Duinker & Greig (2007).

Note. * These steps were the focus of data collection and analysis.

Additional references (not mentioned in main text document)

Duinker, P. N., & Greig, L. A. (2007). Scenario analysis in environmental impact assessment: Improving explorations of the future. *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 27(3), 206-219. doi: 10.1016/j.eiar.2006.11.001

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APPENDIX 6.2 INTRODUCING THE CHINA TOURISM SCENARIOS

One goal of scenario planning is to help tourism managers recognise, consider and reflect on the uncertainties which may evolve (Varum & Melo, 2010). China outbound market has recently started to show key intra-market differences. Therefore, the goal of the current scenarios will be to assess whether tourism stakeholders in the Australia's Wet Tropics region are ready to cater to tomorrow's Chinese markets. Consideration is given to several issues including: what different Chinese market segments will value, what experiences they will desire, and what behavioural traits will they exhibit; how political regulations will affect outbound travel; and, how society will view outbound travel. Scenarios are set in the 2020.

Key driving forces and trends likely to shape the future were identified and used in scenario production. Each trend was assessed as to the degree of uncertainty in predicting its future outcome and the degree of influence it will have on the decision focus. Figure 6.3 displays the scenario matrix; the four scenarios include:

Worried World: a senior Chinese couple travelling on a government bursary and engaging in more luxurious travel, as a reward for their tireless work efforts.

Luxury and Longevity: a corporate Chinese male traveller coming on a five-day working-leisure trip, in an expensive world where eco-products are valued.

Friendly Forthcoming: a young Chinese family seeking to experience similar things to China but in a different context and in a more independent way.

Authentic Avenues: a young Chinese lady returns to visit friends, and decides to go on a nine day Townsville to Cairns road trip with her friend.

The full scenarios are presented below.

SCENARIO 1: WORRIED WORLD

The current world is very unstable and experiencing turbulent times. Acts of terrorism, political instability, health pandemics and environmental issues have many tourism officials concerned about the future of the travel industry. Cooperation between countries is minimal, and China in particular, has introduced measures to limit outbound travel. Chinese citizens who are embarking on outbound trips number in the tens of thousands, and are generally only those who have permission to travel overseas for a special reason. Specifically, the government supports travel by senior citizens and for health reasons.

Signposts of this world occurring now:

Climate change is changing nature: The world's most precious natural assets are continually threatened by the many impacts of climate change. Initiatives like the *Great Barrier Reef Climate Change Action Plan (2012-2017)* will help to mitigate some of the problems, but our natural assets are increasingly facing an expiry deadline.

Disasters are on the rise: The number, severity and frequency of both natural and man-made disasters have increased considerably in the past decade. Each time, these disasters cause mass destruction, loss of lives, and significantly impact the tourism industry.

We live in times of an ageing population: In many societies, the older generations have begun to outweigh the younger population. This demographic shift is due to people choosing to have families later in life and an increase in life expectancy. Furthermore, the "one-child" policy in China has led to a deficit in the younger generations.

Travel is luxury: The act of taking a holiday is seen as the number one luxury product in many societies. Whilst it is considered to be quite expensive, people happily engage in travel to escape the pressures of everyday life, to experience something exotic and to reinvigorate the soul.

How did we get here?

TIMELINE OF CHANGE	
2015	Severe outbreak of Dengue Fever in Vietnam grounds most outbound travel from South-east Asian countries for four months.
2016	A series of terrorism attacks occur in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil during the XXXI Olympic Games.
2017	Major Chinese air carriers start to cancel some services to particular destinations indefinitely due to unstable political conditions.
2018	A new government takes leadership who continues some of the former Xi Jinping government's tourism initiatives, but discourages travel agents to promote travel to most overseas destinations.
2019	Cyber-hacking (identity theft) of personal social media profiles and chat room accounts across the globe continues.
2020	The China National Tourism Administration declines any new Approved Destination Status applications by all foreign countries.

The adventures of Mr and Mrs Chén...

Mr Wěijūn and Mrs Xiùyīng Chén are an old married couple from Baiyun district, near Guangzhou, Guangdong Province. The Chén family have a third-generation vegetable farm. Wěijūn, 65 years old, has recently decided to hand the farm down to his son, Wěiyáng. His wife, Xiùyīng, 63 years old, has always managed the business side of the farm. In addition, Xiùyīng also works part-time as an administration clerk at the South China Agricultural University in Guangzhou city.



After several decades of hard, physical labour on the farm, Wěijūn and Xiùyīng have decided they would like to celebrate the beginning of their retirement by taking an international holiday. Wěijūn and Xiùyīng have only ever been overseas once before, in June 1991, when they visited some relatives in Singapore. They were inspired to travel again with the introduction of a travel bursary for senior citizens by the Xi Jinping government in 2017. The bursary was implemented (and subsequently retained by the new government) as a recognition to senior citizens for their long-standing contribution to the Chinese society. Wěijūn and Xiùyīng grew up during times of economic hardships throughout the 1950s to 1970s, and have never really had the means or time for overseas travel before (with the exception of Singapore where they were hosted by their relatives). In a way, they have been saving for this trip over many years.



Wěijūn and Xiùyīng, with the help of their son, do some preliminary research on www.daodao.com and www.ctrip.com to identify a suitable destination. These days, most foreign countries' tourism websites are inaccessible within China, and international travel is not actively promoted. However, Australia is looking like a possible travel option, as there have been no major incidences in the past five years and numerous flights are still offered. Furthermore, some friends of the Chén family have always had great experiences of Australia. Wěijūn and Xiùyīng are a little concerned about their limited travel experience, particularly with the Western world, but Wěiyáng assures them that travelling in an organised tour group would be safe and comfortable. So, Mr and Mrs Chén fill in an application for outbound travel, requesting permission for a two-week vacation to Cairns, Gold Coast and Sydney, to be booked through Guangdong China Travel Service. Three weeks later, Wěijūn and Xiùyīng receive notification that their application for outbound travel has been approved. The government has also provided Mr and Mrs Chén a travel bursary of 5,000 CNY. With the travel bursary, Wěijūn and Xiùyīng are looking forward to rewarding themselves.

Four months later, Wěijūn and Xiùyīng arrive at the Guangzhou Baiyun International Terminal for their indirect flight (through Beijing) to Cairns. Mr and Mrs Chén are escorted to the first class lounge after the attendant has processed their booking. The service in first class both at the lounge and during the flight is fantastic and Wěijūn and Xiùyīng feel very relaxed and well looked after. On the flight to

Australia, they enjoy a glass of champagne to mark the beginning of their adventure – compliments of the government!



On arrival into Cairns, Wěijūn and Xiùyīng are transferred to their accommodation – Palm Royale Cairns - and enjoy a complimentary dinner in the restaurant before retiring. The next day, the Chéns are booked on a half-day wildlife tour. The tour begins with a trip to Kuranda to visit Australian Butterfly Sanctuary, Birdworld and Kuranda Koala Gardens. Following this, the group stops at Cairns Aquarium and enjoys some of the Great Barrier Reef's most precious creatures – a popular option for those who don't want to get wet (and given the current state of the reef)! Mr and Mrs Chén are pleased with the tour overall and now know why their friends enjoyed Australian wildlife so much. Later that day, Wěijūn and Xiùyīng indulge in an in-house therapeutic massage – another treat from the government!



For day two of the Chén's visit to Cairns, the travel agent has organised a personal chauffeur to escort Wěijūn and Xiùyīng to some of the attractions in Cairns. Firstly, Wěijūn and Xiùyīng buy a ticket for the Skyrail Rainforest Cableway. Recently, the cabins have undergone refurbishment to create a more relaxed and authentic experience including padded chairs and piped music of rainforest and wildlife sounds. After Skyrail, Mr and Mrs Chén's chauffeur drives them to Palm Cove for lunch and a look-around, before returning to the hotel in the late afternoon. The driver stops a few times on the coastal drive back to Cairns, and takes photographs of Wěijūn and Xiùyīng with various landscapes as the background.

On their final full day in Cairns, Wěijūn and Xiùyīng are going on another half-day group tour which is known especially for its well-being properties. The tour begins with a guided walk through the Botanic Gardens, which includes a scented garden where the group enjoys home-made scones and billy tea. After the gardens, the tour continues to Kewarra Beach where everyone enjoys a short stroll along the beachside and can watch locals fish off the jetty. The group then heads to the final stop of the tour – lunch at Body and Soul Restaurant Retreat. At this restaurant, customers sit at group booths – each booth has a sunken floor that is heated and has a rippled foam base – to enjoy an organic meal made of local produce. Then, to end off what has been a truly splendid day Mr and Mrs Chén enjoy dinner on the esplanade to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary.



After four nights in Cairns, Wěijūn and Xiùyīng catch another first class flight to their next destination - the Gold Coast. At the Gold Coast, the Guangdong China Travel Service agent has organised a romantic gondola cruise dinner, a half-day nature wilderness group tour, and a full-day spa treatment among other things. Each morning, the Chéns take pleasure in a stroll along the beach and even manage to watch the sunrise on one occasion. After four nights on the Gold Coast, Wěijūn and Xiùyīng are on another domestic connection to Sydney for their final days in Australia. In Sydney, Mr and Mrs Chén enjoy some more therapeutic treatments, sightseeing and group tours. On their final night in Australia, Wěijūn and Xiùyīng enjoy a gourmet river cruise around Sydney Harbour.

Now, Wěijūn and Xiùyīng are back in Baiyan after their two-week holiday in Australia. The farm appears to be running smoothly in the hands of their son Wěiyáng, so the Chéns just take their time to unpack and settle into retirement life. Wěijūn and Xiùyīng have many wonderful memories of Australia and have taken lots of photographs that they are looking forward to sharing with Wěiyáng and his family. Mr and Mrs Chén feel that the trip was well worth it and thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it - especially when they could treat themselves to something special. Now, they understand why their friends enjoyed Australia so much having finally had the chance to experience it for themselves!

SCENARIO 2: LUXURY AND LONGEVITY

The constant increases in oil prices over the past decade have made international travel rather expensive. At the same time, consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the impacts of their travel on the environment. A lot of political tension exists between countries, in this case Australia and China, as they fail to consider pressing issues in the same way. Nowadays, Chinese outbound tourism for leisure is virtually non-existent whereas business travel continues to exist but is heavily monitored. As such, there has been a marked growth in corporate travellers from China who seek greener and more ethical experiences, which they are willing to pay for.

Signposts of this world occurring now:

Fuel prices: High oil prices over the past decade have radically changed the aviation industry. These days, fewer seats are offered and prices are higher. New airlines are unable to penetrate the market through undercutting established players.

Disagreement in political policies: Chinese and Australian government officials continue to scrutinise each other's policies. Australia's asylum seeker policies and China's freedom of expression are hot topics lately.

Quality Program: Recently, the China National Tourism Administration has placed great importance on the issue of service quality. The *China Outbound Tourism Quality Service Certification Program* recognises quality suppliers and promotes them through Chinese outbound travel agencies.

Conscious and civilised travellers: Society is concerned about the state of the world for future generations. Thus, travellers now seek greener ways to minimise their footprint. Furthermore, the campaign for civilised tourism continues to shape Chinese citizens' good behaviour domestically and abroad.

How did we get here?

TIMELINE OF CHANGE

2015	Tourism industry operators all around the globe increase efforts to obtain various types of accreditation (e.g., environmental, service etc.).
2016	Strong performance of the Australian dollar (AUD) has a dramatic toll on Australia's inbound tourism visitor numbers.
2017	Conversations at the 18 th round of the Australia-China Human Rights Dialogue are more heated than ever before, causing several senior government officials to resign.
2018	Significant increase in the number of businesses in China offering paid travel as a reward for high performing employees.
2019	Noticeable growth in consumerism of luxury goods in China due to increased disposable income and concern for health (rapid purchase of self-fulfilling products).
2020	Introduction of carbon tax on outbound flights from China to help combat China's growing greenhouse emissions.

The adventures of Mr Tián...

Gānglěi Tián, 45 years old, is the assistant director at Beijing Choice Electronic Co. Ltd. in Beijing, China. Beijing Choice Electronic is one of the leading medical monitoring equipment manufacturers in China. Over the past two years, the company has experienced strong market performance; particularly due to recent partnerships with several South-east Asian companies, which Mr Tián played a leading role in acquiring. Gānglěi is also often a guest lecturer at Peking University Health Science Centre.



Due to Gānglěi's key involvement in the Thai and Indonesian negotiations, the managing director offers Gānglěi a three-day paid holiday. Gānglěi would like to visit Cairns, Australia, as it has been highly recommended by his friend who visited five years ago. In addition, a visit to Cairns would give Mr Tián the opportunity to continue business negotiations with some contacts he made in Sydney two years ago at a health convention. As such, the managing director of Beijing Choice Electronic agrees on Gānglěi having a five-day business-leisure combined holiday.



Australia, in general, is not really promoted on www.ctrip.com anymore due to the current political tension between the two countries. So the working holiday trip is being completely organised through China International Travel Service. Once the details are planned out, the schedule is sent to the Chinese government for approval, as the government now requires all travel agents to register any outbound travel. The trip is approved because it is primarily a work trip with a small reward component - the government is still focussed on the continued guarantee of Chinese citizens' travel and leisure time. Gānglěi receives his itinerary through his PDA four weeks later. As part of his package, Gānglěi has been provided with a link, which contains a personalised greeting from China International Travel Service and a three-minute virtual preview of Cairns.

It's travel day for Gānglěi. He is picked up from his apartment and driven to Beijing International Airport where he checks in via his PDA and proceeds through security to first class business lounge. Mr Tián has flown overseas before to Australia, Thailand and Indonesia on numerous occasions for work but he is quite excited to be travelling on the new commercial jet liner which commenced service just last year. This jet liner was introduced as part of China's goal to reduce its carbon emissions, and uses bio-fuel which is 20 per cent more environmentally friendly than previous fuels. Gānglěi was quite happy to pay the extra cost (compared to business class in an ordinary Airbus) to use this faster, greener service. The flight is scheduled to take a mere five hours from Beijing to Cairns direct, so Gānglěi settles in to watch the latest sci-fi movie with Alex Pettyfer using the 3D glasses and personal surround sound headsets provided.

On arrival into Cairns, Gānglěi gets a limousine transfer to his hotel, the Pullman Reef Hotel Casino which is a China Outbound Tourism Quality Service Certified (QSC) Supplier. At the reception desk, Mr Tián scans his PDA to check-in and collects his tickets for the coming days' activities. Each time Gānglěi's PDA is scanned the details are forwarded to the Chinese government for monitoring; if any unusual activities are recorded that deviate from the approved schedule, Gānglěi will need to submit extra information on his return. This process is not new for Gānglěi; he was introduced to it in 2018 on his Sydney trip. Mr Tián suspects the process this time will be simpler as he is travelling on a five-year re-entry business visa and is already acquainted with the personnel for his planned business negotiations.

For his first full day in Cairns, Gānglěi is booked in for a round of golf at the Cairns Golf Club with the director of Tropical North Sports Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Clinic. The two of them hire a solar-powered golf caddy, and the director tells Mr Tián about the local history between greens. After their round of golf, Gānglěi and the director head to lunch at Dundee's Restaurant – famous for its macadamia and mango barramundi (locally caught) – to discuss a business partnership. The lunch meeting is a success.



On day three of his visit, Gānglěi has two business meetings lined up with the head doctor of separate health clinics. Mr Tián's personal chauffeur drives him between the restaurants (breakfast and lunchtime meetings) – where on both occasions, Gānglěi orders the house speciality. One of the meetings is successful, with the doctor agreeing on purchasing Mr Tián's company's technology for use by their patients. Later that day, Gānglěi heads to DFS Galleria Cairns (another QSC Supplier) in order to buy a new watch and some business clothing and accessories.

For his last full day in Cairns, Gānglěi has a booking at Spa by the Sea (Rydges Tradewinds). His treatment for the day includes a hot rock massage, a body exfoliation session, and unlimited use of the sauna, spa and relaxation lounge. The clinic is both eco-certified and a QSC Supplier as all of the spa's treatment uses environmentally-friendly products and technology. Mr Tián is also treated to five-star catering with Australian sweets and delicacies served all day round. After the day at the spa, Gānglěi is feeling quite de-stressed from his busy workload of the past six months. That night, Gānglěi participates in the hotel's research program, by completing the online survey through his PDA, and enjoys a complimentary dinner at the in-house restaurant.

The next day, Gānglěi is due to catch the red-eye flight back to Beijing. After an Australian mixed grill breakfast – ordered on a virtual menu board and delivered to the room – Gānglěi checks out of the hotel. The hotel's general manager is on-site and thanks Mr Tián for his patronage. He also suggests that Mr Tián should go to Kuranda Village for the day. Upon arriving in Kuranda, Gānglěi firstly visits the local markets where he purchases some local produce to enjoy during the day's outing. Then, Gānglěi heads to Rainforest Nature Park and has an army duck ride through the rainforest. Mr Tián was very glad that he had followed the advice of the hotel's general manager as he had thoroughly enjoyed his day in Kuranda.



Now, Gānglěi is back in Beijing and busy at work again. The five-day work-leisure trip was quite successful. Since his visit to Australia, Mr Tián has had further negotiations with the two companies which agreed to purchase Beijing Choice Electronic technology for their clinics. He has been busy talking with the product development department to create a prototype of a new device that the director of Tropical North Sports Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation Clinic has requested. With respect to the health clinic, Gānglěi is currently organising the first shipment of products to be dispatched by the end of the month.

In a moment of spare time, Gānglěi enjoys reliving his holiday as he writes a trip report for the Chinese government. The most favourable parts of the trip for Gānglěi included travelling in the new jet liner, and enjoying some of the local cuisine specialities like the macadamia and mango barramundi. He also enjoyed his rainforest adventure on the army duck – a recommendation from his friend that visited Cairns five years prior to Gānglěi. Mr Tián really appreciated the opportunity to visit Australia for a second time, and eagerly awaits the day he can return again.

SCENARIO 3: FRIENDLY FORTHCOMING

Global cooperation, prosperity and understanding have created a healthy world. In particular, China and Australia have formed a good political relationship as a result of continued success in joint ventures over the past five years. Both countries have a strong economy, and actively encourage outbound travel. Furthermore, technological advancements have made travel easier and more affordable for citizens who may not have had the luxury of an overseas holiday before. Travel recommendations from peers are extremely important to these new leisure consumers, but at the same time, they value the opportunity to experience something new or different.

Signposts of this world occurring now:

China-Australia political relationship continues to grow: For the past few years, the Chinese and Australian governments have developed a strong diplomatic relationship. Recent events, including the unfortunate tragedy of flight MH370 and the Asia free-trade mission have strengthened the level of cooperation and bond between the two countries.

Government's push for new tourism: The *Outline for National Tourism and Leisure (2013-2020)* promotes the construction of new domestic facilities such as family hotels, motels, and self-drive camping. Citizens who experience these at home may also be interested in experiencing these while travelling abroad.

Increased connectivity: Aviation capacity from China to Australia has grown significantly in the past few years (16 per cent growth in 2012). In addition, services are further increased during peak travel periods in order to cater to demand.

New tourists, different experiences: Recently, there has been a strong growth in outbound travel from second- and third-tier Chinese cities. These new travellers are increasingly independent, slowing down travel, and venturing further afield.

How did we get here?

TIMELINE OF CHANGE	
2015	Significant China outbound tourism growth from citizens of second- and third-tier cities – a majority of which have not travelled before.
2016	Tourism Australia and China Travel Service renew another three-year agreement to continue to promote travel down under to the strong middle class market.
2017	Strong Yuan performance (and exchange rates) encourages Chinese citizens to travel abroad.
2018	Chinese government offers discounted rates on passport applications to further advocate their support for outbound travel.
2019	Australia ranked as world's top country brand (on the Country Brand Index) creating an influx of Chinese visitors both repeat and first-time.
2020	Direct travel from China to Australia reaches 150 flights per week, with an additional 50 indirect services per week.

The adventures of the Luó family...

Mr Jūnyǒng, 40 years, and Mrs Yànxíá Luó, 39 years, are a married couple from Nanjing, the capital of Jiangsu Province, China. Jūnyǒng is a production line worker at Nanjing Iron and Steel Co and his wife, Yànxíá, is a sales representative at Nanjing Pharmaceutical Co. They have two children – one daughter, Yángpíng, 15 years, and one son, Jiétāo, 13 years who both attend Jinling Middle School located in downtown Nanjing.



The Luó family have decided to go on a family vacation to celebrate Yángpíng being accepted to Jinling High School, one of the most prestigious high schools in China. Instead of the usual domestic adventure, Jūnyǒng and Yànxíá thought they would treat the kids to an overseas holiday. This would only be the second time overseas for each family member. Mr and Mrs Luó visited Phuket, Indonesia in 2005 on a special three-day packaged vacation introduced by Air China to help tourism recovery after the Tsunami in December 2004. Their passports have since expired but the recent announcement by the government of discounted passport application fees was another key factor in choosing an overseas trip. On the other hand, Yángpíng and Jiétāo have both been on a two-week study tour to the United States of America in 2017 and 2019 respectively. The Jinling Middle School introduced study tours for all first year students, in accordance with the Xi Jinping government's *Outline for National Tourism and Leisure (2013-2020)*.



Jūnyǒng and Yànxíá have decided on a 10-day family vacation to Australia due to a recent promotion they saw on a virtual billboard. In particular, a family friend has recommended that they visit Cairns and Melbourne, so they will spend four nights in each city. Yànxíá has done some research on www.ctrip.com for reviews of particular places and things not to be missed on a visit to these destinations. The Luó family have booked their flights and accommodation for each leg of their trip, but decide not to book any tours just yet, and will instead visit a travel agent when they arrive in Cairns and Melbourne respectively.

Before the main holiday, the Luó family decide to spend two nights in Shanghai with Yànxíá's brother. Yànxíá's brother, who has just returned from Australia four months ago, suggests that they should eat at Ochre – a restaurant famous for authentic Australian dishes – one night when in Cairns.

After their overnight economy flight from Shanghai to Cairns – now only 8 hours on Cathay Pacific's new Boeing 777-X – the Luó family check in at their accommodation, which is a deluxe family suite at the Big 4 Cairns Crystal Cascades. The whole family has been looking forward to this because they have stayed in family hotels in China and are keen to compare the two countries' styles. After settling in and checking out the facilities at the Crystal Cascades, the Luó family visits FNQ Travel (an ADS approved inbound tour operator) to plan out their Cairns visit. A FNQ Travel agent books them on a two-day Australian wilderness and culture tour starting the next day.



Day one of their tour involves a full-day four-wheel drive excursion around the Atherton Tablelands, stopping at waterfalls and lookouts. Jūnyǒng, Yànxíá, Yángpíng and Jiétāo are all surprised to see how different the waterfalls are to those back in China, and really enjoy their first “smoko”- lamingtons, home-made scones and billy tea. After their excursion, the Luó family call into a local shop and buy some lamingtons to enjoy over the next few days. That night, the Luó family join the Wáng family, another Chinese family on the same tour, for dinner at Ochre. The whole group were quite surprised at the tastiness of kangaroo, crocodile and emu!



The second day of the tour begins with a Cairns-Kuranda return trip, which involves a ride on the scenic train one-way and a ride on Skyrail Rainforest Cableway the other way. Both of these attractions are ADS approved operators and Yànxíá totally agrees with the good reviews she read online – a wonderful way to appreciate the true magnitude of the tropical rainforest. Mr and Mrs Luó even treat the kids to the ‘ultimate operator experience’ for the scenic train. This includes a visit to the engine room and unlimited entry to the kids’ only cart – a replica of the engine room where children can talk to each other on old telephones, pretend to drive the train and even dress up in old station master costumes. Then, in the afternoon and evening the group enjoys a visit to Tjapukai Aboriginal Cultural Park for the dance show and dinner. Yángpíng and Jiétāo are lucky enough to be invited to the stage to participate in a traditional Aboriginal dance with the elders!

With one day left in Cairns, the Luó family rent a car and make the drive up to Port Douglas as recommended by Jūnyǒng’s work colleague. In Port Douglas, the Luó family visits Wildlife Habitat for a majority of the day before an afternoon stroll along Four Mile Beach. Yànxíá had read an online poll about what is the cutest Australian mammal – koala or wombat? So, the Luó family make it their mission to get a family picture with all the mammals at Wildlife Habitat to ask their friends back at home. Later, the Luó family enjoy one last evening in their family suite, as they are off to Melbourne the next day for some more sightseeing and to experience some “glamping” along the Great Ocean Road.



Now, the Luó family have returned home to Nanjing, and everyone is back at work and school respectively. Jūnyǒng, Yànxíá, Yángpíng, and Jiétāo are all glad that they had this opportunity to experience Australia together and were fascinated with the differences in lifestyles between China and Australia. The four-wheel drive excursion was definitely a highlight for the whole family.

Yángpíng and Jiétāo are due to give a presentation at school about their Australian trip in the next week. Yànxíá is busy uploading a few of the family’s favourite photos to www.ctrip.com along with her thoughts of Australia. And Jūnyǒng has been researching more about four-wheel driving – perhaps for the next family adventure in China! The Luó family are also busy catching-up with friends and colleagues to share their travel adventures and to give them souvenirs as a thank-you for recommending such a fantastic trip!

By the way, the wombat is currently winning the cutest Australian mammal poll!

SCENARIO 4: AUTHENTIC AVENUES

The whole world is prospering from a healthy economy, which has been supported by technological advancements of the past decade. Political and societal endorsement for outbound tourism is at an all-time high in China. As such, more and more Chinese citizens are engaging in outbound travel – many not for the first time either. Popular tourist sites are, however, starting to show signs of heavy visitation. Chinese outbound travellers are now looking for new, authentic travel experiences as they broaden their international holiday expertise.

Signposts of this world occurring now:

A recovered economy: The world economy is showing signs of recovery from the Global Financial Crisis in 2007-2008. Global activity strengthened in the second half of 2013 and is anticipated to improve further in 2014 and 2015.

Guarantee of citizens' leisure time: China's government is focussed on creating leisure time for its citizens through the *Outlines for National Tourism and Leisure (2013-2020)*. These guidelines include both domestic and international strategies, which aim to provide both the means and facilities for tourism-related activities.

Micro-blogging hits macro heights: Chinese social media has grown exponentially in the past few years. Everyday citizens are increasingly utilising online mediums to share travel experiences and seek personal recommendations and information.

From photography to immersion: Recently, there has been a shift in China outbound tourists' preferences from seeing the famous sites towards experiencing the local culture. Experienced travellers are seeking more authentic and unusual experiences.

How did we get here?

TIMELINE OF CHANGE	
2015	Global economic growth is stronger than projected (4.1 per cent), largely due to the recovery in advanced economies but also growth in developing economies.
2016	Australian government and China National Tourism Administration renew another five-year Memorandum of Understanding, focussing on the dispersal of tourism flows to regional areas.
2017	National roll-out of Aus-e-connect makes independent research and booking of destinations, hotels and tourism-related activities a lot easier.
2018	President Xi Jinping wins the 2018 elections and continues to implement initiatives that aim to create more leisure time for Chinese citizens.
2019	Registered Chinese micro-blogging accounts reaches 800 million users, creating mass consumer-to-consumer data.
2020	Category 5 cyclone Paddy hits Cairns, Australia causing \$1 billion in damage and disrupting inbound tourism for a short period of time.

The adventures of Lifāng Yè...

Lifāng Yè, 33 years old, is a post-doctoral researcher at the Chengdu Kinesiology University in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China. Her research focus is on rehabilitation programs for gymnasts after muscular tear injuries. Ms Yè was lucky enough to have been a part of the Chinese sports rehabilitation team for both the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 (junior position) and the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games in 2016 (head exercise physiologist).



About six months ago, Lifāng received a wedding invitation to one of her close friends in Australia. Lifāng really wanted to attend but was unsure whether she would be able to get the time off work - the university had recently started a new project for which Ms Yè was the lead researcher. However, as it had been almost four years since her last international holiday, her request for three weeks' holidays was granted (in keeping with the government's policy of guaranteeing citizens' travel and leisure time). As Lifāng has been working hard ever since graduating with her PhD five years ago, she thought she deserved a bit of an adventure. Lifāng was so excited about travelling to Australia again and called her friend, Monica, with the good news. It has been almost two years since they last saw each other when Monica came to China for a visit.



As soon as her holidays are approved, Lifāng messages her Australian friends about her upcoming visit. Ms Yè did a Masters of Rehabilitation (Physio) at James Cook University Townsville during 2010 and 2011, and has friends still in the area. As the wedding is in Port Douglas, Lifāng decides to fly into Townsville, spend a few days with friends and then slowly make her way to Port Douglas. Lifāng searches www.ctrip.com on her voice-command tablet for any good deals, and manages to book her flights and a couple of nights' accommodation in Townsville and Port Douglas. These are Lifāng's only definitive plans - she intends to book the rest once in Australia. A couple of days later, Lifāng has a message from one of her friends, Sarah, suggesting a nine-day road trip to Cairns. Lifāng accepts the invitation and can't wait to organise it when she meets with Sarah.

Lifāng catches the 11pm flight from Chengdu to Townsville which is scheduled to arrive at 9am. The time passes quickly as Lifāng manages a five-hour sleep and watches some old re-runs of Covert Affairs (her favourite show while in Australia). On arrival into Townsville, she is greeted by some of her Masters' classmates and they head out for brunch on the Strand. Lifāng takes a group selfie and shares it on Weibo with her Chinese friends. Then, the four of them take a drive up Castle Hill and around town so Lifāng can see how much Townsville has changed. Later that day, Lifāng heads to her Masters' supervisor's house for a barbeque (she has missed these dearly since leaving Australia). It was a great day of catching up with friends and Ms Yè loves being in Australia again!

The next day, Lifāng has organised a trip to Crystal Creek with her old host family. It has been nine years since Lifāng was last here - a couple of weeks after Cyclone Yasi where the water was in full flow. They enjoy a swim and a picnic lunch before returning. Lifāng then meets up with Sarah, and that evening, they plan and book some of their upcoming adventure.



The road trip begins with Lifāng and Sarah collecting the hire car then making their way to Hervey's Range Heritage Tea Rooms for coffee and home-made scones. Lifāng loves the Australian 'smoko' and after a refreshing break, they continue to Undara Lodge arriving at 3pm for a bush walk. The next day, Lifāng and Sarah are booked in for cave diving. Due to Cyclone Paddy, wide spread flooding in the region has caused the larva caves to fill with water and create a niche tourism product. Lifāng couldn't resist this unique opportunity, and afterwards, blogs on Weibo about her fantastic experience. The last night in Undara is enjoyed with a campfire and story sharing. After their short visit to Undara, Lifāng and Sarah continue onto Innisfail, stopping at Forty Mile Scrub National Park and Ravenshoe.

On the morning of the fourth day, Lifāng and Sarah do some internet surfing for the next leg of their journey. They find some good deals for the Atherton Tablelands and pencilled in a two-night wellness escape for a couple of days' time. After lunch, Lifāng and Sarah go for a short drive to Paronella Park for the afternoon and evening tours. Lifāng recalls seeing the coverage of Paronella Park, post Cyclone Paddy, but can't believe the wide-spread damage she is seeing - she makes a plea to her social media friends who are considering a trip down under to visit Paronella Park to support the restoration project.



The fifth day was another adventurous day with white water rafting down the Tully River. This was the first time rafting for both Lifāng and Sarah; they had planned to do a trip after Cyclone Yasi in 2011 but it never eventuated, so they were glad they could experience the full force of rafting this time around! On the tour, they meet a bunch of local girls and organised to have dinner out together that night.

After their three-night stay in Innisfail, Lifāng and Sarah are off to the Atherton Tablelands. It is a day of sightseeing with many selfies taken in front of all the waterfalls. That night, Lifāng uploads her favourite pictures to Weibo and checks in with all her friends in the comfort of their spa cottage at Eden House Retreat and Mountain Spa. The next day, Lifāng and Sarah treat themselves – a massage, a facial, and some hydrotherapy at the on-site day spa – followed by a walk through the tropical gardens and dinner at the Retreat's restaurant. Then, for the last day in Atherton, Lifāng and Sarah hire some bikes – Lifāng has a passion for all types of physically challenging sports – and go on the hunt for platypi while enjoying the scenery. The rainforests of the Wet Tropics are definitely one of Ms Yè's favourite places in the world!

Day eight marks the final leg – Atherton Tablelands to Cairns – and Lifāng and Sarah want to sample some of the region's local produce. First up is a visit to Golden Drop Mango Winery followed by lunch in Mareeba and an afternoon treat at Coffee Works. And finally, for their last day together, Lifāng and Sarah head to DFS Cairns Galleria for some retail therapy. Lifāng mainly buys some new designer clothes, accessories and a few other items for herself. That night, Lifāng and Sarah return the rental car to the airport, where Sarah catches a flight to Townsville and Lifāng catches a taxi to her overnight accommodation – The Shang-ri La Hotel. Tomorrow, Lifāng is off to Port Douglas for Monica's wedding in two days' time.

The next morning, Lifāng is being picked up by Monica's mother to make the drive up to Port Douglas. The weather couldn't be more perfect so they take their time, driving along the coastal route, stopping many times for photo opportunities. Then, on the day before the wedding, Lifāng plans a nice relaxing day shopping along Macrossan Street before fish and chips on Four Mile Beach. Afterwards, she heads out to Flames of the Forest for her friend's wedding that will be held the next day.



Now, Lifāng is back in Chengdu and working again on that research project at the university. Lifāng was so thrilled to have been able to celebrate her friend's wedding, and to see some of the more 'off-the-beaten-track' destinations that far north Queensland has to offer. Whilst Ms Yè was there for Cyclone Yasi in 2011, seeing some of the damage, she can't believe how beautiful this region continues to be even after being constantly battered by severe tropical cyclones. Lifāng encourages all her friends to visit down under!

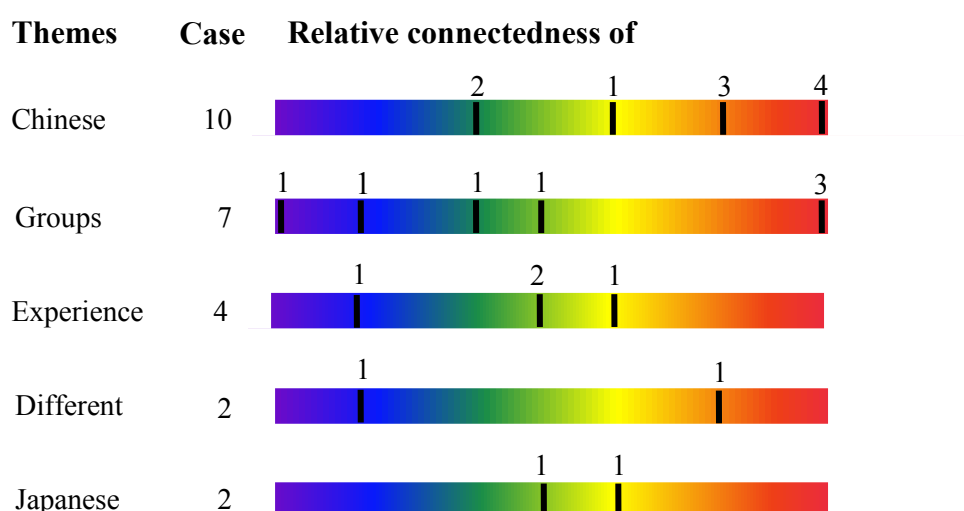
APPENDIX 6.3 CONSTRUCTING THE LEXIMANCER PORTRAYAL

Tourism stakeholders' response to "how would you describe the typical current Chinese market to your attraction/destination?" were originally analysed independently using Leximancer 4.0. Leximancer is a text analytics tool that measures (and visually displays) concepts based on both their presence within the text and how they co-occur or interrelate (<http://www.leximancer.com/>). The nature of the data – mainly spoken language and shortness of text – produced themes such as "things", "particularly" and "certainly". Further exploration of these themes (using the report tabs e.g., thematic, concept, and query) indicated poor representation of the interview data. For example, the following extracts were returned for "thing":

"...one of the things we are currently looking at..."

"...a key target for us is the business side of things, through what we're doing with the educational tourism."

Therefore, a researcher-driven Leximancer portrayal was constructed (using the Leximancer findings). The first step was to identify reoccurring themes. Individual thematic summaries were reviewed; the number of times a theme was identified and its relative connectedness was recorded (see figure below).



Collective themes and their relative connectedness across stakeholder maps

Note. ^a Number of individual stakeholder maps in which this theme was identified. ^b Number of individual stakeholder maps based on their respective level of relative connectedness.

Altogether, five reoccurring themes were identified including “Chinese”, “groups”, “experience”, “different”, and “Japanese”. The dominant theme was “Chinese” as identified in 10/15 individual concept maps. Four stakeholder conversations highlighted this theme as the most discussed (red) with another three as the second-most discussed topic (orange). The next prominent theme “groups” was identified in 7/15 stakeholder maps. Interestingly, this theme was the most connected in three cases while being the least connected in four other stakeholder conversations. The three other themes were identified in significantly fewer cases. “Experience” was identified in 4/15 stakeholder interviews while “different” and “Japanese” was identified in only two cases. These three themes, however, were considered important to the stakeholder discussions due to their inter-connectedness with “Chinese” and “group”.

The second step involved the compilation of a Leximancer portrayal (i.e. researcher-generated concept map). This concept map was developed through a multi-stage, intuitive process. Similar to the process of identifying re-occurring themes, the report tab was again explored to highlight common concepts between the 15 individual concepts maps. The individual concepts of the five previously-identified themes were considered. This stage resulted in many concepts identified in a select few concept maps i.e., not re-occurring.

Further investigation, however, determined that concepts which were labelled differently had similar underlying thoughts. Therefore, the third step involved the selection of concepts which best represented the underlying thoughts (collectively held by multiple stakeholders) of the five themes. Concepts either retained their original label (if it accurately described the underlying thoughts) or were subsequently relabelled to something more appropriate. Then, the links between concepts were established. Figure 6.2 displays the researcher’s Leximancer portrayal; links between concepts are indicated by grey lines. One difference between the themes in step one and step two is the reverse ordering of “experience” and “different”. After a thorough review of the Leximancer excerpts, “different” was concluded to be more central to stakeholder discussions than “experience”. The five themes and their concepts will now be considered, in order of relative connectedness to the interview conversations.

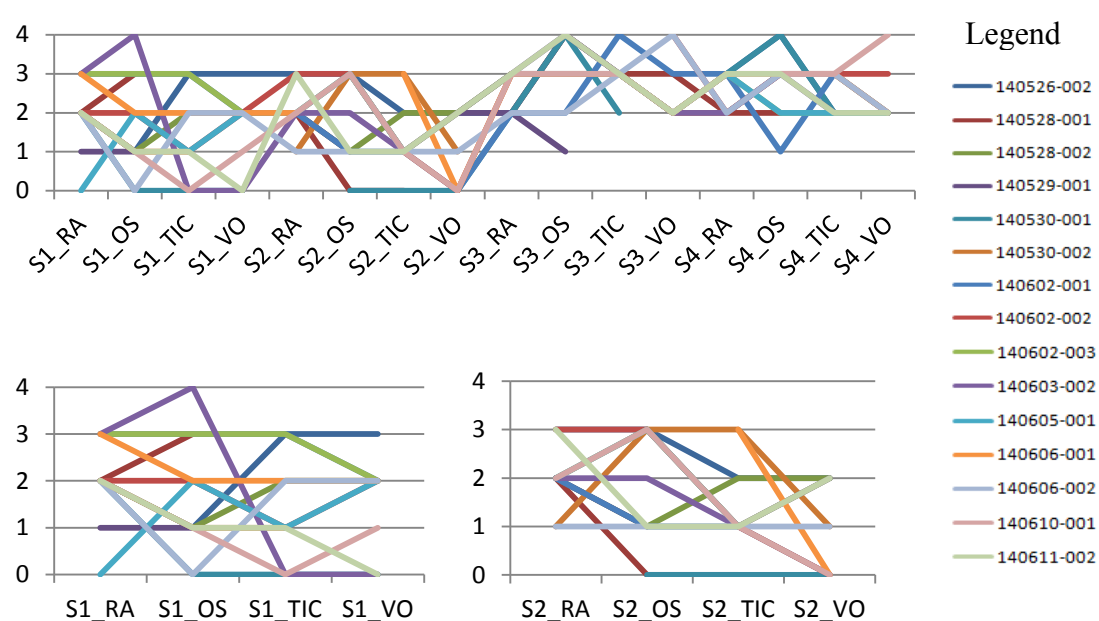
APPENDIX 6.4. EXPLORATION OF THE STAKEHOLDERS' OPTIMISM SCORES

After the extensive qualitative treatment of tourism stakeholders' current perspectives, future attitudes were explored through a researcher-driven clustering approach. Specifically, stakeholders' optimism scores were utilised to identify several types of optimist groups. Initial investigations involved frequency analysis according to three simple classifications: (1) pessimistic: stakeholders were scored 0 on the optimism scale for that particular dimension, for that specific scenario; (2) neutral: stakeholders were scored a 1; and (3) optimistic: stakeholders were scored a 2, 3 or 4. The table below displays the results for this analysis.

Descriptive statistics for the optimism levels of the four Chinese scenarios

Degree of optimism	Worried world		Luxury and longevity		Friendly forthcoming		Authentic avenues	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Reality acceptance	(n = 15)		(n = 14)		(n = 14)		(n = 13)	
<i>Pessimistic</i>	1	6.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<i>Neutral</i>	1	6.7	2	14.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
<i>Optimistic</i>	13	86.7	12	85.7	14	100.0	13	100.0
Organisational survivability	(n = 15)		(n = 14)		(n = 14)		(n = 14)	
<i>Pessimistic</i>	2	13.3	2	14.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
<i>Neutral</i>	6	40.0	5	35.7	1	7.1	1	7.1
<i>Optimistic</i>	7	46.7	7	50.0	13	92.9	13	92.9
Tourism-industry condition	(n = 13)		(n = 14)		(n = 13)		(n = 12)	
<i>Pessimistic</i>	3	23.1	2	14.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
<i>Neutral</i>	4	30.8	8	57.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
<i>Optimistic</i>	6	46.2	4	28.6	13	100.0	12	100.0
Visitation outlook	(n = 14)		(n = 13)		(n = 13)		(n = 13)	
<i>Pessimistic</i>	3	21.4	5	38.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
<i>Neutral</i>	1	7.1	2	15.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
<i>Optimistic</i>	9	64.3	6	46.2	13	100.0	13	100.0

In the above table, the number of respondents falling into each optimism group for the different optimism dimensions and Chinese scenarios fluctuated greatly. This indicates that individual stakeholders responded quite differently in their attitudes towards the four Chinese futures. Accordingly, further analysis of tourism stakeholders' optimism scores aimed to cluster respondents who had similar stances across multiple scenarios. In order to achieve this, individual respondents were compared against one another in line graphs depicting the four scenarios. The figure below illustrates tourism stakeholders' optimism scores.



Inset A: Worried World scenario

Inset B: Luxury and longevity scenario

Tourism stakeholders' optimism scores

Note. S1, S2 etc. = Scenario 1, Scenario 2 etc.; RA = Reality acceptance; OS = Organisational Survivability; TIC = Tourism-industry Condition; VO = Visitation Outlook.

The above figure revealed minimal difference in stakeholders' opinions towards scenarios 3 (friendly forthcoming) and 4 (authentic avenues). Further clustering, therefore, was based off the responses for scenario 1 and 2. On further examination, however, no strong optimist clusters emerged. Tourism stakeholders were determined to be quite diverse in the viewpoints towards the future. Hence, the decision for qualitative reporting of emerging themes.