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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY INTO THE MEANING OF PHANTASMAL DESTINATION AND THE PHENOMENON OF PHANTASMAL TOURISM THROUGH THE GROUNDED THEORY METHOD: *THE CASE OF SHANGRI-LA OF YUNNAN, CHINA*

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An Exploratory Study into the Meaning of Phantasmal Destination and the Phenomenon of Phantasmal Tourism through the Grounded Theory Method:
The Case of Shangri-la of Yunnan, China

GAO BO, WENDY

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2010

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ABSTRACT

Shangri-la is a destination created and reshaped after a totally imagined place by the British writer James Hilton in his novel *Lost Horizon,* published in 1933. Despite its fictional origins, Shangri-la has become synonymous in Western cultures with the idea of a heavenly place on earth. The name, which is an invented word without any meaning in any known language, has subsequently entered into English. The Collins English Dictionary defines it as "a remote or imaginary utopia". It is currently being presented as an actual place located in Yunnan province, China. In December 2001, Zhongdian County, the capital county of Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, was renamed by the County Government, and the State Council officially announced it as Shangri-la County in May 2002. On 30th November 2007 Peter Ford published an article in the South China Morning Post, raising the alarm that "Shangri-la", which claimed to have inspired mythical accounts of heaven on earth, was becoming a "paradise lost" as a result of the hordes of tourists visiting the region.

Previous tourist destination studies have focused mainly on tourist behavior, such as travel motivation, perception, and experiences, in specific physical places, including countries, cities, and rural areas. Although a number of tourism studies have described the creation of myths about tourist destinations, there is little research concerned with the reasons why people visit such imaginary places. How do tourists perceive fictional destinations

and what are those perceptions based on? How do they identify the location? In this thesis, this type of locale is referred to as a 'phantasmal destination' and Shangri-la is taken as a typical illustration of such a phantasmal destination.

The hypothesis of this argument is that in the mind of this specific type of visitor, the myth becomes actual history; the fiction that first served it is accepted, either as a documentary or, at least, a revelation that points to a more significant knowledge than their own. These places are presented as reality or reality mythologized through films and books, which, in turn influence the reality. In the first instance, myth becomes reality. In the second instance, a mythologized (illusory) version of the reality replaces it. Often, the resulting somewhat 'structured' site (place or attraction) is presented openly or implicitly as a heritage site. Phantasmal destination is defined here as an imaginary place embedded in a physical space. This type of imaginary place represents an essential component in a complex system of beliefs. In the context of travel, the tourist turns geographic locations into 'destinations' by mentally contriving and re-imagining landscapes.

The main purpose of this exploratory study is to investigate how a phantasmal destination interacts with the realistic 'lived-in' world. The research aims to take a micro-perspective, supported by imaginative geographies, and a postmodern theoretical framework to examine of the traveler process in visiting the phantasmal destination, Shangri-La in the Yunnan province of China. In particular, travel inspiration, expectations,

perception of the destination, personal psychology, and travel experience are explored. Four research questions are proposed with regards to understanding the phenomenon of visiting a phantasmal destination and how the attributes of the destination meets those phantasmal tourists' expectations.

Following the constructivism paradigm, an inductive qualitative research approach is chosen, and grounded theory approach is adopted for the exploratory research. This method is characterized by constant comparative data analysis, theoretical sampling, and theoretical coding. This study consists of three stages. At stage one, the secondary data of eight published travelogues and 55 online travel blogs on Shangri-la, Yunnan province, were collected and email interviews with those bloggers were conducted. Subsequently, on site observation and informal interviews with the travelers were carried out. Based on the results of data analysis of travelogues, travel blogs and observations, semi-structured in-depth interview questions were prepared. At the final stage, 47 individual travelers were interviewed in Shangri-la and surrounding areas such as Meili Mountains and Yubeng village, as the participants recognized these places as being close to the description of the fictional Shangri-la. Six out of 47 interviews were deleted because of the poor quality of digital voice recording. Finally 41 interviews were analyzed using the constant comparative process. Constant comparative data analysis, the core method to establish analytic distinctions, consists of four steps: comparing incidents applicable to each

category, integrating categories and their properties, delimiting the theory, and writing the theory.

The findings show that media promotion incited tourists' inspiration to discover an idealized authentic world. The chaos of the modern world and rapid development of globalization stimulated some people's desire to escape from their crowded lives and seek a peaceful, simple lifestyle. They wanted to explore authentic destinations before these locations were irrevocably changed and modernized. Those participants perceived Shangri-la as challenging but accessible; with a sense of a natural air of mystery; a place that incites spirituality; with particularly endearing remoteness and primitive aspects; a landscape unspoiled by development, and a simple peaceful lifestyle present in a small village. The travelers that evaluated their experience of Shangri-la were more concerned with intangible attributes, rather than tangible attributes. Their travel experiences in Shangri-la were categorized into four properties: feeling the mythical Shangri-la atmosphere, the authentic feeling of Shangri-la, scenic natural attractions, and social reality.

Guided by the overall findings and informed by the data analysis paradigm, a theoretical framework was developed. This framework illustrated the tourist process when searching out a phantasmal destination, marked by their travel inspirations, perceptions, expectations, and experience, and factors influencing the searching process were identified. These factors included societal change and the significance of media, word of mouth, and

personality. This framework suggests that the phenomenon of phantasmal tourism is affected by both external stimuli (such as urbanization and commercialization), and personality. In addition, travel motives, perception, and expectation interactively affect each other and together influence the overall travel experience.

The most important contribution of this study is the discovery and identification of a new type of tourist destination, named 'phantasmal destination'. This type of destination has similarities to other tourist attractions that have been classified before, such as, film tourism, literature tourism, cultural tourism, and pilgrimage tourism. However, although it has similarities to those typologies, phantasmal tourism differs significantly in that, regardless of the source of the myth, whether book, film or folk mythology, it is taken to be real by its potential visitors. The phantasmal destination is more a creation of its potential visitors than its modern or historical origins. Destinations and attractions that are based on myth (stories or fables) are distinguished by the fact that visitors to those places know that they are coming to a physical destination that might have served as the location for a fiction, but they have no illusion about the event having actually occurred. However, in the case of phantasmal destination, the myth becomes a reality that, in turn, leads to a reimagining of the myth.

This leads to the second contribution of this study. The findings of the research strongly suggest common personality traits that phantasmal tourists share. Although the scope of this current study does not investigate

this possible phenomenon in detail, it serves to raise foundations for future studies. If correlations between personality traits and travel motivations can be established through research, the implications of such findings will be significant both for the advancement of knowledge in the field and for innovation in managerial practices.

The third important question that arises is whether it is at all possible to satisfy the expectations of a phantasmal tourist. This study shows that whilst it is possible to satisfy the expectations of a phantasmal tourist, there are significant challenges. Challenges that should be met by destination managers, as phantasmal tourists are more likely to revisit the phantasmal destination once their expectations are validated. Furthermore, this study shows that destination managers can take advantage of this phenomenon by carefully designing and marketing suitable destinations once their phantasmal attributes are confirmed. Diligent design and marketing, informed by sound research, will also lead to better-designed and managed destinations that neither insist on the acceptance of the myth nor attempt to contradict it. Such destinations will also be appealing to visitors other than phantasmal, carrying a degree of interest to other types of tourists.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The process of a PhD can be likened to a long journey. The final destination is pre-determined, but there are distractions and detours along the way. Important people are left behind, albeit temporarily, and new companions help with the smooth process of the trip. Although the journey is lonesome, to arrive at the destination safely and on time and returning home intact would not be possible without the support, assistance, guidance, patience and love of many.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Tourism, as a type of social phenomenon, has attracted increasing interest since the Second World War. Its effects on societies have been considered in relation to economy, sociology, and environment, and have helped reveal some of the artificial differences among cultures, whilst also providing an understanding of the authentic divergences. Mass tourism, growing exponentially after the Great Wars, turned McLuhan's (1989) prediction of the world as a 'global village' into a reality. Tourism, as an internationalized social activity, means that it is no longer possible to study travel patterns in a given society without analyzing developments taking place in most other countries. The dynamics of the association between 'global' and 'local' have pivotal roles in the production, reinvention, identity and consumption of destinations and cultural landscapes. Overpowering trends towards globalization, compression of time-space continuum, and increased media attention have changed local perceptions of urban and rural landscapes (Terkenli, 2005). Against this background, some researchers have begun investigating the nature of contemporary consumption of tourism and hospitality products as a reflection of a postmodern trend (Williams, 2006). Although some scholars view postmodernism as an intellectual fad which is difficult to address, others think valuable insights would result from a discussion of the effects of the postmodern condition on the consumption and marketing of tourism and hospitality (Urry, 2002; Williams, 2006).

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One interpretation of postmodernism presents the cultural tourism viewpoint as a system of signs or symbols, specific in both time and space (Urry, 2002). Williams (2006) states the key concepts of postmodern marketing are fragmentation, indeterminacy and distrust of universal discourse. Through a rejection of modernism, this approach becomes a new and different cultural movement that redefines the way contemporary tourists experience and explain the world. Hyper-reality and image are two of the most relevant aspects of postmodern discourse.

According to Willams (2006), hyper-reality, one of the most discussed aspects of postmodernism, refers to the assertion that reality has collapsed and has become image, illusion, simulation and simulacra. The debate on reality refers to Crang's (1999) assertion, that people selectively filter the perceptions of the world, and reality is constantly shaped by one's experience and the tasks one has at hand. "The perceptual world may be more 'real' and truthful to our experiences than any scientifically defined reality" (Crang, 1999, p. 57). Baudrillard (1993, p. 23), which is referred to as a "hallucinatory resemblance of itself". In tourism, postmodernist interpretations suggest that the arrival of hyper-reality means that simulations not only represent reality, but become reality.

In the postmodern existence, signs and images become more important than the objects and ideas that they represent. Postmodern consumers concentrate on individual explanations of imagery without paying much attention to what those images mean. In this image-centered new world,

tourism consumption and travel patterns are changing significantly. Instead of evaluating the offer in a traditional sense, through marketing communication tools such as advertising, consumers feel it by becoming part of it (Williams, 2006). Urry (2002) refers to this phenomenon as "tourist gaze". This leads to a new way of communicating the product, called 'experiential marketing' (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). This marketing movement is about identifying the essence of the product and transforming it into a set of tangible, physical, interactive experiences, which then reinforces the offer.

Motivated by increasingly complex factors, tourists have become more discerning in their choice of destinations and have begun to seek new and interesting places to visit. Parallel to this, more regions have discovered their tourism potential. The result is a highly competitive destination marketing environment where a large number of destinations are fighting for an increasingly sensitive tourist market in search of new experiences. This leads to new developments in destination marketing, including applying new ideas to mature destinations to change the perception of the prospective tourists, such as the cases of Singapore and Dubai. On the other hand, tourists also create meanings for, and transform their imaginations to, a physical place, such as Middle Earth and a utopian world.

As an example, we can point to the growing interest in metaphysical tours (Whitehill, 2007) where tourists visit places such as the Great Pyramid in Egypt, not for historical or geographical motivations, but for the assumed attributes of the destination. In this particular example, the participants in the

tour believe that when the ancient and probably mythical civilization of Atlantis fell more than 30,000 years ago the collected wisdom of the ancients was placed on the site of the Great Pyramid. The motivation for these tourists is to access that wisdom to benefit humanity.

The Atlantis phenomenon is not isolated. Increasing numbers of tourists, mainly from first world countries; affluent, educated and middle-aged, are participating in tours of this kind. The popularity of these types of destinations is reflected in the widespread variety of forms. The fictional kingdom of Shangri-La, which stemmed from the imagination of James Hilton and featured in the novel *Lost Horizon,* has attracted tourists from around the globe since the Chinese State Council renamed Zhongdian County in Yunnan province as Shangri-la. These tourists may believe in the myth that the inhabitants of Shangri-la lived abnormally long lives, protecting the accumulated knowledge of all history. The success of this destination has resulted in it being declared a government-sanctioned tourist region in China.

1.2 THE PHENOMENON OF SHANGRI-LA TOURS

Writer of The Christian Science, Peter Ford (2007), raises the alarm regarding the risk that "Shangri-la", which claims to have inspired mythical accounts of heaven on earth, is becoming a "paradise lost" as a result of the hordes of tourists flocking there. This article was also published in the South China Morning Post on 30th November 2007. The news intrigued my long

held curiosity about why people visit those imaginary places. How do they perceive those fictional destinations and on what do they base their perceptions? How do they identify the location? Before looking at previous studies for possible answers, it is necessary to briefly introduce the Shangri-la myth and its promotion as a tourist destination.

1.2.1 Shangri-la Myth

Shangri-la is a destination created and reshaped after a place totally imagined by the British writer James Hilton in his novel *Lost Horizon.* The novel was published in 1933 and produced as a film in 1973. Hilton's novel begins with the description of four Europeans evacuating from 'Baskul' by light airplane. Later, they find themselves being kidnapped and taken to the Himalayan ranges by an 'Oriental'. Their plane crash lands in a remote corner of Tibet and the pilot immediately dies. They are rescued by the retinue of a passing lama and taken to the valley of the Blue Moon, where they are accommodated in the 'lamasery' of Shangri-la. As the story progresses, we learn that Shangri-la is a storehouse of world culture. The place is an earthly paradise, providing the entire intellectual and sensual pleasures of modern civilization while providing a retreat from it pressures. The inhabitants, who enjoy the tranquil and peaceful environment, and the prospect of a long life in Shangri-la, hope the four Europeans remain in Shangri-la however, one of them is restless to leave. Fearing for his safety, the novel's central character Conway escorts the dissenter out of the valley, but loses his way back to Shangri-la in the process. At the end of the story,

Conway is still desperately trying to find his way back to the valley of the Blue Moon in Shangri-la.

James Hilton wrote *Lost Horizon* between the two world wars and its success is often attributed to people's desire for a paradise on earth at a time where hope was lost. "Hilton's tale reflects more than anything else its author's reaction against the shortcomings of western civilization in particular and the human condition in general" (Hutt, 1996, p. 51). The popular success of the novel and subsequent film, over more than eighty years is also revealed in the popularization of the term Shangri-la. The Shangri-la myth deals with great themes: Can there be peace on earth? Is a Utopian ideal attainable and, if so, how can it be realized? The publication of the book coincided with the rise of Nazi power in Germany. The book and the subsequent film touched a nerve in Western society, and Hilton's oasis in the Himalayan Mountains became part of our lexicon, synonymous with Utopia itself (Bishop, 1989).

1.2.2 Shangri-la Tours in Yunnan, China

Despite its fictional origins, Shangri-la has become identical with the Western cultural idea of a heavenly place on earth. The name, which is an invented word without any meaning in any known language, has subsequently entered into English. The Collins English Dictionary defines it as "a remote or imaginary utopia". The idea of such a heavenly place has caught the imagination of readers worldwide. Does such a place really exist or is it a sheer fantasy? Whilst some say that it may indeed be a real place,

Hilton professed that his readers would not find Shangri-la on any map. However, it is now being presented as an actual place located in the Yunnan province of China.

In December 2001, Zhongdian County, the capital county of Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, was renamed by the county government and the State Council and officially announced as Shangri-la County in May 2002 (Hillman, 2003). The decision was based on the opinion of experts who had conducted research on the location of the fictional Shangri-la since the mid-1990s, and came to the conclusion that the 'real Shangri-la' was located in Diqing due to the three rivers crisscrossing the area, the Mekong (Lancang), the Salween (Nu) and the Golden Sand (Jinsha), as described in the book. They also found that an American transport plane did crash in Zhongdian in 1944. Although the timeline is contradictory, as the novel was published in 1933, and the author never visited China, but built his earthly paradise based on the descriptions of a photographer's work which was published in *National Geographic* magazine (Hillman, 2003), the promotion of the "discovery" of Shangri-la has benefited local tourism development. Diqing received over 1.5 million tourists in 2002 after renaming the destination to Shangri-la. Overseas visitors increased from 84,100 in 2001 to 130,000 in 2003, and foreigner arrivals continued to increase to nearly half a million by the year 2007 (Table 1.1). Again, the question is whether these tourists are attracted to the Shangri-la myth or the promotion of the physical place or, possibly, to both.

Table 1.1 Tourism Statistics of Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture,

1994 – 2007

Year	Tourists arrivals (10,000s)		Foreigners (10,000s)		Tourism Receipts (10,000s RMB ¥)	
	Total	Growth	Arrivals	Growth	Total	Growth
1994	1.50		0.15		0.16	
1995	4.26	184%	1.20	70%	0.19	18.75%
1996	17.42	308%	2.42	101%	0.80	321%
1997	54	209%	2.80	15.70%	1.50	87.50%
1998	65.20	20.74%	3.80	35.71%	1.90	26.67%
1999	112	71.78%	6.30	65.79%	5.40	184%
2000	106.26	-5%	6.76	7%	6.70	24%
2001	124.01	16.70%	8.41	24.41%	8.84	31.94%
2002	150.02	20.97%	10.29	22.35%	11.36	29%
2003	129.70	-13.54%	13	26.34%	10.24	-10%
2004	194.70	50.12%	16.28	25.23%	13.30	29.88%
2005	264.44	35.82%	20.77	27.58%	20.08	50.98%
2006	330.80	25.09%	30.80	48.29%	26.50	31.97%
2007	410.72	24.16%	48.98	59%	36.14	36.38%

Source: Diqing Prefecture Tourism Bureau

1.2.3 The Phenomenon of Searching for Imaginary Places

Shangri-la is a well-known modern myth, an imaginary place. People know it is a fiction, but are still attracted to Shangri-la. To assume that Shangri-la is an accidental case would be erroneous, as tourists are also attracted to UFO city in Roswell New Mexico, United States, or Middle Earth in New Zealand. All these places are fictional (inauthentic) and openly or implicitly give support to surrounding myths to promote it as reality (authentic) to a certain type of tourist. This leads to an examination of what can be considered authentic or inauthentic. Some researchers point out that the seeming authenticity of events and attractions is staged and distorted to suit the needs of both the visitors and their hosts (Boorstin, 1964; MacCannell, 1976; Yeoman, Brass, & McMahon-Beattie, 2007). The

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assumption is that the destination reflects an actual historical legacy that might be presented in an inauthentic manner to suit the needs of the planners and visitors (Urry, 2002). The question raised here is what happens when the 'legacy' is not related to any recorded history, but is based on fiction that is held as 'truth' by a relatively small number. This type of place is referred to as 'phantasmal destination' and will be explored in this thesis.

The study began as an investigation whether a destination that is based on myth with no historical basis existed as an attraction for a select number of visitors. Shangri-La was chosen because it incorporated all the attributes that were identified before the actual study took place. Each destination attracts different kind of visitors that visit the place for different reasons and have different motivations. However, in most cases, visitors can be satisfied with another destination if the one initially chosen is not available. For phantasmal destination, however, the visitors must come for that destination only because of their specific expectations can only be satisfied by the place that claim to be what they are seeking. Although there may be only a small group of tourists seeking for phantasmal destination and experience, when this group of tourists transfer meanings and cultural values that they held in their minds to a physical field, these symbolic meanings and definitions turn out to be socially constructed and become landscapes (Greider & Garkovich, 1994).

Human beings attach meanings to nature and environment that are not naturally present. The environment gains a definition and form from a

specific vision and through a unique filter of values and beliefs. Landscapes, through this process, become symbolic environments, reflecting our self-definitions that have their roots in culture (Greider & Garkovich, 1994). The phantasmal destination is a landscape transformed from the physical environment through mythical and cultural symbols and reflects these tourists' definitions of themselves.

Physical places have the potential to incorporate a number of landscapes within their boundaries. Each of these landscapes stem from the cultural definitions of the people that arrive at the place. Through the use of different symbols that carry different meanings, physical objects or conditions of the natural environment are transformed into landscapes. The symbols and meanings represent sociocultural phenomena – they are social constructions (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Different social and cultural contexts give way to different conceptualizations of the observed nature. Eventually, the nature becomes the same as the context from which it was formed. "Each culture constructs its own world out of the infinite variety of nature … [nature is] socialized … reorganized … [and] made into a material manifestation of social structure" (Busch, 1989, p7). Instate of answering the question of whether Shangri-la is or is not a phantasmal destination, this research unfold an inductive process and focuses on how a group of visitors who participate in the in-depth interview socially construct their perception, experience and understanding of phantasmal destination, with Shangri-la being the instance of this social construction.

1.3 THE GAP IN CURRENT TOURIST DESTINATION STUDIES

In previous tourist destination studies, the focuses have been on tourist behavior in specific physical places, such as countries, cities, and rural areas. Tourist behaviors include tourist motivation, perception, and experiences of a specific physical place. One of the more recent attempts at destination marketing is special interest tourism, where "traveler's motivation and decision-making are primarily determined by a particular special interest with a focus either on activity/ies and/or destinations and settings" (Weiler & Hall, 1992, p. 5), such as literature and film destinations, heritage and religious destinations, and pure fantasy of theme parks (Trauer, 2006). However, on reviewing special interest tourism studies, we find that the destinations are either situated in physical places or in manufactured parks (e.g. Frost, 2006; Gottdiener, 1982; Hanefors & Mossberg, 2002; Squire, 1994). For example, literature and film destinations are considered as a new form of cultural landscape, and the places either relate to real-life authors/actors or have their origins clearly in a lived world. Heritage destination relates to the culture and history of a physical place, and pilgrimage destinations are rooted in the mainstream religions. As Barber (1991) states, the essential difference of religious tourist from other tourists is its journey results from religious causes, externally to a holy site, and internally for spiritual purposes and internal understanding. The theme park is a manufactured product providing a package of tangible and intangible attributes which are perceived by the tourist as an experience available at a certain price (Johns & Gyimothy, 2002; Middleton & Clarke, 2001). There

are studies, books and articles on Shangri-la, however, none of these works is concerned with the phantasmal qualities of the destination or the visitors that seek the product of their imagination in real world. Previous studies have been more interested in myth creation for literary purposes or utilization for marketing strategies and place promotion. Furthermore, current studies on special interest tourism reveal that tourist perception of the literary destination is closely associated with the literature and film setting (Ryan, Zhang, Gu, & Ling, 2008), or historical record (Poria, Reichel, & Biran, 2006). Tourist seeks to visit film sites for clusters of signs (Tzanelli, 2004) that are shown on the screen. Theme parks are bound to a specific space to provide a fantasy experience for tourists. There is a paucity of studies that focus on places created in literature, but difficult to locate on earth. The few studies that are concerned with the fictional place are categorized into either literature/film destination, such as Middle Earth, and is studied within a discussion of the film trilogy, Lord of the Rings (Carl, Kindon, & Smith, 2007), or theme parks, such as Santa Claus village in Lapland, Finland (Pretes, 1995). The core argument in the pages that follow is that tourists cannot be categorized into film or theme park tourists if they believe that Middle Earth or Santa Claus village exist as authentic places and are seriously seeking these places. These tourists are searching for a special type of place for their unique special interest. This is the case for the particular set of people seeking Shangri-la as an earthly paradise that existed (and may still exist) in reality. In this thesis, this type of place is referred to as a 'phantasmal destination'.

The hypothesis of this argument is that in the mind of this specific type of visitor, the myth that introduced the place becomes actual history; the fiction that first served it is accepted either as a documentary or, at least, a revelation that points to a higher reality than our own. These places are presented as reality or reality that was mythologized through films and books, which, in turn influence the reality. In the first instance, myth becomes reality. In the second instance, a mythologized (illusory) version of the reality replaces it. Often, the resulting somewhat 'structured' site (place or attraction) is presented openly or implicitly as a heritage site. Tzanelli (2004) suggested that this form of misrecognition of the artificial for real in urban milieus provides another link between the "loss of the self" in consumption and modern life in the developed world.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this exploratory study is to investigate how a phantasmal destination interacts with the realistic 'lived-in' world. The research aims to take a micro-perspective, supported by imaginative geographies and a postmodern theoretical framework to examine the process of travelers visiting a phantasmal destination, Shangri-La in Yunnan, China. In particular, travel inspiration, expectations, perception of the destination, personal psychology, and travel experience are explored.

The research questions include: a) What are the motives that inspire tourists to visit a phantasmal destination? b) How do tourists perceive a

phantasmal destination, such as Shangri-La? c) How do the nature and level of the tangible and intangible attributes of the place influence the visitors' experience of a phantasmal destination? d) What factors could mediate the process of visiting a phantasmal destination?

Specifically, the research objectives are:

1. To assess why tourists are attracted to a phantasmal destination and their expectations of the place.

2. To investigate the underlying dimensions of travel inspirations for visiting a phantasmal destination.

3. To understand how tourists define the notion of a phantasmal destination.

4. To explore the effects of the nature and level of destination attributes on experiences of a phantasmal destination.

5. To examine closely the mediators in the process of visiting a phantasmal destination.

6. To develop a conceptual framework of the process of visiting a phantasmal destination for future research.

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1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

By exploring the meaning attached to the creation of a phantasmal destination from the tourists' perspective within the context of Shangri-la in Yunnan, China, this thesis provides a fresh perspective to the link between the imaginary, and the search for its concretization through destination marketing. Phantasmal destinations which do not exist on earth, but merely imagined in people's minds, have seldom been studied in tourism and destination marketing research.

This study is significant in contributing to the extant knowledge of how a phantasmal destination interacts with the realities of the lived world. The results of the research will provide a number of benefits to managerial practices relating to tourism. Firstly, it will contribute to current knowledge of travel motivation for phantasmal destinations. An increasingly sophisticated set of visitors necessitate understanding the very specific motives that entice them to choose a destination over its competitors. This is important both from a destination marketing point of view (the more we understand the decision making behavior of prospective tourists the more we can develop campaigns to attract them) and from a social psychological viewpoint where lifestyle factors influence travel decisions in a profound way. At a time when it is becoming increasingly necessary, but equally difficult to differentiate destinations, it is of importance to determine factors that would give a destination the edge that competitors would either find difficult or impossible to replicate. The supposed records of knowledge left

by an ancient culture that, by all historical accounts, never existed, or a fictional place that became real through a generation's desire for utopia are unique in the eyes of their believers. The majority of studies on tourist motivation to date, although numerous, have investigated the more general attractions of the destination which influence the decision making of prospective visitors, but specific attributes that appeal to niche markets have not yet received due attention.

Secondly, image studies have concentrated on the mass perceptions of physical destinations, the perceptions of an imagined place has not been explored in previous studies. This paper sheds light on the perceptions of phantasmal destination by relying on in-depth interviews with tourists in the mountainous region of Shangri-la. The findings provide destination planners with evidence for the necessity to reconstruct destination image and marketing plans taking cue from the tourists' perceptions of the phantasmal place.

Finally, this study attempts to establish a conceptual framework to examine the relationship between perceived attributes of a destination created by non-historical or physical qualities, and other mythical importance attached by a relatively small but important segment of the tourist population. Understanding the behavior of those visitors motivated by perceived mythical qualities, and analyzing the relationships between the determinants of their travel experience will have both academic and managerial implications. This research develops a framework to explain the process of visiting a specific type of destination (termed 'phantasmal' for the purposes

of this study) by determining the factors of motivation, perception, experience, and investigating the relationships among them.

The results of this study provide further insight into consumer decision-making for tourism products. It is aimed at providing tourism planners in this geographically and psychologically remote area of China with the evidence for the necessity to bridge the gap between their marketing policy and tourists' imagination constructed through the perpetuation of myths. It also provides thorough research, sufficient to be transferred into evidence-based policy for local tourism planners and decision makers. The translation to policy is the next step the author is hoping for given that the evidence it provides should be easily evaluated by local authorities.

1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

This dissertation is composed of six chapters. Chapter One provides the research background, and then discusses the research questions and objectives. It also identifies the significance of the study in terms of its theoretical and practical contributions. Chapter Two presents a comprehensive review of previous studies including tourism attraction systems, travel motivation, perceptions of destination, personality and tourist experience. Chapter Three details the methodology applied to explore the phenomenon of visiting the phantasmal destination, including the rationale for adopting grounded theory, the procedures of data collection and data analysis, and trustworthiness issues in qualitative research. In Chapter Four,

the major research findings of the study are described and discussed. Chapter

Five concludes the study, and includes the summary of findings, the research

implications and limitations, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2: DOMAIN SPECIFICATIOIN

The concept of phantasmal destination has been developed in Chapter One. This concept is derived from the tourism phenomenon in which the tourist is attracted to imaginative place, supported by imaginative geographies and a postmodernism perspective. The underpinning theory, then, is the relatively recent conceptualizations of space that are grouped under the of human geography. As the imaginative place is more associated with individual's desires and viewpoint than any objective definition of the actual destination, examining personal travel inspiration and how a tourist perceives a destination are important domains in understanding the occurrence of phantasmal tourism. Furthermore, personality plays an essential role in this type of tourism, as imagination is a highly subjective viewpoint. Finally, tourist travel experience is the overall consequence of travel activity and concerns both the tourist and the destination planner. Understanding tourist travel experience will provide valuable information for destination marketing and planning for further improvement, especially phantasmal destination planning. The purpose of the research is a preliminary exploration of the phenomenon of phantasmal tourism which has yet captured researchers' attention, and the domain specifications in this paper focus on the imagining of places, as well as the inspiration for travel, perception, and experience. The effect of personality is also reviewed.

2.1 HUMAN GEOGRAPHY

Human geography is concerned with "how people make places, how we organize space and society, how we interact with each other in places and across space, and how we make sense of others and ourselves in our localities, regions, and the world" (Fouberg, 2009, p. 8). The major focuses that reveal the core themes of human geography include perception of place, movement, and cultural landscape. Humanistic geographers are concerned with the cultural construction of place and landscape, mapping of daily life, how the language assigned meanings create and change environments, religious symbolism and landscape, relationship of place to identity, and myths and narratives (Adames, Hoelscher, & Till, 2001; Ley & Samuels, 1978).

As human beings actively create spaces out of nature, humanistic geography becomes an essential tool for the study of meaning and experience in geography. The traditional interest of geography, which is to connect concepts to their referents, has changed to a concern in assigning meaning to subjects (Entrikein and Tepple, 2006). In this respect, human agency and imagination and interpretation of a place is closely associated with cultural geography, a vital part of human geography.

Cultural geography focuses not only on different cultures in different parts of the globe, but also concerns how cultures make sense of place and space (Crang, 1998). Human beings and natural places are interactively affecting each other. While people, as autonomous agents, are making place,

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place facilitates and constrains the agent (Sack, 1997). Places are often imagined before they are realized. We transform environments continuously by giving material existence to imaginative worlds. The world becomes an active complex of places that are being continuously made, unmade and remade in relation to human projects. The powerful tools that are utilized are language and imagination and these comprise the essence of the humanist perspective in cultural geography (Lowenthal, 1961, Tuan, 1990, Wright 1947).

2.1.1 Imaginative Geography

As one branch of human geography, imaginative geography focuses on the individual imaginations and the fantastic features of geographical reality, and the meanings that create and transform the place and landscape (Aitken & Valentine, 2006; Cloke, Crang, & Goodwin, 1999). Our images of the world not only representour own, but also connect to our social sources. Imaginations of a place reflect the individual's psychological needs for the future hope or memories of the past. It is worth noting here that personal imagination directly connects to the values of particular cultures. Whilst personality influences the imaginary place as the individual produces it based on his/her own experience of the world, it also connects to the individual's social situation and social roles (Caughey, 1984). Driver (1999) argues that the perception of the world is at the same time also rooted in society, in that, "imaginations are social as well as individual" (p. 209). Although the imaginary place is obscured, people intend to find a physical place for their

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imagination because people's imagination is inextricably connected to their real world experience (Malpas, 1999). It is also one of the key elements in complex systems of belief (Tuan, 1977). The symbolic difference between the concepts of imagination and reality is reconstructed by the human agent and attached meanings to specific places (Couldry, 2000). The meaning of a place is created by human agency and their imagination (Entrikin and Tepple, 2006). For example, a region and a landscape are not just spatial categories for organizing the world, but rather a part of the continuous process of human dynamic of making the earth 'home' and creating worlds out of nature.

From this perspective, the natural world does not make sense by itself; it is the product of the human imagination as well as any physical manipulation (Whatmore, 1999). As Whatmore (1999) argues, nature is socially constructed by human beings and based on the categories, technologies, and conventions of human representation. The landscapes of nature are understood as 'ways of seeing' the world in which the 'real' and the 'imagined' are intricately interwoven. For example, Niagara Falls was imagined as an embodiment of primeval nature and a representative of the distant past due to its remoteness and inaccessibility. When news of the falls first reached Europe in the late seventeenth century, it was taken as a manifestation of myth and attached meanings of heaven and hell. In the later part of nineteenth century, it was imagined as a symbol of death and future (McGreevy, 1987). The changing perception is regarded as poetic symbols, human imagination is not only generating meanings based on reading the

natural world or linking the individual dreams or imaginations to the collective, the local to the global. It is, most importantly, discovering and creating new and unexpected meanings through the metaphorical power of language (Cosgrove, 1994). In that, Niagara's remoteness was sustained by drawing on new meanings after it was physically accessible. The poetic imagination produces and differentiates cultures, such as the 'mysterious East', 'paradise islands'. Cosgrove (1994) further argues that all human cultures have origin myths and we shape our myths accordingly. Lewis Mumford (1944) summarizes it as boundless imagination, which means people are tempted to use their imagination when a place is the unknown, the untried, and the unbounded.

The study of imaginative geographies enables us reflect our self-perceptions about the surrounding world. They have minimum grounding in reality as they are based on non-factual evaluations of the places and peoples that they conjure (Bruner 1991; Gregory 1999). Reality is no longer thought of as the direct reflection of matter around us. Kant's Copernican revolution changed this. We now accept that individuals experience reality within the limits of their ability to know and judge. Kant divided this ability into three: the empirical experience of appearances as received by our senses; the construction of inner and outer world relations through using concepts; and the faculty of absorbing variety of appearances by using reason to enable understanding and judgment (Lengkeek, 2000). Imagination is necessary in the construction of reality as it is an essential characteristic of representation. Imagination both leads to an extension of our

reality by giving it meaning and a limitation of it as some considerations are beyond the limits of our everyday imagination. Imaginative geographies are not involved "simply in demarcating 'our space' from 'their space' … but [in] 'our' reaching into 'their' space and imaginatively – and eventually materially – appropriating that space and claiming it as 'ours'" (Gregory, 2000, p. 322).

2.1.2 Imaginative Geographies Perspective of Phantasmal Destination

Reviewing the literature of the last 20 years on destination, Framke (2002) found that researchers had not given a clear geographical definition of destination or indicated clear boundaries for it, despite that a destination has to be a geographical space where tourism occurs. The implication is that tourism is a dynamic force, premised on and sustained by difference over space. It takes myths and dreams and inscribes them on to physical places. Tourism destinations are thus transformed from ordinary geographic spaces through the perspective of visitors and continuous invention of landscapes of symbolic consumption (Young, 1999).

A destination is a narrative created by marketing and is never a physical place with clearly drawn boundaries. Rather, it is a place that exists on different geographic levels, structured by processes and experienced by social actions. Each destination is a combination of attractions, facilities and services viewed from a commercial angle. Sociologically, it is a collection of 'images' which are experienced by interaction with the tourists. The attractions, facilities and infrastructures are static, but the destination also has

a dynamic existence that is constantly changing – its combination of agents and tangible service products varying according to visitors' historically altering demands (Framke, 2002).

Destinations have a tangible materiality represented by buildings, monuments, restaurants, forests, bridges and other dense entities. At the same time, destinations have a characteristic that is more abstract. A destination is imagined as a moving object - not rooted in one place (Hetherington & Munro, 1997). It comes into existence through relationships, through trans-national networks of people, technologies, objects and images that are constantly connecting and disconnecting it to other places, 'place-myths' and 'imaginative geographies' (Bærenholdt, Haldrup, Sheller, & Urry, 2004; Coleman & Crang, 2002; Larsen, 2006).

Imaginative geographies do not only rearrange the individual's understanding of the world as mentioned above, but also help to shape their actions (Driver 1999). In travel, imaginative geographies help with the signposting of places so that tourists can find them as 'sites' and locate them within an imaginative landscape with their own meaning as 'sites' (Gregory, 1999, p. 116). Eventually, those become strongly influential in shaping and controlling the expectations and experiences of future tourists (Gregory 1999; Galani-Moutafi 2000). Imaginative geographies become 'real', not because they represent the real world, but because they shape the way we experience and interact with places and people (Driver 1999).

Destinations take on specific 'imaginative geographies' through selective representation in writing and picturing the physical environments and human activities. Books, marketing communication materials, web pages, blogs, emails, and personal photo albums materialize, distribute and realize the creation or sustenance of myths and half-truths. This, in turn, encourages and helps to justify fantasies. Geographies that are borne out of this are contradictory and uncertain. "There is both a constancy and a shifting quality to this model of place- or space-myths as the core images change slowly over time, are displayed by radical changes in the nature of a place, and as various images simply lose their connotative power, becoming ''dead metaphors'', while others are invented, disseminated, and become accepted in common parlance'' (Shields, 1991, p. 61).

Yet, the effect of communications is also limited. The experience of the site does not significantly contradict the visitor's preconceptions created by the pictures he or she has seen before visiting the site. Instead, the concept of imaginative geography questions the difference between 'real' and 'perceived' worlds. Photography, for example, can be seen as technology of world making rather than distortions of the existing world (Crang, 1997, p. 362). The subjective representations mentioned above are not distinct from the site where they take place. They are merely performances that transform and connect the destination to other destinations. The space ''is less the already existing setting for such stories, than the production of space through that taking place, through the act of narration'' (Coleman and Crang, 2002, p. 10)

Shurmer-Smith and Hannam (1994, p. 59) further argue "all places are imaginary, in the sense that they cannot exist for us beyond the image we are capable of forming of them in our minds". Cosgrove (1994) sees the imaginary creations as "neither purely of senses, which align us with nature, nor purely of intellect, which separates us from nature" (p. 388). The product of imagination can neither be solely determined by the sense data (reproductive) nor simply an image negating the external world. Instead, imagination "plays a symbolizing role, seizing on sense data without reproducing them as mimetic images and "metamorphosing" them through its metaphorical capacity to generate new meaning" (p. 388)

The past no longer exists and the future has not yet happened,. The imagination creates meaning in the current time by combining symbols of past and future. Such a synthesis necessitates a symbolic confirmation of the past and a symbolic opening of the future with its utopian possibilities. An ideological interpretation of the myths and symbols that define societies leads to constructing images that challenge tradition for those that seek a break from their present predicament. Imagining utopias gives motivation for action towards change. The traveler, then, recreates the destination in his/her mind based on a subjective interpretation of myths and stories fuelled by personal desires, wants and hopes. Imaginative geography of the destination is a product of these.

Underpinned by imaginative geographies, phantasmal destination is associated with individual's perception of world, and represents personal

desires of future or memories of the past based on one's socio-cultural situation and roles. As the formation of phantasmal destination is a continuous process of the human dynamic of creating worlds out of nature (Entrikin & Tepple, 2006), using a qualitative method enables the researcher to understand fully the phenomenon of phantasmal tourism, the data of inspiration, perception and personality can be obtained only by directly communicating with individuals.

2.1.3 Social Construction of Reality and Myth-making

In the previous section the reality of an imagined space from a human geography perspective was discussed. Sociologists, also study place meaning from the point of view of social constructivism. The theory of social construction of reality proposes that all social and cultural phenomena are constructions produced and reproduced through interactions of people and social activities in the society (Berger & Luckmann, 1966/1991). According to this, "objects are not given in the world but constructed, negotiated, formed and fashioned by human beings through their social interaction and practices" (Iwashita, 2003 p. 333). The implication is that most of what people experience and sense as reality, as well as the social world in which they live, are socially constructed. The identities of individuals, groups, and places are also socially and culturally created and maintained and, in some cases, modified and recreated through human activity. All construction of reality, therefore, can be seen as a product of the human capacity for thought and, as such, is subject to change (Berger & Luckmann, 1966/1991).

Social constructivism suggests that there is nothing 'natural' or even 'objective' about tourist destinations as they are socially and culturally constructed through human intervention. Destinations cannot be defined in terms of geographical and physical attributes alone (Lefebvre, 1991). As the bulk of tourism activity is dependent on the qualities of a destination as represented to tourists through marketing communication materials, such as brochures and television (Hughes, 1998), places may have no meanings in nature outside those constructed through language and discourses and attributed to the destination. Ordinary places can be transformed into tourist destinations through the sociolinguistic system (Dann 1996).

Brochures, TV images and other mass media constantly turn images into myths. Wang (2000) gives the examples of a tropical island being converted into the myth of paradise, the image of camels and Arabs into the mystic Orient, and the image of elephants or native Thais into the exotic (pp. 166-167). Wang (2000) also mentions the images being "created by appealing to myths relating to destination areas … fostered by literature and other media" (p. 167). There are other imaginary places created in literature that are difficult to locate in the physical world, and a number of tourism studies have described the creation of myths about tourist destinations (Selwyn, 1996). Shangri-La is such a myth, with the only difference that it is doubtful that the myth belongs to the actual geographical location in which it is placed.

2.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN GEOGRAPHY AND TOURISM

Theories of human geography and its extensions, imaginative geographies and cultural geographies, are the essential underpinnings of the current study. However, those investigations are concerned with the intricate relationships of human beings with their physical environments. Whether the encounter with the landscape is a result of travel is rarely mentioned and often is not considered as a factor. The present study is about tourism. It is as much about what makes people travel as it is about how people 'create' places through individual and collective imaginative processes.

Theories of travel motivation in tourism bridge this gap. The study of motivation seeks to answer why people behave in certain ways and why behavior varies both within the individual and between different individuals. Motivation studies aim to understand how motivations influence people moving within the spaces and places. What motivates individuals to behave in different ways and why one person will demonstrate intense behavioral engagement, while another will not? While there are a large number of studies that deal with the factors behind the travel phenomenon, two main theories dominate most of the territory. Both theories openly or implicitly acknowledge that a destination is much more than its geographic boundaries – even when such boundaries exist. In this section, these theories will be covered.

Tourism is defined by Lew (1987) as a "non home" place that draws discretionary travelers away from their homes. The attraction of a destination

is a central component of tourism (Shoval & Raveh, 2004). Pigram (1983) commented that tourism would not even exist without the existence of attraction, but Leiper (1990) argued that attraction does not have the power to literally "draw" tourists; instead the marker plays an important role to connect tourist and destination attractions. Marker refers to information provided by the destination, it is categorized into three types: generating markers are pieces of information gathered before departure; transit markers are encountered en route, and contiguous markers are the information about tourist attractions presented in the destination. As Leiper (1990) proposes, apart from marker, the tourism attraction system also includes attraction and tourist. Attraction is also named as nucleus, and it is expanded to be any feature or characteristic of a place that a traveler contemplates visiting or actually visits (Leiper, 1990). The concept of tourism attraction systems was further developed by scholars to interpret the relationship among the three elements and how it reflects tourists' perceptions, behavior, and motivations, before and after their arrival at the destination (Leiper, 1990; Richards, 2002). Markers are considered to be parts of a tourism attraction system that links tourists with attractions (Leiper, 1990). Within the model of the tourism attraction system, tourists are pushed towards attractions through the employment of different markers.

In this system, the influences of markers on tourists are highlighted and supported by empirical research. For instance, Richards (2002) notes tourists from long distances are more likely to visit must-see sights and will focus on a narrower range of attractions. They also invest more time to

research the destinations to reduce perceived risks and sense of insecurity. Those who stay for a short time are expected to use more generating markers to pre-arrange their trips due to limited sightseeing time and they will have fewer chances to encounter in-destination contiguous markers than will long stay tourists. Long stay tourists employ their previous experiences as generating markers and tend to use a wider range of markers. Fodness and Murray (1997) indicate that friends and other travelers, guidebooks, and personal experience are important sources of information when people are en route. Pre-arrival awareness of destination attractions is important in creating tourist demand, especially for short stay tourists (McKercher, Mei, & Tse, 2006).

2.2.1 Push –Pull

Investigating the factors that stimulate the desire to travel, Dann (1977) and Crompton (1979), using a sociological perspective, have developed the push-pull model. This model elaborates on tourist motivations from the context of everyday life and socio-cultural, as well as institutional, aspects of society (Britton, 1991; Rojek, 1995; Wang, 2000; Watson & Kopachevsky, 1994). Push-pull model is perhaps the most often utilized conceptualization of tourist motivation to date as it is widely applied by many researchers (Baloglu & Uysal , 1996; Bogari, Crowther, & Marr, 2004; Chang, Wall, & Chu, 2006; Hsu, Cai, & Wong, 2007; Kim & Lee, 2002; Oh, Uysal, & Weaver, 1995; Rittichainuwat, 2007; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Yuan & McDonald, 1990). Push factors refer to motivators that compel

tourists to seek activities that would meet their perceived needs. Pull factors are the motivators that are produced by the destination. Those include the attempts of the destination management to attract tourists and the past experience, knowledge and beliefs of the tourists themselves. Push factors include a desire for escape, rest and relaxation, prestige that is socially assigned to travel, health, a desire for adventure and a desire to interact with different cultures. Pull factors include the physical attributes of the destination such as beaches, natural characteristics, cultural attractions and recreation facilities (Gnoth, 1997; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994). In general, push factors are considered to be the initiators of the desire to travel and pull factors explain the choice of a certain destination over its competitors (Bello & Etzel, 1985; Crompton, 1979).

Dann (1977) identifies two motives for travel: anomie and ego-enhancement. He tries to explain the stimulus to travel in terms of individuals experiencing anomie in everyday life. Such people desire through travel elsewhere to transcend the feeling of isolation present in modern city living, where the tourist simply wishes to escape for a while. Ego-enhancement refers to people's desire to be recognized. The need to have one's ego enhanced or boosted is analogous to the desire for a "bodily tune-up." Crompton (1979) also identifies two sets of motives among pleasure holidaymaker;. push motives and pull motives. The push motives include escape from a perceived mundane environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationships, and facilitation of social interaction. Pull motives include

novelty and education. Both Dann and Crompton placed their emphasis on push factors as well as pull factors. Dann (1977), not regarding the relationship between these two factors as being dichotomous, rather, polar coordinates in a continuum. Dann's later work (1996) includes a new dimension to the sociological explanation of tourist travel. Through an analysis of the important role that mass media and marketing play in stimulating the desire to travel, Dann (1996) shows that the language of tourism is a tool of social control. Intricate descriptions and illustrations in travel guidebooks serve to tell readers not only what to expect from the destination but how to behave once there. Dann's later work presents critical insights into the influential factors of the push-pull framework of his early work.

Not all researchers agree with the assumption that pull and push factors were motivators. Pizam et al. (1979) argues that pull factors are no more than common sense explanations of tourist activity and have no role to play in motivation. Some studies, while accepting pull factors as motivators, refer to them as destination attributes (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Turnbull & Uysal, 1995; You et al., 2000) or attractions (Yuan & McDonald, 1990). Others accept only the push factors as motivation (Kim & Lee, 2002; Klenosky, 2002; Moutinho, 1987; Nicolau & Mas, 2006; Pyo, Mihalik, & Uysal, 1989). Push and pull factors represent separate stages in travel decision making, but they should not be treated as operating entirely independently of each other (Crompton, 1979). People travel because they are pushed by their own internal forces and simultaneously pulled by

destination attractions and attributes (Cha, McCleary, & Uysal, 1995; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994). The push-pull concept has been used widely in travel motivation studies, however, the adoption of both push and pull factors as travel motivation has not been without controversy. A number of researchers differentiate between the push and pull concepts, and from social psychological approaches develop escaping-seeking model to explain tourist motivations.

2.2.2 Escaping – Seeking

One method of understanding the nature and process of travel behavior is the social-psychological approach. These studies assume travel behavior to be essentially psychologically driven. The main hypothesis is that people are born with certain innate needs and when there is an imbalance in their need systems, they seek alternatives for satisfying these needs. Travel and tourism are seen as one way of addressing this disequilibrium. Iso-Ahola developed his two-dimensional tourist motivation theory of escaping-seeking by adopting Deci's theory of intrinsic motivation (see Figure 2.1) (Iso-Ahola, 1982; Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987; Ross & Iso-Ahola, 1991). He argues that the psychological benefits of leisure travel are derived from the interaction between the two forces of escaping routine and stressful environments, and seeking recreational opportunities for certain psychological rewards. People are motivated to seek tourist activities in order to leave behind the personal problems of everyday life and obtain personal and interpersonal rewards. Personal rewards consist mainly of

self-determination, a sense of competence or mastery, challenge, learning, exploration, and relaxation. Interpersonal rewards are those arising from social interaction.

Figure 2.1 Iso-Ahola's Social Psychological Model of Motivation
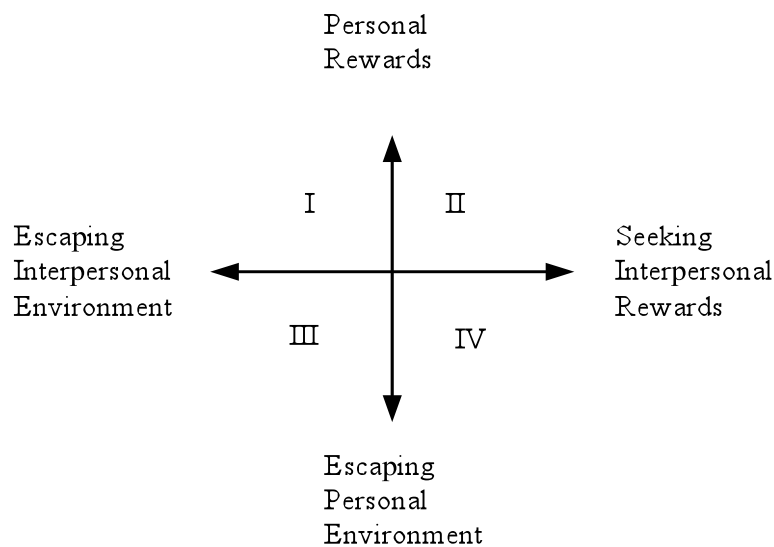
Quadrant I: Need to escape interpersonal environment (e.g. family or group situations)

Quadrant I: Desire to seek personal rewards (e.g. Rest and relaxation)

Quadrant II: Desire to seek intrinsic rewards

Quadrant III: Need to escape personal environment (e.g. personal problems and difficulties)

Quadrant III: Desire to seek interpersonal rewards (e.g. culture or group activities)

Quadrant IV: Desire to get away from everyday environment

Source: Iso-Ahola (1984 p111), Mannell and Iso-Ahola (1987, p323), Iso-Ahola (1989, p262)

Mannell and Iso-Ahola (1987) suggested that tourism should represent more of an escape-oriented rather than a seeking-oriented activity for most people. Escape-orientations imply that people take vacations to avoid their over-stimulating or under-stimulating everyday life. Those who escape over-stimulation would participate in fewer leisure activities during a holiday and attach less importance to seeking intrinsic rewards than those who escape under-stimulation. The tenet of this argument is the psychological concept of optimal arousal.

The construct 'optimal arousal' is essential for an understanding of travel and tourism motivation. Wahlers and Etzel (1985) established that tourists' vacation preferences would depend on the difference between their optimal or ideal level of stimulation (a personality trait) and the actual lifestyle stimulation experience. If people experience less stimulation than they desire in their daily lives, they are more likely to seek greater novelty and stimulation on a holiday. Conversely, if they experience higher levels of stimulation than they desire in everyday life tourists would prefer a more sedate holiday.

2.2.3 Methodological Issues in Motivation Research

Motivation is one of the most researched topics in tourism. Mannell and Iso-Ahola (1987) state that, in the context of leisure studies, "What researchers have done is to present subjects with various reasons and ask them to rate how important each of them is to their leisure participation. Subjects have made these ratings not in relation to a particular leisure

experience, but as statements about their perceived reasons for leisure participation in general. Invariably in these studies, the data have been analyzed by factor analysis, typically resulting in four to five 'need dimensions' or 'motivation factors'. It is then assumed that such factors explain most people's leisure motivation and satisfaction for most of the time. While such studies are interesting and useful in their own right, they ignore the dynamic nature of leisure motivation." (p.322)

The commonly used method has been to first list motivation items found in the literature and then incorporate those items into a questionnaire. After data are collected through mail-out questionnaires, various quantitative research methods are utilized to generate the results. The validity of this quantitative approach relies largely on the selection of motivation items for the questionnaire. If a certain motivation factor is present in the mind of the respondent but not included in the questionnaire, the results will be less than ideal. The use of a predetermined set of items has the inherent problem of the possibility that dimensions selected by the researchers might not include some of the important motives of the respondents (Jewell & Crotts, 2001). Utilizing a qualitative method might be a better way of studying tourist motivation. The use of unstructured or semi-structured interviews in which open-ended questions are asked and projective techniques, such as association and sentence completion tests, might produce results that are more reliable. In these types of studies, narrative transcripts are usually coded and content analysis conducted before conclusions are reached. At the exploratory stage of tourist motivation research, a qualitative method could

be more useful to generate insightful information about what motivates people to travel. Qualitative methods were used by motivational researchers early in their studies (Crompton, 1979). More recently, Jewell and Crotts (2001) advocated the use of the Hierarchical Value Map (HVM) technique, to explore the underlying motives and needs of visitors to a heritage site. The HVM method helps to identify both higher and lower psychological values and their connections via a series of probing questions. Jewell and Crotts chose the HVM technique as an alternative to overused traditional techniques, which they thought could lead to a better discovery of tourists' latent motives and reduce researcher bias. Klenosky (2002) used the same method to investigate the interrelationship between push and pull factors. His research revealed a number of pull factors (beaches, historic/cultural attraction, scenic/natural resources, skiing, new/unique location, and party atmosphere) that corresponded to four motives (excitement, accomplishment, self-esteem, and fun and enjoyment). Both quantitative and qualitative approaches have their advantages and disadvantages. Qualitative research methods might be useful because they use tourists' explanation of their experience. However, sometimes the tourists might not be aware of their true reasons for travel (Dann, 1981). A pilot study of a small number of in-depth interviews might be useful before a large-scale survey. This pilot study might help to unearth tourists' real motivation more accurately than items collected from extant literature. Fodness (1994) developed a 20-item motivation scale by employing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Motivation research in tourism has not reached its full maturity. As the research methods become

more sophisticated, the motivation factors behind travel activity also become more complicated.

2.3 SPECIAL INTEREST TOURISM

The modern tourist, bored with a mass-produced product, is looking for new and exciting forms of travel, without any serious self-involvement (Wearing, 2002). Tourism consumption patterns and the growth of ''special interest tourism'' (SIT) are thought to reflect the continuously increasing diversity of leisure interests of the late-modern leisure society (Douglas, Douglas, & Derret, 2001). Opachowski (2001, in Trauer, 2006) states that the tourism industry is increasingly adopting the identity of an ''experience industry'', with tourists willing to pay for optimal experiences within the limited time available and that emotional stimuli (feelings rather than goods) are being sought. The phenomenon is not new and one can trace its roots to the Grand Tour, Olympics, and historic expeditions in recent and distant history. It is also not as clear as it could be. Buried under new terminology, such as 'alternative', 'sustainable', 'appropriate', 'new', 'responsible' and 'ego-tourism' there is an undeniable ambiguity in the term Special Interest Tourism (Trauer, 2006, p. 183).

Special interest tourism takes place when the ''traveler's motivation and decision-making are primarily determined by a particular special interest with a focus either on activity/ies and/or destinations and settings'' (Weiler & Hall, 1992, p. 5). This definition, as any definition that attempts to

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describe a tourism phenomenon, is far from achieving consensus among tourism researchers (Butler 1999). However, it is adequate for the purposes of this study.

Although this study is clearly interested in a travel phenomenon that should be classified under 'special interest', not all typologies that are grouped under this banner are relevant to the discussion. For example, most special interest tourism can be listed as 'adventure tourism', depending on the definition of 'adventure'. Also, 'sustainable tourism' and 'eco-tourism' seem to be nebulous terms that are more useful to describe attitudes of the visitors rather than any specific motivation. There are, however, recently identified classifications that overlap with the main theme of this thesis. These include literature and film tourism, culture and religion tourism, and theme park tourism.

2.3.1 Literature and Film (Movie) Tourism

In the last decade, there have been numerous studies concentrating on the influence of literature and film on travel aspirations of individuals. (Andersen & Robinson, 2002; Beeton, 2001; Busby & Klug, 2001; Frost, 2006; Herbert, 1996, 2001; Hudson & Ritchie, 2006; Kim & Richardson, 2003; Mazierska & Walton, 2006; O'Neill , Butts, & Busby, 2005; Riley & Van Doren, 1992; Squire, 1994). Literature and film tourism is used as a medium communicating a range of cultural meanings and values with potential tourists rather than simply a function of media influences (Busby & Klug, 2001). The places created in the literature are considered as a new

form of cultural landscape. Cultural landscapes are the interaction between and evolution of a society's internal and external social, economic and cultural aspects, influenced by the natural environment's physical constraints and or opportunities (Phillips, 1998). The literature and films create destination images of either highly attractive scenery or quirky, nostalgic and idyllic rural societies and result in sales of holidays to those destinations. The movies such as Harry Potter, Star Wars and Lord of the Rings are about alternative worlds and realities and their locations have become social constructions in the minds of individuals.

2.3.1.1 Literary tourism

Literary tourism is identified by Squire (1996, p. 119) as that '… associated with places celebrated for literary depictions and or connections with literary figures'. The literary places include two types of places, which are 'real-life' and 'imagined' (Herbert, 1996; Squire, 1994). Real-life places are about the lives of writers. They are seen as connections to different phases in a writer's life. Birthplaces are often of particular interest as they provide the visitors with an insight to an author, such as his/her origins and social standing before he/she became famous (Smith, 2003). The 'imagined places' are associated with written works. Although some 'imagined places' have their origins clearly in the real world, other locations created in literature are more difficult to locate.

The majority of research that studies literary places from the tourism viewpoint is concerned with the individual attraction level. A common

feature of these studies is that they are all interested in the visitors' perspective and their interpretation of the meaning of literary heritage (Herbert, 1996, 2001; Squire, 1994, 1996). Some look at the ways with which an attraction or a region exploits a literary theme in their marketing strategy and place promotion.

Busby and Klug (2001) propose a new form of literary tourism typology based on Butler's framework. According to this, motivations of the visitors to literary destinations range from those visitors interested in the background against which a work was produced to gain new insights into the work and the author (literary pilgrims). to those that find the destination appealing because it was appealing to their favorite author (for example, travelers attracted to Normandy through their admiration of Marcel Proust). In some instances, popularity of the work turns the region into a tourist destination in its own right: For example, Charles Kingsley's 'Westward Ho!' resulting in the creation of the seaside resort in Devon named after the novel. Finally, there is the influence of travel writing. In this form, places and people have been reinterpreted and communicated to wider audiences. For example, 'Down Under' by Bill Bryson, highlights the unconventional aspects of Australia not found in tourist guides.

Herbert (2001) offers a different explanation for the attraction of literary places. Accordingly, people visit literary places because of the following reasons. They might be drawn to places that have connections with the lives of authors; that form the settings for novels. Fiction may be set in

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locations that the writer was familiar with and the fusion of real and the imagined gives such places a special meaning. Fictional characteristics and events often generate the strongest imagery. In other cases, tourists may be drawn to literary places for some broader and deeper emotion than the specific writer or the story. The reason may be less concerned with the literature than with some dramatic event in the writer's life. These are the exceptional qualities of a literary place.

Therefore, literary tourism includes visiting destinations associated with writers' actual lives as well as those that they used as settings for their fiction. This type of tourism starts with the markers rather than the actual place. The destination becomes significant because the fictional work that uses it as a setting is first read. The visitor is motivated by encountering a work of fiction that includes a setting based on a real place or an imaginary setting. This gives the idea to the reader to visit the place associated with the work of fiction or its writer. The place becomes important after the marker and the visitor arrives with expectations created by the work of fiction. The power of imagination might mean that the place in the visitor's mind, as preconceived prior to actual encounter, might appear more authentic than the actual place.

The novel serves as a 'communication channel' between reality and the reader's subjective imagining of reality (Smith, 2003). The reader distorts and selectively absorbs what is presented to form his or her own image of the place. According to Pocock (1992), this type of tourist is interested in

expanding their knowledge and wants to be selectively self-educated. Although fiction is a flawed historical source of reality, some visitors still try to discover the significance of literary place. While a large number of tourists classify themselves as literary tourism fans, only less then 15 per cent would qualify as literary pilgrims (Herbert, 2001; Squire, 1994). Those studies found that although part of the motivation to visit the site was influenced by literary works, visitors also attracted by other attributes which they valued.

2.3.1.2 Film (movie) tourism

Hudson and Ritchie (2006) define film tourism as visits to a destination as a consequence of it being featured on television, cinema or video. It is considered as a sector of cultural tourism. A film can act as a "pseudo-tourism attraction" (O'Neill , Butts, & Busby, 2005). A film can increase visitation to a destination where filming is believed to have occurred (Beeton, 2001; Riley, Baker, & Van Doren, 1998; Riley & Van Doren, 1992; Tooke & Baker, 1996; Tzanelli, 2003). Movies may influence excursion choice, as visitors seek to visit locations already experienced through the on-screen process of 'vicarious consumption' (Riley & Van Doren, 1992). Although physically stationary, viewers are emotionally elsewhere through the mediation effects of film.

Hudson and Ritchie (2006) summarized and classified the film tourism phenomenon into four broad sections. Those are the influence of film on the decision to travel; the characteristics of film tourists themselves;

the impacts of film tourism on visitation numbers and on residents; and destination-marketing activities related to film tourism.

According to Hudson and Ritchie's (2006) theoretical model, from the push side, motivations for film tourism include fantasy, escape, status and prestige, self-identity, romance, nostalgia, novelty and learning. From the pull side destination marketing activities, destination attributes, film-specific factors, film commission and government efforts, and location feasibility are the major factors.

Film induced tourists seem not to consume specific objects, but clusters of signs (Tzanelli, 2004). Film tourists visit New Zealand because the country, after the success of Lord of the Rings trilogy, now signifies Middle Earth. However, MacCannell (2001) suggested that tourists are often conscious of the fact what they are offered is fake. The tourists can be used by the tourism industry for marketing purposes. This self-recognition as manipulated and not manipulative subjects may make them reconsider the offers of organizers. Often, those tourists enjoy their holidays in ways different from those suggested by the marketers.

Lord of the Rings films represents a good example of a bridge between destinations popular because of various fictions and 'phantasmal' destinations. Those films are fiction built upon fiction. The images appear to be real but have no relevance to a real world. As a result, the world of the films is the simulation of a place that was never real (Baudrillard, 1998). Although the films offer an escape to the viewers from the ordinary

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experiences of everyday life, they also hide the fact that the experience they offer is standardized and inauthentic. As Tzanelli (2004) suggested they are a mere simulation of a simulation. It is also claimed that this form of misrecognition of the artificial for real in urban milieus, provides another link between the 'loss of the self' in consumption and modern life in the developed world (Tzanelli, 2004). This phenomenon is sometimes taken to its extreme. This is when the place is not 'like' depicted in a fiction. In the mind of this specific type of visitor, the myth that introduced the place becomes real; the fiction that first served it is accepted either as a documentary or, at least, a revelation that points to a higher reality than our own. This idea, which is at the core of present thesis, will be explored in detail later.

Some literature and films open a window into an imaginative world, which does not disappear with childhood and this imaginative world can be recovered through tourism (Squire, 1994). Literary destinations might begin with some undeniable fact, and then continue with dealing myth as well as reality. Authenticity, in those instances, is a subjective experience, created by the goals of destination management and the visitors, sometimes predetermined, interpretation of the stimuli, and the interaction between the two. Visitors to literary destinations might not be able to make any distinction between the real-life and imagined places (Herbert, 2001). According to Shields (1991) new meanings are given to texts by readers, creating a reflexive circulation between the subject and the object. Samuel (1994) also argued that interpretation can only be understood through the

readership and reception theory. The 'imaginary dislocations' that transpire as historical knowledge are transferred from one learning circuit to another.

2.3.2 Culture and Religious Tourism

It is difficult to distinguish various types of tourism against any other factor outside motivation. It is logical to think that tourists often visit a destination with more than one purpose in mind. A film buff in search of a relaxing destination might choose one that was featured in one of his favorite films. What matters here should be the main motivation, that is, were they traveling primarily to satisfy a desire that was induced by the film, or was the main purpose recreation that could equally be met by the film destination?

Rinschede (1992) argues that religious tourism is differentiated from other types of tourism by a dynamic and static element. Its participants are motivated, sometimes in part but often exclusively, for religious reasons. Motivating factors might include visiting local, regional, national, and international religious centers, ceremonies and conferences. Religious pilgrims can be separated from tourists through the identification of the places they choose to visit. Collins-Kreiner and Kliot's (2000) study of the behavioral characteristics of Christian pilgrims to holy land has shown that the main motives for visiting were personal and religious.

Religious tourism can be seen as a subordinate of cultural tourism (Rinschede, 1992). Religious tour programs often include a free day to allow the pilgrims to explore the surrounding area. Although it is sometimes hard

to distinguish religious pilgrims from respectful but secular visitors at religious attractions, there is no evidence to suggest that tourism and pilgrimage are incompatible (Nolan & Nolan, 1992). Pilgrims have a tendency to complain more about the commercialization of holy sites and about the lack of authenticity. Despite that, nearly half of the pilgrims studied were found to be interested in non-religious activities (Collins-Kreiner & Kliot, 2000). It is also important for religious tourists to travel with a group of believers that are in the same age group and share similar beliefs.

Tourism motivated by religion is probably one of the oldest types of tourism and as old as religion itself (Rinschede, 1992). Nolan and Nolan (1992) divided religious tourism into three categories based on the destination's attractions: a) pilgrimage shrines, defined as sites that serve religious motivations but are not beyond the immediate locality of the tourist; b) religious tourism, which refers to sites and structures of some religious significance as well as some historic and/or artistic importance; and c) religious festivals.

Pilgrimage, the essential difference that sets the religious tourist apart from other tourists, is defined as a journey resulting from religious causes, externally to a holy site, and internally for spiritual purposes and internal understanding (Barber, 1991).

Pilgrims and pilgrimages are important components of travel in most countries and the number of scholars that have investigated the relationship

between religion and tourism are many (Cohen, 1992; Collins-Kreiner & Kliot, 2000; Eade, 1992; Hudman & Jackson, 1992; Nolan & S. Nolan, 1992; Rinschede, 1992; Smith, 1992; Vukonic, 1996). There are studies that look at the interaction between pilgrims and tourists (Eade, 1992); the typology of tourist uses of pilgrimage sites (Rinschede, 1992); and the behavioral characteristics of Christian pilgrims who visit holy land (Collins-Kreiner & Kliot, 2000). Tourism and pilgrimage are considered sharing basic common features, and as opposite end points on a continuum of travel (Smith, 1992).

Comparing tourism to pilgrimage, Cohen (1992) proposed three dimensions: the structural, phenomenal, and institutional. Cohen's (1992) research on tourist and pilgrim activities at sites in Thailand found that pilgrimage and tourism differ in terms of the direction of the journey undertaken. According to Cohen, tourists experience a place located in otherness, where the pilgrim journeys are toward their socio-cultural center. Although Cohen puts forward an interesting argument, his attempt to distinguish these two types of travelers is not distinct (Morinis, 1983).

Finally, tourism and pilgrimage are related, although, perhaps, separable phenomena. Both call on common basic themes in the human situation (Center/Other, familiar/strange, here/there), but each works with and develops these themes in a unique way. Both types of travel represent a quest for ideals, but the ideals emphasized appear to be distinguishable (secular/religious. worldly/other-worldly). Both involve the movement of

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large numbers of people over designated destination areas, but the types of groups, contents of activities, and management problems are not always identical (Morinis, 1983).

2.3.3 Theme Park Tourism

Theme park is well known as a manufactured user-oriented recreational enclosed environment. The atmosphere created in theme parks is another world and time with one dominant theme, which creates and sustains a feeling of life involvement in a setting completely removed from daily experience. Examples of theme types in contemporary theme parks include adventure, futurism, international, nature, fantasy, history and culture, movie (Wong & Cheung, 1999). The best known theme parks arguably are the Disney parks, such as Disneyland, Disneyworld and EuroDisney.

Theme park has been reviewed as key symbols of popular culture. It not only represents the futuristic and artificial nature, but also serves as cultural preserves for the most nostalgic images and dreams of a nation (King, 1981). However, after all, it is a "happy land", a manufactured good for happiness. It is a package of tangible and intangible components (Middleton & Clarke, 2001). This package is perceived by the tourist as an experience available at a certain price. The theme park consists of rides, activities and exhibits; supporting facilities and services; entrance fee, image of the park. The major targets are children and families (Johns & Gyimothy, 2002).

Motivation for visiting theme parks is a complex phenomenon and subjective to change over time. However, weak to moderately strong relationships have been found between motivation and visitors' demographics and lifestyle (Wong & Cheung, 1999). For example, themes of history and culture were preferred in the age group of 40-54 years whereas young people reportedly attached low importance to these themes and preferred adventurous themes. The popular attributes of future theme have been identified by the theme parks managers as "interactive adventure, fantasy and mystery, movies and television shows, science fiction and futuristic themes, space, nature and ecology, educational, seasonal themes, sports, and story book themes." (Milman, 2001, p. 142)

2.4 DEFINITION OF PHANTASMAL TOURISM

"Phantasy" is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as "imagination, visionary notion." This is a term in constant use in psychoanalysis, both in descriptions of clinical practice and in discussions of theory. The particular spelling of the word "phantasy" with the ph, is used to differentiate the psycho-analytical significance of the term, that is, predominantly or entirely unconscious phantasied, from the popular word "fantasy", meaning conscious day-dream, fictions. However, it is quite often used loosely, to denote either conscious imaginings or anything unconscious not in accord with our rational assessment of facts (Adams, 2004; Hayman, 1989). In this respect, phantasmal destination is defined here as an imaginary place embedded in a physical space. This type of imaginary place represents

an essential component in a complex system of belief. The place must exist if the belief system is to be sustained yet the system of belief is not within any mainstream religion (Tuan 1977). In context of travel, the tourist turns geographic locations into 'destinations' by mentally contriving and re-imagining landscapes of symbolic consumption. Urry (2002), in a comprehensive analysis of this phenomenon, suggests that the main meanings associated with tourism are visual. Central to this idea is the tourist gaze, "to look individually or collectively upon aspects of landscape or townscape which are distinctive, and which signify an experience which contrasts with everyday experience" (Urry 1995, p132). From this perspective, the phantasmal place is a liminal space with phantasmal (mythical) attributes as well as physical (natural) and social and historical attributes. Phantasmal destination exists on the ground as well as in mental landscapes, paintings, books, films, and photographs. In the eyes of the visitor that believes its mythical attributes, it can be a sacred site, a private idea of a spiritual Garden of Eden.

Mythical attributes are a nebulous area of defective knowledge surrounding the empirically known and the spatial component of a world view, a conception of localized values within which people carry on their practical activities (Tuan, 1977). People build their fantasy worlds on little knowledge fuelled by a strong desire for escape. Another related occurrence concerns the unconscious creation of a mythical space around our pragmatic actions. This is recognized as being necessary for proper anchoring in reality (Tuan 1977). Tuan states that this is essential for our "orientation - of being

securely in the world" (p. 87). Modern awareness conflates and makes indistinct our categorization of the components of the world in which we live, therefore signal and usher in variable spatial transformations (Sack 1980). The transformation presents a disassociation process that involves pulling down the old and established internal representations of the world and creating of new forms, processes, and meanings. Terkenli (2005, 2002) calls this the process of unworldment, while the growing disassociation of the new internal representations from the actual geographical location or established uniqueness of such becomes deworldment. The creation of fictitious and/or staged and inauthentic landscapes causes the processes of unworldment to collapse into processes of deworldment. Resulting new types of landscapes are framed in new sets of rules that often contradict the existing conceptualizations of space and carry with them trends that have not existed before. In time, the transformational nature of these trends assumes global dimensions (transworldment) with differing levels of influence over space, time and social structures. Through their new image, which is a modern manifestation of interpersonal communication, these phantastic landscapes are quickly disseminated around the world through electronic communications. The level of tourism activities in the destination – analyzed in terms of form, function or symbolism, and the degree of significance to local residents and local landscape – influence the level of global dissemination of the image.

Separately, Crang (2004) argues that tourism, as an active agent, is not only about consuming places. It is also involved in creating and shaping

society's evolving history. The destination and tourist cultures are both transformed and produced through tourism. The construction of a mythical realm responds to fundamental human needs of feeling and imagination. It satisfies intellectual as well as psychological needs. Therefore, the phantasmal place is imagined - often with the help of oral stories, books, films, and pictures – and then transposed on a particular physical destination that correspond as closely as possible to the imagined place.

Founded on these perspectives, phantasmal tourism is theorized in this thesis as a form of tourist activity that exists in between two polarities of a continuum. At one end, there are the core attributes of the destination, which are labeled as phantasmal attributes. Those attributes are mythical values attached to the destination. At the opposing end of the continuum are the 'real' (physical) attributes of the destination. Those are the natural characteristics, social and historical qualities, and infrastructure. As in all destinations, the motivation to visit the area can belong to a combination of the desire to experience both attributes. Similarly, as with the other segmentation forms, if the core (phantasmal) attributes represent the main pull factor, the destination is termed phantasmal.

Phantasmal tourism may overlap with other special interest tourism categorizations, (such as literature/film destinations, theme park and religion tourism) as it also associates with the power of language, but it could be differentiated by tourist's perception of the place and their travel motives (Weiler & Hall, 1992). Regarding literature and film destination, according

to Busby and Klug (2001), Herbert (2001), and Hudson and Ritchie (2006), people expect the place to be the same as the setting that is depicted in the books or films. Tourists want to experience authentic lifestyles of authors or actress/actors, and expect becoming close to authors' living environments. The authenticity is measured by the extent to which the destination is close to the setting in the books and films. In addition, the previous studies on literature and film tourism mainly focus on actual geographic places, research on imaginative places is rare. Phantasmal destination may be rooted in the places that were created in literature and film fictions, but the difference is that phantasmal tourists may perceive this type of place more based on their own hope and imagination. Phantasmal tourists are in search for confirmation of their own beliefs. This is similar to pilgrimage tourists, with the important difference that phantasmal tourists do not travel to mainstream religious sites or a holy land. They travel for reasons other than paying respects to a deity or deities, and this significant difference justifies further investigation of phantasmal tourism..

Phantasmal destination could be a type of fantasy landscape. However, it is not like a theme park, which tourists know from the outset to be a manufactured product for consumption in a specific geographical space. People have a clear perception of a theme park, and their visit is for fun and relaxation. Phantasmal tourists may seek a fantasy place within a natural environment rather than a manufactured location. Therefore, the phantasmal destination shares some characteristics of literature, film, religion and theme

park tourism, but also has unique characteristics that deserve its categorization as a new type of tourist destination.

In summary, phantasmal destination is created in written texts and mythical stories, and attached new meanings by the readers' imagination. The imaginary dislocations that transpire as historical knowledge are transferred from one learning circuit to another and then disseminated globally among groups of people with similar dissatisfactions and dreams. As Varley and Crowther (1998, p. 316) point out: "successfully providing the creative space for the consumer's aesthetic personal projects to unfold is surely the challenge facing the late-modern entrepreneur". It is also human geographer's core tasks of research (Aitken & Valentine, 2006; Crang, 1998).

2.5 PERCEPTIONS OF DESTINATION

People make decisions on the basis of their interpretation of the phenomena that exist independently of them. Our perception of the world is the main influence on our behavior, but the picture we have of it might be distorted by preconceptions, misperception, or incomplete understanding. Behavioral geography, a subfield of cultural geography, investigates our perception of the world and its influence on our behavior. The pictures created in our minds through our perception of the external phenomena are referred to as mental maps. Individuals make decisions based on their mental maps, but function in a world that largely might not fit into their

understanding of it. In this way, our evaluations of landscapes are influenced by our perceptions of their usefulness or of their aesthetic value (Bergman & Renwick, 2008).

Behavioral geographers strive to explain the processes that cause certain reactions to external phenomena within space. We try to make sense of the external world by trying to construct a structure from the disorderly and confusing sensory images that assail us constantly. Our own constructions are not independently conceived. Instead, those are derived from "the concepts given to us in language, literature, image, gesture, and behavior" (Entrikein & Tepple, p. 76).

Language and other systems of information processing and communication create a mental interaction with the physical world that is directly perceived. and the imagined or hypothetical constructs that are its interpretations. Perceptions equip us with intuitive data that stimulate interpretation. "Reality to an adult, then, consists of experienced, perceived, and remembered features, objects, events, and behaviors to which a person has been exposed or which she/he has experienced" (Entrikein & Tepple, p. 30).

What we commonly assume as reality, then, is "anything that can be apprehended in perception and grasped in thought and understanding" (Lee, 1973). According to this theory, experiences, concepts, facts are all real, and reality is essentially the construct of those through a continuous and ever fluctuating process. The problem here is that the theory asks us to accept a

world that is at once an objective and subjective reality. Lee (1973) proposes a 'process view of reality', which becomes 'process philosophy of everyday life'. The assumption here is that we develop our knowledge of the external world through an interactional and experiential process. Our behaviors show how we have constructed a 'reality' by integrating information encoded and stored in our long term memory, our sensing of the world around us, and the objective facts of physical reality. The researchers that subscribe to this philosophy assume that everything is real in some sense. The issue is to find the right senses in which something becomes 'real' *per se*. The theory suggests that "only by understanding the processes that guide thinking, reasoning, and acting can we fully comprehend the geospatial patterns found in human-environment relations." (Lee, 1973).

Human beings receive an exorbitant number of messages that emanate from external world. Our senses filter those messages and the mind encodes only those that it considers as personally relevant for keeping in long-term memory. Our knowledge of a particular environment is essentially composed of those selections. As what we consider 'relevant' changes from individual to individual and from one time frame to another, our 'reality' depends on individual elements..

2.5.1 The Destination Image Formation

The image of a place is a result of the process of tourists' perception rather than reality (Gartner, 1993) because tourists are not able to pretest the tourism product prior to actual experience. Gartner (1993) suggests that

images of a place are comprised of three components; cognitive, affective, and conative. The cognitive component represents the beliefs and attitudes towards an entity that results in an internally accepted picture of its characteristics. The understanding of the product is predominately intellectual. The affective component is about feelings and values held towards the entity. Finally, the conative component refers to action that determines, in the case of tourism, whether the destination in question will be chosen for the intended vacation. Gartner sees the image formation process as a continuum from over induced to autonomous and organic. By over induced, he refers to conventional forms of advertising. Autonomous image formation agents consist of independently produced reports, documentaries, movies, and news articles. The organic agents refer to information obtained about a destination from experience gained through previous travel to the area. Only autonomous agency has a significant impact on individual and societal beliefs because people are likely to consider the information as relatively unbiased when compared to traditional advertising (Kim & Richardson, 2003). Fakeye and Crompton (1991) propose a third stage of image formation, named as the complex image. They assert that, 'upon visiting … selected destinations, a tourist will develop a more complex image resulting from actual contact with the area' (p. 11).

The models of image formation process identify the influential factors on tourists' perception, including previous experience, degree of familiarity with the destination, cultural background, geographic origin, and expectation of the destination. Baloglu and McCleary (1999a) found that

perceptions of countries are different between visitors and non-visitors. Non-visitors formed their perceptions based on an organic image, which is a result of exposure to newspaper, magazine, movies and TV reports while visitors unify the image directly from the destination they visit. The pre-visiting image of a destination is reconstructed by the individual tourist's interpretation of the information they received. The meaning of a destination is decided in the mind of the visitor, rather than by the objects and displays encountered. This idea is based on the poststructuralist viewpoint, which suggests that the meaning is not inherent in the text but is generated outside of it (Voase, 2002). Based on desires, memories and concerns, tourists create meanings in their minds that sometimes have little relation to the reality of the attraction they encounter (Campbell, 1994; Voase, 2002). The guiding principles of the experience are shaped before arrival to the destination through the process of daydreaming (Campbell, 1994; Voase, 2002). According to Campbell (1994) the visitor is an artist of the imagination. He or she takes images from memory and rearranges the immediate environment to render it more pleasing.

The destination is, therefore, framed ideologically by marketers and tourists that arrive with a set of preconceived ideas, which Urry (2002) terms 'the tourist gaze'. Urry's explanation of the tourist gaze as 'romantic' and 'collective' is relevant to this thesis. 'Romantic gaze' refers to the gaze by better-educated visitors that have the cultural capital to construct meaning from places and events. 'Collective gaze' belongs to those that are less

informed and therefore less discerning and more in need of similar gazers to verify the point of gazing in the first place.

There is no longer a single, given meaning assigned to a destination that would be commonly accepted by all visitors. The subjectivity of the experience is made more certain due to ideas in the mind of the visitor before the arrival at the destination. Marketing communication efforts, past experiences, biased representations, personal beliefs, desires and fantasies, shape images that tourists carry to the destination. This does not mean that destinations do not have material attributes that have commonly accepted meanings which stem from their history and physical reality. The Great Pyramid in Egypt might mean different things to different visitors, but its physical existence and historical significance are commonly accepted.

Jafari (1987) suggested that tourism is a form of transformation or emancipation that takes the individual away from the ordinary world and gives rebirth into a non-ordinary world. Tourism enables the individual to set aside temporarily standards of conduct that would normally be repressed at home (Selänniemi, 2003). As the transformation process continues, visitor's normal, ordinary community is relegated to residual cultural backdrop and is replaced by the "tourism culture" of the destination. This new culture "defines and redefines roles, rules, notions, motions, forms, forces, expectations, processes and the nature of animation" (Jafari, 1987, p. 153). As the emergence into touristhood deepens, the visitor… is transformed into a new person with a new identity (the tourist) that he or she is playing on a

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new stage (the magnet) and is living up to the magnet of a new culture (the

tourist culture) (Jafari, 1987).

For those reasons, tourism is, especially in its postmodern forms,

more related to humanistic geography than the physical geography.

Motivation behind the travel urge seems increasingly to derive from

meanings assigned to places that have often little relation to their physical

properties. As the factors that motivate human beings to travel become more

intricately nuanced and more complex, phantasmal destination concept is a

likely outcome.

2.5.2 The Functions of Perception

In the marketing and tourism context, perception is considered as a

major predictor, influential in directing decision making and consumer

behavior (Richardson & Crompton, 1988; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989).

Each individual selects, organizes and interprets received information in a

unique way. The image of a destination is created through the perception of

those that view it. This image depends on both specific stimuli which are

related to the environment and the individual's own characteristics and

situations (Beerli & Martin, 2004). Destination perception accumulates from

destination attributes, both physical and mythical (Correia, do Valle, &

Moco, 2007). Tourists pre-experience a particular destination through

various sources regarding the destination attributes. Developing destination

perception is of importance for marketers, who need to discern the individual

differences with which prospective visitors perceive destination attributes in differing ways (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2002; Um & Crompton, 1990).

Tasci, Gartner, and Cavusgil (2007) point out that destination perception is just a different name for destination image. However, Fridgen (1987) argues that image and perception can be differentiated by environmental stimuli. Both the image and perception are part of environmental understanding and comprehension, but image is an end to the process of perception, there are no stimuli for image to independently exist. This means image might or might not include perception. Perceptions based on the tourist's own experience or on indirect sources lead to the components of image which are cognitive, affective and conative (Gartner, 1993; Gnoth, 1997; Gunn, 1988). While cognitive and affective components refer to mental responses to the stimuli in the environment, conative is explained as action on the information. Cognition is the mental process of acquiring knowledge through thought, experience and senses. It involves conscious attention, thinking, remembering, understanding and evaluating stimuli in order to make decisions. This process is different from affect, which is feelings that the stimuli evoke and its largely unconscious reaction of different levels of intensity, when the cognition about an object increases, this might lead to a positive affection toward that object (Anand, Holbrook, & Stephens, 1988; Peter, 2008; Tasci et al., 2007).

Destination attributes are commonly used in empirical research to measure tourists' perception of a destination (Turner & Reisinger, 1999).

Tourist destinations consist of a number of attributes that differentiate them from each other. These are listed by Reisinger and Mavondo (2002) as accessibility, amenities, accommodation, attractions, and activities. Accessibility refers to the external transportation and communications that would make the destination accessible to outsiders. Amenities include internal facilities, such as catering, entertainment, internal communication, and transportation that would make tourist experience more convenient and enjoyable. Accommodation consists of lodging facilities, such as hotels, motels, and camping grounds. Attractions might refer to natural (scenic and historical) or structured, such as exhibitions, sporting events, and congresses. Activities are recreational experiences that might take place indoors or outdoors. There are also psychological aspects to the tourist experience. Tourists come into direct or indirect contact with other people, a phenomenon which gives another dimension to the destination. Tourists take into consideration most or all of those attributes when making their decision to visit or revisit a particular destination. Potential travelers make comparisons of the attributes of different destinations before they make their choice and decide on the destination which offers those attributes they deem important (Turner & Reisinger, 1999). At the same time, different market segments place varied levels of importance on different attributes, resulting in diverse destination choices (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2002; Scott, Schewl, & Frederick, 1978).

Perceptions of a destination can result from various factors. This includes, for example, what tourists have learned through their cultural and

social background, personal interests and experience, and their education. Images that various destinations are able to establish in the global marketplace also play an important role. There are numerous empirical studies which confirm that different nationalities, people from varied geographic distances, visitors and non-visitors hold divergent perceptions of a particular destination (Ahmed, 1991; Bonn, Joseph, & Dai, 2005; Hsu, Wolfe, & Kang, 2004; Jensen & Korneliussen, 2002; Richardson & Crompton, 1988). Bonn et al. (2005) claim that despite globalization, and the spread of the use of the Internet, which have had considerable influence in improving cultural awareness and reducing cultural distances, visitors still differ in their perceptions according to their geographic origins.

While perception is seen as the outcome of a sense making process, the individual's subjective mental map of an internal cognitive process (Bakker & Kamann, 2007), there is a paucity of empirical studies on the relationship between internal desire and perceptions of a destination. However, a few scholars have recently given some attention to this area. Among these, Young (1999) found, in his study on the influence of individual motivation on the interpretation of destination meaning, only a slight difference between the mental maps of short term tourists with those who had stayed in the destination for relatively longer periods. The relationship between the evaluations of visitors with different durations of stay at the time of the interviews has relevance on the accuracy of visitor surveys (Jensen & Korneliussen, 2002).

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Reisinger and Mavondo (2002) examined the relationship between the importance of destination attributes, travel motivation and perceptions of destination attributes from American and Australian young travelers' perspectives. The destination attributes selected in their study were accommodation, transport, amenities, attractions and activities. They surveyed 348 American and 360 Australian students in 2000. Their findings reveal that destination attributes have a significant association with travel motivations. Both internal and external motivations show significant correlations with perceptions of destination attributes in both samples.

Beerli and Martin (2004) conducted an empirical study on tourists' characteristics and the perceived image of tourist destinations, and the relationship between the perceived image and the tourists' motivations were examined. The sample groups were first time visitors and repeat visitors. Their results show that for first time visitors, the motivations significantly influence affective image, while repeat visitors' motivations, linked to knowledge, had a significant negative relationship with affective image. Therefore, they argue that tourists' motivations significantly influence the affective component of the perceived image of the destination. Recently Martin and Rodriguez del Bosque (2008) conducted a similar survey and their findings were consistent with the previous study. The findings indicate that destination perceptions are formed according to individuals' beliefs about the destination (cognitive image), along with their feelings concerning the place (affective image). The cognitive element is formed through the destination's attributes, either functional / tangible components, such as

landscape and cultural attractions, or psychological / abstract components, such as hospitality and atmosphere, or both. Conversely, the affective element relates to the emotions evoked by the destination, such as pleasure and excitement. These image dimensions are used by the visitors to form impressions and assess the destinations in their evaluation for final choices. Perceptions about a place are influenced significantly by the visitor's motivations and cultural values. Psychological motivations, on the other hand, lead to the development of affective image. If the emotions that the destination evokes complement the motivations or benefits sought by the individual, a favorable affective image is formed before the travel decision is made.

Correia et al. (2007) investigate the reasons behind Portuguese travelers' choice of exotic places. They have focused on the relationships between psychological and social motivation and, the social motivation and the physical characteristics of the tourist product. They attempt to determine the extent with which these motivating factors will contribute to the overall perception of the destination. Their survey results prove that the perceptions of a tourist destination are formed based on push and pull factors. Push factors are determinants of pull factors that, in turn, explain perceptions. However, they did not find a significant association between push factors and perceptions. Poria, Reichel and Biran (2006) probed the relationship between motivation and perception of destination on a heritage site. Their findings also indicate a distinct relationship between tourists' perceptions of a site and the motivations for visiting.

2.5.3 Measurement Issues in Perception Research

Equally in the empirical studies above, issues of measurement have been of great interest to tourism researchers and practitioners (Driscoll, Lawson, & Niven, 1994; Echtner & Ritchie, 2003). Those that criticize the process assert that it is not possible to fully understand the cognitive process because objective outside observers cannot look into the head of the subjects. All they can do is to observe the outcomes of the cognitive process. Therefore, the investigation needs to rely on the subjects' explanation of their own behavior to understand how they react to their perception of the environmental situation and/or changes in the environment.

Echtner and Ritchie (2003) found two common approaches in their review of techniques used in the measurement of product image perception; structured and unstructured approach. Echtner et al. (2003) and Pike (2002) concluded that the majority of destination image studies have employed structured methodologies to measure destination image (Chen & Hsu, 2000; Murphy, Pritchard, & Smith, 2000; Reisinger & Turner, 2000). Nearly all the researchers have used either semantic differential or Likert type scales in the measurement of destination image.

It is not possible to measure specific characteristics of the product through structured methodologies, although they are easy to administer and simple to code. Structured methodologies are attribute driven and, although results can be analyzed through sophisticated statistical techniques, this characteristic makes them unsuitable for the measurement of unique

characteristics. Unstructured methodologies, on the other hand, lend themselves to the expansion of the unique features of the product. A combination of the structured and unstructured methodologies, with extensive qualitative research conducted during the scale construction phase, is crucial in studies that aim to measure destination image (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Jenkins, 1999; Pike, 2002).

Formica (2002) put forward a six step framework for the measurement of destination attractiveness after a thorough review of past literature of tourist attractions, attractiveness measurement tools, regional analysis of tourism resources and tourism planning. His six step framework consisted of defining the region under investigation; measuring the unit area; making an inventory of the resources of the region; grouping the resources into attraction factors or categories; evaluating the attractions and presenting the results in a geographical fashion. Such approach is supported by Hunter et al. (2007) who suggest that multimethod research design for destination image perception is important. In their own study Hunter et al. (2007) utilized visual research to reveal the real perceptions of myth-related destinations, with considerable results. Visual research is useful in uncovering the process between perception and perceptual memory and the opinions people form about commodities and cultural symbols. As such it is an effective methodology for examining travelers' perceptions of culture-related and mythical destinations and can contribute to tourism studies with its ability to combine multiple methods.

In the design of future destination image research, Echtner and Ritchie (2003, p. 46) suggest that

> *"Destination image should be envisioned as consisting of two main components; those that are attribute based and those that are holistic; each of these components of destination image contains functional, or more tangible, and psychological, or more abstract, characteristics; images of destinations can also range from those based on 'common' functional and psychological traits to those based on more distinctive or even unique features, events, feelings or auras."*

Destination image construct is difficult to measure. However, visitors' perceptions, taken on the whole, may be either favorable or unfavorable (Milman & Pizam, 1995). Destination image studies in general stress the need for destinations to develop favorable images to remain competitive. Travelers make destination choice decisions when the positive image is considerably stronger than the negative image (McLellan & Foushee, 1983).

2.6 PERSONALITIES

A review of the literature of human geography reveals that people are constantly creating and reinventing space and place according to the individual's perception of the external environment. The phantasmal destination is the product of tourist imagination. In this respect, reviewing tourist personality can help in understanding how tourists perceive the imaginary destination and why they search for these kinds of places.

Personality encompasses the diverse qualities of individuals and it influences personal psychological functioning (Cloninger, 1996). Although

each of us is unique, there are recognizable similarities among people (Ross, 1998). The definition of personality depends largely on the theoretical orientation of those who are attempting the definition. The concept of personality is best regarded as constructed, rather than real in a physical sense (Cloninger, 1996). There are a number of perspectives on personality, among these theories, trait / type approach is considered as best suited to tourism behavior studies (Jackson, White, & White, 2001).

Trait theory explains personality as a complex and differentiated structure of traits. A trait is a 'mental structure' which accounts for regularity and consistency in behavior (Cattell, 1950). There are comprehensive models of traits, such as a five-factor model (Goldberg, 1981), a sixteen-factor model (Cattell & Stice, 1957), a three-factor model (Eysenck, 1975), and an interpersonal trait model (Wiggins, 1979). Personality traits are perceived as components of a personality construct (Asch & Zukier, 1984). Hampson, John and Goldberg (1986) propose trait hierarchies - a types and traits hierarchical relationship. A broad personality type has many specific traits. For example, a person can be described as an 'extrovert' (type) and one of the traits could be 'talkativeness'. Traits can be combined in a hierarchical model with fewer broad, general factors at the top branching downwards into an increasingly large number of specific factors (Boyle, 1989; Gerbing & Tuley, 1991; Zuckerman, Kuhlman, & Camac, 1988).

2.6.1 Personality Theories Applied to Tourism

Personality, as a predictor for leisure activity decisions has been studied extensively. There are, however, few studies in tourism that have focused on personality for its own sake (Jackson et al., 2001; McGuiggan, 2004). Ross (1998) suggested that as the study of personality is still evolving, there could be 'no more appropriate or useful study than personality as it illuminates tourist behavior' (p31).

A number of researchers have investigated the relationship between personality and travel decision-making (Frew & Shaw, 1999a; Gilchrist, Robert Povey, Dickinson, & Rachel Povey, 1995; McGuiggan & Foo, 2004; Plog, 1974). Plog (1974) was the first person to conduct research on personality type as it applies to tourist behavior (Jackson et al., 2001; Madrigal, 1995). His seminal work has been widely cited in tourism literature and is included in almost every hospitality and tourism textbook available (Coltman, 1989; Gee, Makens, & Choy, 1989; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2006; Gunn, 1988; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Mill & Morrison, 1992; Murphy, 1985; Pearce, 1995).   There have also been its critics, pointing to the fact that it is not possible to empirically evaluate his conclusions.

While some academics are emphatic about Plog's model (Griffith & Albanese, 1996; Nickerson & Ellis, 1991), others have claimed that it is unsupported (Andreu, Kozak, Avci, & Cifter, 2005; Lee-Hoxter & Lester, 1988; Madrigal, 1995; Smith, 1990). Recognizing the model's shortcomings, some researchers have chosen a more reserved approach and utilized more

familiar personality measures to investigate the tourist-personality relationship. Among those, Gilchrist et al. (1995) looked at the relationship between adventure travel and sensation-seeking behavior. Their findings showed that adventure travelers scored significantly higher on Zuckerman's (1991) sensation-seeking scale. Frew and Shaw (1999) demonstrated a connection between personality and tourism attractions using Holland's (1997) theory of personality types. Holbrook and Olney (1995) discovered a relationship between the personality variable of romanticism and wanderlust. Their findings indicated that more tourists with a romantic inclination preferred riskier vacations and warmer climates. McGuiggan and Foo (2004) applied Carl Jung's theories and used the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) to measure the tourists' leisure activity preferences.

2.6.1.1 Plog's Allocentrism/Psychocentrism model

Plog (1974) proposed his allocentrism/psychocentrism model based on the type/trait personality theory of tourism. His original research, commissioned by the airline industry, involved interviewing people who did not travel by plane despite being on an above-average income scale. His findings indicated that those people shared common personality traits. They were not venturesome; they were anxious in daily living and believed they had little control over their lives. Plog defined these characteristics as "psychocentrism," and termed those non-flyers "psychocentrics." Further investigations revealed other people with opposing tendencies. Those tendencies were termed "allocentrism". Allocentric personalities tended to be

adventurous and self-assured. Plog used the terms "near-psychocentric", "mid-centric", and "near-allocentric" to describe the individuals that were between the two extremes. In nation-wide samples, the dimensions of allocentrism and psychocentrism were distributed on a normal curve, with a slight skew towards allocentrism. Later, Plog (2001) updated his model and changed the term psychocentric to "dependable" and allocentric to "venture".

Figure 2.2 Allocentrism / Psychocentrism Distribution
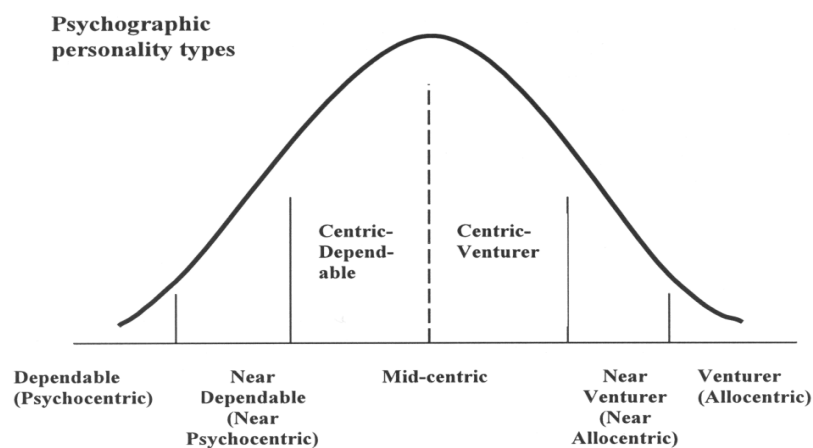
Plog's model has attracted considerable interest through the years. It has been criticized as being too difficult to apply because tourists travel with different motivations on different occasions (Andreu, Kozak, Avci, & Cifter, 2005). For example, it is not uncommon for some tourists to take a winter skiing holiday in an allocentric destination, yet take their main holiday in a psychocentric destination. McKercher (2005) questioned the validity of Plog's model stating that each market drawn to a destination has its own unique relationship with the place and that a destination can be seen to exist at multiple stages along Plog's allocentric/psychocentric continuum

simultaneously. Lee-Hoxter and Lester (1988) studied the relationship between allocentrism and extroversion as measured by the Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI). They showed an overall significant but small correlational relationship between allocentrism and extroversion. However, the correlation was significant for females only and not in the expected direction. This contradictory finding was not adequately explained. Williams, Ellis and Daniels (1986) reported results that generally supported Plog's model. Nickerson and Ellis (1991) combined Plog's allocentric – psychocentric dimension with an extroversion-type dimension to describe different types of tourist personalities. Their study found a moderate positive correlation between allocentrism and extroversion-type.

One of the most persistent critics of Plog was Smith (1990). Smith was unable to find a relationship between the allocentrism–psychocentrism personality dimensions and destination preferences. Plog (1990) rebutted Smith's findings on the grounds of construct validity, inappropriate sampling, and misapplication of the theory. He also criticized Smith for not using Plog's allocentrism–psychocentrism scale. Smith (1990) responded to Plog's rebuttal by pointing out that the allocentrics–psychocentrics in his sample was normally distributed, thus indicating that no skew toward the allocentric end of the continuum existed. Smith also reported that the allocentric–psychocentric continuum was able to predict actual travel behavior (group vs. independent travel) in only two of 25 subgroups included in his study. However, Plog (1991) noted in a second rebuttal that Smith failed to address the most important criticisms outlined in his first critique,

namely an inappropriate measurement instrument and classifying scheme were used to assess allocentrism–psychocentrism.

Based on previous studies, (Litvin, 2006) summarized the criticisms of Plog's model as follows:

- While compelling as a theory, the concept has been subject to little independent empirical verification.
- The concept fails to account for the fact that tourists travel with different motivations.
- While travelers may be allocentric in nature, financial or other factors may cause them to demonstrate mid-centric or near-psychocentric travel patterns.
- People are complex, and it may not be possible to place travelers in a 'single simple category'.
- The theory was designed for U.S. based travelers and does not work well for other nationalities.
- While Plog noted that with travel experience people are likely to become more allocentric, it has been countered that it would be more likely that travel to unfamiliar places would force travelers further into their shells.
- Finally, while the model presents an interesting concept, it neither predicts nor explains a large percentage of all tourism behavior. Therefore, it is impractical for use by tourism marketers.

Litvin went on to retest Plog's model and the result of his analysis support Smith's criticisms while defending Plog's model. When the survey premise was to test respondents' travel patterns, his findings were consistent with Smith's (1990) criticism that the model served little functional purpose. When the theme was changed to investigate people's ideal destination, however, these same tourists revealed travel aspirations that fit Plog's model remarkably well. In other words, when the focus is on the vacationer's travel attitude to their ideal vacation, Plog's model appears to be rigorous.

2.6.1.2 Holland's personality theory

Holland's (1973, 1997) observations of several broad classes of people led him to devise a typology of six different personal orientations to life. These personal orientations, which account for most human interests, traits and behaviors, are Realistic (R), Investigative (I), Artistic (A), Social (S), Enterprising (E) and, Conventional (C). Each of the six different personality types is defined in terms of its characteristic activities, interests, and competencies (Table 2.2). To make practical use of his typology, Holland (1985) devised the Vocational Preference Inventory (VPI) and then the Self-directed Search (SDS), to identify a person's personality and guide for educational and vocational planning.

Table 2.1 Holland's personality typology

Type	Personality
Realistic	Possesses mechanical and athletic ability and lacks social competencies; values money, power, status and other concrete things. Is inclined to be asocial, conforming, frank, genuine, materialistic, persistent, uninsightful, and uninvolved. Preferred vocations: automotive engineer; boiler maker; electrician; farmer.
Investigative	Possesses mathematical and scientific ability and lacks leadership ability: values science. Is inclined to be analytical, cautious, critical, complex, curious, independent, intellectual, introspective, precise, rational, and unassuming. Preferred vocations: chemist; computer operator; laboratory technician; mathematics teacher.
Artistic	Possesses artistic and musical ability; values aesthetic qualities. Is inclined to be emotional, expressive, idealistic, imaginative, impulsive, intuitive, non-conforming, original, and sensitive. Preferred vocations: Actor/Actress; artist; Interior decorator; Photographer.
Social	Possesses social competencies; likes to help others. Has teaching ability; values social and ethical activities and problems. Is inclined to be co-operative, empathic, friendly, generous, helpful, idealistic, patient, sociable, tactful, and warm. Preferred vocations: funeral director; librarian; minister/priest; social science teacher.
Enterprising	Possesses leadership and speaking skills and lacks scientific ability; values political and economic achievement. Is inclined to be adventurous, agreeable, ambitious, energetic, extroverted, optimistic, self-confident, and sociable. Preferred vocations: contractor; lawyer; Radio/TV announcer; real estate sales person.
Conventional	Possesses clerical and numerical ability; values business and economic achievement. Is inclined to be conforming, conscientious, defensive, inflexible, methodical, obedient, orderly, thrifty and unimaginative. Preferred vocations: bookkeeper; key punch operator; post office clerk; typist.

Source: Adapted from (Frew & Shaw, 1999b)

Later, Holland (1997) extended his theory by relating personality types to environmental image. He proposed that when the external

environmental pattern resembles a personality pattern, the person is more likely to find the environment reinforcing and satisfying. When the relationship is positive and the resemblance stronger, the satisfaction is higher. Holland (1997) theorized that, since a congruent environment includes people with "similar interests, values, traits and perceptions" there is a higher probability that a person will have a greater interest in those environments. Numerous applications of his theory over the past decades have provided support for his formulations (Hyland & Muchinsky, 1991; Taylor, Kelso, & Cox, 1979). Although the majority of the empirical work has concentrated on education and business sectors, Holland (1997) has suggested that it can be applied to non-vocational and recreational activities.

Acting on Holland's suggestion, Frew and Shaw (1999a) surmised that if a tourist attraction is perceived as having a congruent environment by certain types of people, then they will have an interest to visit the attraction. Personality type, therefore, may influence the choice of a holiday destination as well as the types of activities participated in during the vacation. Further, environment satisfaction levels of tourists with the environment and the level of enjoyment with their experience may reflect their personality types as well as the congruency of the environment.

Frew and Shaw (1999b) applied Holland's personality theory through an empirical study to investigate the relationship between tourism behavior and Holland personality types. Their main focus was on the relationship between personality, gender and tourism behavior. The results show that

although some attractions exhibited greater personality – gender interactions, eight of the 31 attractions, displayed no such interactions at all. They interpreted their findings and suggested that those attractions may be generically attractive or at least mass market attractions. There is some support that some distinctions are apparent in relation to types of personality, gender, and tourism behavior for some attractions, which suggests that the theoretical justification for the contingent applicability requires attention.

2.6.1.3 Carl Jung and the Myers-Briggs type indicator

Jung's typology of psychological types is well known and widely respected. Jung (1959) proposed that people vary along three important dimensions which correspond to basic psychological processes. The first dimension is introversion – extroversion, which he terms as a general attitude of consciousness. The characteristics of this dimension are more or less sociable. He argues that psychic energy is directed inward toward the unconscious among introverts and is turned outward toward the world among extraverts. Jung describes this dimension as a stable characteristic throughout life, whereas the other important dimensions in his theory describe capacities that can, theoretically, change as personality develops.

These two dimensions are termed as functions of consciousness. The dimension of thinking – feeling describes alternate ways of making judgments. Choices can be based on logic (thinking) or on emotion (feeling). Feeling types include more emotional memories of joy, excitement, and shame, compared with thinking types (Carlson, 1989). Thinking types who

are also extraverted score high on a measure of assertiveness, the Rathus Assertiveness Schedule (Papadopoulos, 2006).

Sensation – intuition dimension refers to alternate ways of perceiving. Information can be tangible and comprehensive, like that which comes through the five senses (sensation), or it can be global and holistic (intuition). Intuitive types seem to be more imaginative and aware of their unconscious than sensation types. Intuitive types, for example, are better able to interpret emotion from facial expression (Carlson & Levy, 1973). Studies among college freshmen show that intuitive types prefer to be given a broader range of advisement information about college programs, whereas sensation types, who prefer facts and details over intuition, choose more focused advisement (Crockett & Crawford, 1989).

Myers, McCaulley and Most (1985) developed an instrument called the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) designed to measure Jung's model as well as to provide a fourth score to assess whether the individual is predominantly a judging type or a perceiving type. The judging – perceiving dimension has been interpreted as tapping impulsivity (Cloninger, 1996).

Gountas and Gountas (2001) have conducted exploratory research in consumer psychology of tourism over two years based on Jungian personality typology and using MBTI inventory. Their findings identified four major personality types, which are thinking/ logically oriented, sensing/ materially oriented, feeling/ affectively oriented and perceptive/ intuitively oriented. They claim that MBTI is one of the most widely used,

non-psychiatric instruments of personality identification used in both counseling and organizational contexts.

McGuiggan (2000, 2004) applied Jung's theories and MBTI instrument to a study of leisure activity choice. They found strong correlations between personality variables and leisure activities, and have measured leisure preferences as well as actual choices. Since recreational tourism is a leisure activity (Iso-Ahola, 1983), it should follow that if the same issues are addressed in the study of destination or tourism activity choice, a similar relationship should exist between personality and tourism preferences. McGuiggan (2004) suggests that the following model should be considered in studying the relationship between personality and tourism choices:

- Tourist destinations should be measured in terms of attributes, rather than actual destinations;
- Personality should be a predictor of tourist preference, rather than choice;
- The role of other constraining variables needs to be considered in the relationship.

2.6.2 Measurement Issues

Mannell (1984), in his review of literature on the subject, points to the fact that studies have used general personality inventories to measure individual differences and that there is a lack of theory that could distinguish

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leisure-specific personality differences to help understand leisure-related behavior. Nias (1985) stated that the majority of those studies could not demonstrate a strong relationship between personality and leisure behavior. Iso-Ahola (1980), in his criticism of the studies, mentioned their failure to define clearly how they operationalized the variables. He also asserted that the studies failed to rely on theory for the inclusion of specific activities and lacked consistency in personality measurement.

Gountas and Gountas (2001) indicate that the main shortcoming of existing typologies is that they are based on subjective and hypothetical methods clustering the findings into groups, without a theoretical basis of consumer behavior and the decision-making process. They assert that tourism literature on the subject overlooks the dynamic and simultaneous interaction between behavior, situational factors and personality characteristics. They suggest, once those are taken into consideration, MBTI would be a reliable instrument in tourism behavior studies. McGuiggan (2000), among other studies, demonstrated that MBTI is compatible with leisure preference studies.

McGuigan and Foo (2004) replicated Yiannakis and Gibson's (1992) study in an Australian context, using MBTI to test the relationship between personality and tourist role behavior. Their findings supported the 15 leisure tourist roles identified by the earlier study. The MBTI provided insight into the needs underlying enactment of the various roles in terms of the three underlying role dimensions.

The MBTI is based on Myers' theory of personality, developed from Carl Jung's theory of psychological types and her own observations (Myers et al., 1985) The MBTI describes a person's personality on four dichotomous dimensions, indicating a person's preference for source of psychological energy (extroversion vs. introversion), perception (sensing vs. intuition), making judgments (thinking vs. feeling), and orientation to the outer world (judging vs. perceiving). The MBTI questionnaire is a forced-choice, self-report inventory, self-administered and designed for use with normal subjects. Reliability and validity data on the MBTI have been approved by many researchers (Arnau, Green, Rosen, Gleaves, & Melancon, 2003; Carlson, 1985; Edwards, Lanning, & Hooker, 2002; Murray, 1990). The MBTI questionnaire is readily available, simple to administer and score, and is the most widely used personality questionnaire in America for non-psychiatric populations (Murray, 1990).

There are various arguments that support the existence of a relationship between MBTI type and tourist behavior. Firstly, both Jung and Myers advocate in their theorizing that people of similar personality traits react similarly to different situations in life. It should follow that individuals of similar personality types should prefer comparable tourist experiences. Various scholars (Hirsh & Kummerow, 1989; Kroeger & Thuesen, 1989; Provost, 1990; Provost & Anchors, 1987) hypothesized on the relationship between MBTI type and leisure activity choice. Secondly, a large amount of data is available that document the relationship between MBTI type and occupational choices. Authors such as Iso-Ahola (1980) and Kabanoff and

O'Brien (1980) have proposed that work, leisure and vacation choices are influenced by a common third variable, such as personality. As there is ample data indicating a relationship between MNTI type and career choice, it is logical to assume that a similar relationship exists between personality type and vacation choice.

Thirdly, consumer behavior theory on information search and decision-making process is analogous with the sensing-intuitive and thinking-feeling functions measured by the MBTI indicating how information is gathered by the individual and decisions are made. As a result, the MBTI is often utilized by organizations to estimate decision-making styles of executives (Moore, 1987). There is no reason why this approach could not be extended to include decision-making for tourism choices. Shank and Langmeyer (1994) conclude that, although MBTI has been used sparingly in consumer research, it "would seem to be the ideal personality inventory for marketers" (McGuiggan & Foo, 2004, p. 44).

Plog's allocentrism and psychocentrism inventory, on the other hand, has been questioned for its validity and reliability. Jackson, Schmierer and White (1999) conducted research to evaluate the relationship between Eysenck's extroversion dimension and Plog's inventory. Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI) (Eysenck, 1980) has been well researched in many areas of psychology and has both high levels reliability and validity (Jackson et al., 2001). It has been concluded that extroversion and allocentrism are two independent personality constructs, tourists and their destination choices may

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be best described on two dimensions rather than one. Nickerson and Ellis (1991) also recommended that tourists should be described on both extroversion and allocentrism dimensions. Based on these two dimensions, Jackson et al (2001) propose four tourist personality types associated with tourist behaviors: the explorer, the adventurer, the guide and the groupie.

2.7 TOURIST EXPERIENCES

2.7.1 Conceptualizations of the Tourist Experience

Tourist experience has been considered as an essential way to understand visitor overall satisfaction (Ryan, 2000; Vittersø, Vorkinn, Vistad, & Vaagland, 2000). Early study on tourist experience can be traced back to the 1960s when Daniel Boorstin (1964) defined it as the artificial and inauthentic experience of mass tourism from industrialized societies. In contrast, MacCannell (1973) argued that tourists travel for the authenticity they miss in everyday life.

To solve the debate, Cohen (1979) argues that people are heterogenic, and they are alienated from their cultural origins to different degrees. They quest travel experience from mere pleasure, to the search for meaningful experiences. In his view, tourist experience is the result of relationships between a person and a variety of centers. These centers are related to their own societies in everyday life and other cultures during their travel. Based on this, through phenomenological inquiry, Cohen (1979) has categorized individuals into two broad groups; modern pilgrimage and search of pleasure.

The former group refers people who adhere to the center of their society and perceive their daily life as meaningful. Moreover, they also enjoy observing the authentic life of other centers. The latter group is alienated from the goals and values of their everyday life, and move in a centerless space for fun and pleasure.

Recently, Uriely (2005) criticized previous studies on the concept of tourist experience and argued that the concept should shift "from differentiation to re-differentiation of everyday life and tourism; from generalizing to pluralizing portrayals of the tourist experience; from focusing on the toured objects to the attention given to the role of subjectivity in the constitution of experiences; and from contradictory and decisive statements to relative and complementary interpretations" (p. 209). His arguments are basically rooted in postmodernism, which emphasizes the diversity and richness of life. The tourist subjective interpret meanings perceives as a determinant of the experience. Larsen (2007) also argues that tourist experience is a highly complex psychological process, and individuals' expectations and memories should be incorporated into tourist experience studies. In all, tourist experience is personal interpretation of their feelings about other centers.

2.7.2 Measurement Issues for Experiences

Tourist experience has been evaluated based on subjective interpretation of human experiences in the natural settings of destinations for years, and studies have attempted to understand what factors may determine

pleasant or unpleasant experiences. For instance, Graefe and Vaske (1987) argue that understanding tourist experience requires an initial understanding of tourist motivations and perceptions. They revealed that tourist experience is also affected by a series of inter-related impacts of other tourists and recreational use of the area. Recently, quantitative research to measure and predict tourists' behavior and satisfaction has become more widespread (Chhetri, Arrowsmith, & Jackson, 2004). Satisfaction has been considered as a cognitive process leading to an emotional state (Crompton & Love, 1995).

Perception of a destination and level of satisfaction have gained more attention in tourist experience studies. Arnould and Price (1993) tested the extraordinary experience of a river rafting trip in the Colorado River basin. They raised three dimensions of experience: communion with nature; "communitas" with friends, family and strangers; and personal growth and self-renewal. They asserted that the findings showed a weak link between expectation and satisfaction of the extraordinary experience. Sternberg (1997) suggests using iconography to represent the meaning of image affect on tourist experience. He took Niagara Falls as a sample and identified two main compositional elements, which situates the desirable motif of a waterfall in a staged setting, and links the motif to themes such as terror, adventure, and romance.

Reviewing previous studies, the dimensions of experience diverge to a great extent. Hedonistic consumption experience and learning experience have received more attention in tourist experience studies (Havlena &

Holbrook, 1986; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Li, 2000; Ryan, 2000), and Jansson (2002) went further and shifted hedonic experience from realistic hedonism to imaginative hedonism. The former refers to people who like re-experience of a particular kind of bodily pleasure, and prefer going to the same or similar destination. The latter type refers to people who continuously search for new places and activities. He argues that "the mediatization process generates a regime of imaginative hedonism, in which people's desires for new first-hand experiences are intensified." (P. 441) but imaginative hedonists often involve realistic fantasies, and these two types are thoroughly interlaced. This argument has been proved by a later study from Laing and Crouch (2009). They used narrative analysis in examining frontier travelers, who prefer traveling to remote and unique locations, such as deserts, mountains, and outer space, and found that these people seek a metempsychotic journey. They want to experience mythic, imaginary and theatrical elements, and explore the common discourse of the adventure myth.

2.7.3 Destination Satisfaction

There is consensus on the importance of tourists' satisfaction for the successful marketing of a destination. This is the primary concern for a destination management organization. The definition of tourist satisfaction is still allusive, and regarded as difficult to prescribe in terms of a single universally relevant meaning (Yüksel, 2008). The widest supported view of satisfaction in tourism is a collectively evaluated total consumption

experience on three levels: the overall satisfaction, the dimensional satisfaction, and the product-service satisfaction (Yüksel, 2008). This evaluating process is dependent on the individual tourist's situational decision. Oliver (1996) argued that customer satisfaction is "the summary psychological state resulting when the emotions surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with the consumer's prior feeling about the consumption experience" (p. 306). The complex conceptualization of satisfaction has created issues in regard to the accurate measurement of tourist's satisfaction, yet this is a crucial factor for destination management organizations when designing products to match tourists' needs and expectations. To solve measurement issues, a number of theories and models have been proposed to measure tourist level of satisfaction.

Referring to Yüksel's (2008) summary on consumer satisfaction theories, early satisfaction theory applied the dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957) to examine how effort and expectation affected the evaluation of product and satisfaction (Cardozo, 1965; Engel, Kollat, & Blackwell, 1973; Festinger, 1957; Howard & Sheth, 1969). Yüksel suggested that dissonance occurred when a customer expected a high-value product yet received a low-value product. This theory was not well accepted and its validity and reliability were questioned (Oliver, 1977; Yi, 1990). Succeeding studies employed assimilation-contrast theories (Helson, 1964; Sherif & Hovland, 1961) to suggest that consumers will manipulate and tolerate discomfort to a certain point, and dissatisfaction will occur when this threshold of rejection is reached (Anderson, 1973; Olshavsky & Miller, 1972). The problem with

this theory is that its results were derived from laboratory settings with simple products, such as ball-point pens, and any application in actual complex consumption was doubted (Oliver, 1996). Drawing on the shortcomings of these two theories, Oliver (1977) developed the Expectation-Disconfirmation Paradigm (EDP) by adopting level theory (Helson, 1964). In addition, Attribution Theory (Bitner, 1990; Folkes, 1984), Importance-Performance model (IPM) (Barsky & Labagh, 1992; Martilla & James, 1977; Oh & Parks, 1997), Value Percept Theory (Locke, 1967; Westbrook & Reilly, 1983), Evaluative Congruity Theory (Chon, 1992; Sirgy, 1984), and Equity Theory (Oliver & Swan, 1989) were developed to study consumer satisfaction in recent decades. Among these theories, EDP and IPM have received intensive attention.

2.7.3.1 The expectation-disconfirmation paradigm (EDP)

The expectation-disconfirmation paradigm assumes that customers purchase goods and services with pre-purchase expectations about anticipated performance. After consuming or experiencing the product, the consequence of purchasing will be compared with the initial expectations and adjusted. If the outcome differs with the expectations, the disconfirmation occurred either positively or negatively. The confirmation occurs when the result matches the expectation. Satisfaction is seen as a function of the expectation (adaptation) level and perceptions of disconfirmation. The prevailing disconfirmation is at a more abstract affect level rather than at an objective attribute level (Oliver, 1980).

Underpinned by this theory, in addition to tangible products and service industries, studies have focused on tourist satisfaction. The results of these studies showed that tourist satisfaction is not only affected by cognitive expectation, but also emotional expectation (del Bosque & Martín, 2008; Fournier & Mick, 1999; Liljander & Strandvik, 1997; Mano & Oliver, 1993; Oliver, 1993; Russell, 1980). Cognitive expectation is seen as beliefs and judgments made through mental processing of external information received from travel experience. Emotional expectation refers to the feelings and affection evoked from visiting a destination (Decrop, 1999). Furthermore, destination image plays a significant role in overall destination satisfaction (del Bosque & Martín, 2008; Chi & Qu, 2008). While disconfirmation is widely accepted as a major construct influencing satisfaction, one interesting exception, which requires further study, was provided by del Bosque and Martin's (2008) study. Their results showed that no significant relationship appeared between higher positive disconfirmation of tourist expectations and higher levels of satisfaction with the destination. The relationship between higher tourist expectations and less positive disconfirmation of expectations was also disputed.

Chi and Qu (2008) argue that recent studies have been focused on general levels, and attention should also be paid to attribute levels. According to Oliver (1993), overall satisfaction was directly affected by attribute satisfaction. He examined the relationship of destination image, attribute satisfaction, overall satisfaction, and destination loyalty, and found that destination image and attribute satisfaction had significant positive

effect on the level of overall satisfaction. The dimension of destination image included travel environment, natural attractions, entertainment and events, historic attractions, infrastructure, accessibility, relaxation, outdoor activities, and price and value. The dimensions of attribute satisfaction consisted of shopping, activities and events, lodging, accessibility, attractions, environment, and dining. Reviewing the current studies on tourist's experience of a destination, it is still unclear about what types of destination attributes are more important in effecting overall satisfaction while the destination image is regarded as holistic and destination attributes include both the physical and psychological. Moreover, there are no studies which have found if the current study settings can be applied to a phantasmal destination context.

2.7.3.2 The importance-performance model (IPM)

The importance-performance model has been favored in hospitality and tourism research for years, and has been claimed to be a powerful tool in determining customer satisfaction (Barsky & Labagh, 1992; Oh, 2001; Yüksel & Yuksel, 2008). Researchers suggest that attribute importance and beliefs play a central role in customer satisfaction. The level of overall satisfaction toward product and services correlated with the perceived importance of a specific product's characteristics. Customer's satisfaction level is related to the extent to which important attributes match their expectations. IPM is regarded as a modified version of EDP to measure customer satisfaction (Barsky, 1992; Yüksel & Yuksel, 2008). According to

Oh (2001), this model has been applied in different subject areas, such as service quality, travel and tourism, leisure and recreation, education, and healthcare marketing. However, the research on destination satisfaction is limited and not comprehensive.

Based on current relevant studies on destination satisfaction, Fuchs and Weiermair (2004) used an importance grid to develop destination benchmarking for exploring guest satisfaction. They identified 19 destination attributes and, according to their results, resort information, hospitality of local people, friendliness of tourism employees, and service adaptability for tourists' families were ranked as of high importance. Mobility within destination, modernity of the destination, animation, nightlife, all inclusive cards, access to the internet, and tourism services after departure were identified as of high implicit importance and low explicit importance. Landscape, booking and reservation, nostalgic atmosphere, hiking trails, possibilities to relax, customs and traditions, traffic management, and management of waiting queues were identified as of high explicit importance and low implicit importance. They pointed out that perceived important destination attributes led to higher tourist satisfaction. However, generalization of the results is questionable because tourists select destinations based on their interests and motives, and the same person may rank the same important attributes differently for different destinations according to their individual motivation.

2.7.3.3 Critiques of EDP and IPM

EDP and IPM have gained popularity among researchers in customer satisfaction studies, however it is noticeable that these two models do not sufficiently explain tourist satisfaction. Many researchers have pointed out the problems with these two models, and most representative critiques are provided by Oh (2001) and Yüksel and Yüksel (2001).

The major problem with EDP lies with measurement issues. First, tourism is an experiential industry and, unlike tangible consumer goods which are easy to evaluate before purchase, tourists may not have clear expectations until they are in the destination. In this situation, disconfirmation cannot occur. Furthermore, tourists obtain destination information through multiple sources, such as news reports, promotional materials, word-of-mouth etc. from their residential place as well as en route, where tourists may update their expectation accordingly. They may also have indistinguishable expectations and perceived performance after experiencing the destination. Some tourists may be satisfied even when the destination fails to meet their expectation, and stay above their minimum tolerable level. Or they may be dissatisfied even when the destination exceeds their expectation.

Second, the comparative standards remain varied, such as predictive expectations, norms, past experience, desires, ideals and experiences of others (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001). Different measurement standards may cause different results. There is no single unique comparison process which

fully explains tourist satisfaction judgments; hence, multiple standards of comparison were proposed (Cadotte, Woodruff, & Jenkins, 1987; Erevelles & Leavitt, 1992; Oliver & DeSarbo, 1988; Sirgy, 1984; Tse & Wilton, 1988). Spreng, MacKenzie, and Olshavsky (1996) applied multiple standards of desires, expectations and performance, and developed and examined alternative satisfaction models under conditions of non-actual purchase of a camcorder, their results integrated multiple standards of comparison into a single framework and confirmed the importance of desire congruency and information satisfaction as a determinant of satisfaction. Similarly, Park and Choi (1998) used four standards of comparison including expectation, product norm, equity, and ideal. They concluded that consumer involvement and product experience appeared to interactively influence the type of comparison standard used for evaluating product performance, even though consumers did not use multiple standards simultaneously in any situation. Their findings partially matched suggestions from Oliver and DeSarbo (1988), who suggest that the multiple comparison process is a complex of interactions which may take place either sequentially or simultaneously. Overall the validity and reliability of the model still retains a number of unresolved issues (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001).

The problems with IPE are summarized by Oh (2001, p. 624):

a. Lack of a clear definition of the concept of importance.

b. Absence of a clear criterion variable for the IPA framework as a whole.

c.   Mixed uses of importance and expectation.

d.   Lack of research on absolute versus relative importance.

e.   The implications of relationships between importance and performance among the attributes.

f.   Absence of guidelines for developing a set of attributes to be used.

g.   Use of unidirectional versus bi-directional measurement scales for the concept of importance.

h.   Use of actual means versus scale means in constructing the IPA grid.

i.   Potential misclassifications of attributes on the IPA grid.

j.   Philosophical issue related to strategic suggestions.

In summary, measuring destination satisfaction is a complex process. There is no universal model to explain overall satisfaction, especially for the tourism industry. Quantitative methods are commonly used in current satisfaction studies, while there are few studies applying qualitative methods. As tourist satisfaction is a more personal judgment, qualitative methods may help researchers better understand this complex process.

SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter reviews human geography, its relationship with tourism, and the relevant constructs in the travel process. This is in order to identify the extant literature and find support for the phenomenon of phantasmal tourism. Studies in human geography provide profound knowledge of imaginary places, underpinned by the concept of imaginative geography. In tourism studies, push-pull and escaping-seeking theories are found to better explain the relationship between human geography and the phenomenon of phantasmal tourism. In addition, special interest tourism, personality, destination perception, and travel experience have been reviewed.

Human geography focuses on the relationship between human beings and social space and place making. Human geographers are concerned with people's perception of place and movement among space and places. Imaginative geography is an element of human geography and concentrates on an individual's imagination of a place and the meanings that are created and transformed to the place and landscape. However, imagining of a place reflects both the individual psychological needs for future hope and memories of the past, as well as the values of a particular culture. In the view of human geography, a tourist destination is a collection of 'images' which are experienced by interaction of the place with the tourist. Leiper (1990) proposes that tourist, marker and attraction of destination are three essential elements in tourism systems. Tourists, the primary factor, are pushed by inner desires, seeking places to fulfill their needs. Markers mediate to assist

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people to find their desired places. Destination is a locale providing tourists the opportunity to realize their personal desires. Therefore, personal psychology factors such as travel motivation and personality are important constructs in tourism.

According to previous travel motivation studies, motives are varied based on the individual destination. The majority of studies focus on push and pull factors. These studies reveal that people travel as a result of inner push and external pull factors. However, Leiper (1990) and Iso-Ahola (1982) propose that people travel because their innermost needs push them to seek somewhere to escape. Iso-Ahola's seeking-escaping model enables us to better understand tourists' travel behavior, although this model has not been widely examined. Moreover, extant studies have not revealed motivation research on phantasmal destinations. The questions of why people travel to a fictional place, and what type of people they are, are yet to be answered.

Recently, special interest tourism has studied niche markets such as literary tourism, film tourism, culture and religion tourism and theme park tourism. These studies provide sound understanding of tourist motives, but they overlook those tourists that search for imaginary places. The tourist mentally contrives and re-imagines landscapes of symbolic consumption, turning geographic locations into 'destinations'. This perspective means that the phantasmal destination has an existence beyond its physical form on the ground. It also exists in mental landscapes, paintings, books, films, and

photographs. For the visitor that believes its mythical attributes, it becomes a sacred site, a private idea of a spiritual Garden of Eden.

Personal psychology plays an important role in tourist behavior. Research on personality in tourism has received much attention - Plog's Allocentrism/Psychocentrism model being an example. Plog proposes that allocentric tourists prefer adventure and long distance travel, while psychocentric tourists travel only to familiar places. The majority of tourists fall between these two types. Plog's model, however, has proven difficult in experimental research. Other personality studies have been mainly concerned with the effects of social-psychology factors on travel preference and experience, and divided tourists into different market segments based on travel motivation.

Travel motivation also affects perception of a destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004), and especially influences affective image of a destination. Destination image is the result of perception and, as proposed by Gartner (1993), there are three types of destination images: cognitive, affective and conative. Cognitive and affective image are by way of received information, and are formed before visiting. Conative image is shaped by actual experience and is formed after visiting. The gap between pre and post image, and/or to what degree, match the important travel motives which influences the travel experience. This is the basis of the expectation-disconfirmation model and importance-performance model.

Tourists' positive or negative experience depends on whether the destination is able to provide what tourists quest from the destination. The measurement of travel experience focuses on whether tourists will revisit or recommend to others. To date, tourism literature has not been sufficiently concerned with the extent to which destinations meeting tourist quests cause positive or negative experiences. While tourists are heterogenic and have different expectations from and motives for the same destination, it is difficult to measure level of satisfaction by applying quantitative methods.

Analysis of the reviewed literature has revealed that although previous tourism research on motivation, perception and experience theories and concepts, help to explain tourists travel behavior, they have failed to develop a comprehensive understanding on how phantasmal destination interacts with a lived world. There appears to be little work on why people are attracted to a phantasmal destination, how people perceive this place as it has no a physical base, and how this place is embedded into a physical place. Thus, it is worthwhile investigating through qualitative research the phenomenon of phantasmal tourism. The following chapter details the research method employed in this investigative study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology applied in the research, and reviews the methods therein. Initially, the rationale for using qualitative methodology and grounded theory approach for this research is discussed, followed by an introduction of the procedures of grounded theory method. The details of sampling strategy are then explained, and the process of data collection and analyses are elaborated. Finally, the considerations of trustworthiness and ethical issues are presented.

3.1 THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The debate on the nature of quantitative and qualitative research approaches in sociology, psychology, nutrition, organizational behavior, and many other related fields of study continues to concern both researchers and theorists alike. Quantitative research is acknowledged by most researchers as a positivist science employed in manipulating, measuring and specifying relationships between specific variables in order to test hypotheses about causal laws (Abusabha & Woelfel, 2003; Bryman, 1988; Richardson, 1996). Qualitative research advocators argue that qualitative research is the most appropriate methodology when the purpose of the study is to investigate meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, phenomena, symbols, and descriptions. While quantitative methodologists may question the rigor and subjectivism of qualitative research, others argue that validity and reliability can be built into systematical qualitative research design (Silverman &

Marvasti, 2008). Berg (2004) stated that it is erroneous to view quantitative strategies as more scientific than qualitative research; actually both methods are useful and legitimate (Walle, 1997). The key point is to identify and understand the aim of the research and paradigm of methodology inquiry (Abusabha & Woelfel, 2003).

3.1.1 Criteria for Choice of Methodology

Decisions about choosing the "right" methodology are crucial and always theoretically loaded. Either quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods depend on alternative inquiry paradigms based on ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions (Table 3.1) (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Guba and Lincoln (1994) propose four major inquiry paradigms; positivism, postpositivism, critical theory and constructivism. Positivism and postpositivism assume that comprehensible reality exists and can be measured and verified by physical and human sciences. The researcher is independent and separate from the participants, therefore findings are value-free. The knowledge of the world can be gained through experimental and quasi-experimental methods. These two paradigms explain the phenomena of the natural world. Critical theory presupposes that the complex world is organized by overt and hidden powers and that research is necessarily influenced by the researcher's values. Findings are therefore value mediated. The major method to be adopted to obtain the knowledge of the world is qualitative research. The aim of critical theory is to critique and transform the social cultural environment. Constructivism, alternatively,

asserts that we develop individual subjective meaning which leads to multiple meanings. Reality is socially, culturally and historically constructed. While the epistemology and methodology of constructivism are as for critical theory, the aim of this paradigm is understanding and the reconstruction of people's belief system. Constructivism assumes that people will open up to new interpretations of the natural world. These paradigms provide researchers criteria to choose an appropriate methodology. Jennings (2001) states that "A paradigm is the overlying view of the way the world works; the methodology is the complementary set of guidelines for conducting research within the overlying paradigmatic view of the world; and the methods are the specific tools of data collection and analysis a researcher will use to gather information on the world and thereby subsequently build 'theory' or 'knowledge' about the world (p.34)."

According to this paradigm, the criteria for choosing methodology depend on the individual researcher's view on ontology, epistemology and methodology. It indicates how researchers perceive the world and the nature of reality, and how our individual beliefs regarding these vast matters affect us on a daily basis. In this study, I take the position that the natural reality of the world is interpreted by individual subjective meaning. Reality is socially, culturally and historically constructed. The purpose of the study is to understand and investigate how a phantasmal destination interacts with the realistic lived world and, to this end, qualitative research methodology is deemed more suitable and thus employed in this study.

Table 3.1 Basic beliefs of alternative inquiry paradigms

Item	Positivist	Postpositivism	Critical Theory et al.	Constructivism
Ontology	Naive realism- "real" reality but apprehensible	Critical realism- "real" reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible	Historical realism- virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values; crystallized over time	Relativism- local and specific constructed realities
Epistemology	Dualist/ objectivist; findings true	Modified dualist/ objectivist; critical tradition /community; findings probably true	Transactional/ subjectivist; value- mediated findings	Transactional/ subjectivist; created findings
Methodology	Experimental/ manipulative; verification of hypotheses; chiefly quantitative methods	Modified experimental/ manipulative; critical multiplism; falsification of hypotheses; may include qualitative methods	Dialogic/ dialectical	Hermeneutical/ dialectical

Sources: (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 109)

There are various methods available when conducting qualitative research, such as ethnography, participatory action research, phenomenology, discourse analysis, grounded theory, photo voice, qualitative description or interpretive description, and mixed methods. Which method is more appropriate is a complex question to answer, however, a simple rule of thumb is for the researcher to always ask themselves what is their theoretical perspective and what are the research questions. These two questions will

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direct the researcher toward an appropriate method. In this study, the theoretical framework is Symbolic Interactionism as it operates in the postmodern world. The research questions are: How do travelers perceive a phantasmal destination, and how is the phantasmal destination embedded into a physical place?

Symbolic Interactionism is a social psychological and sociological theory with roots in American Pragmatism, and is grounded on the premise that meanings are interpreted by individual human beings. Humans are purposive agents who confront a world that must be interpreted rather than a world composed of a set of stimuli to which the individual must react (Schwandt, 1997). Phantasmal destination is a place imagined and created in the individual mind. Where this type of place is located depends on how the individual perceives it and embeds it into a geographic or natural place. This study sets to explore the phenomenon of travel to a phantasmal destination, and specifically focus on the process of the visiting. As such, grounded theory method (GTM), which has developed from symbolic interactionism, is employed. GTM asserts that theories must be 'induced' from data; only in this way will the theory be closely related to daily realities. GTM focuses on 'how' questions, and is best used when studying a process or an experience over time through various stages and phases.

3.1.2 Grounded Theory Method

Grounded theory method (GTM) was first introduced in the 1960s by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss. They derived GTM through

analyzing their own research decisions and formalized their methodological strategies in the text, "The Discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research" in 1967. In this text, they provide researchers with a systematic research procedure to develop theories and meanings beyond the concepts. GTM is recognized as a systematic and strict research tool in qualitative study because of the credibility of its data collection and analysis procedures (Riley & Love, 2000). The components of grounded theory practice are summarized by Charmaz (2006, p. 5) as below:

- Simultaneous involvement in data collection and analysis

- Constructing analytic codes and categories from data, not from preconceived logically deduced hypotheses

- Using the constant comparative method, which involves making comparisons during each stage of the analysis

- Advancing theory development during each step of data collection and analysis

- Memo-writing to elaborate categories, specify their properties, define relationships between categories, and identify gaps

- Sampling, aimed toward theory construction, not for population representativeness

- Conducting the literature review after developing an independent analysis.

GTM has gone through a series of developments since it was first 'formulated'. GTM's originators have played a significant role in these developments, leading to much controversy between themselves and other grounded theory researchers over the years. Glaser and Strauss have taken grounded theory to somewhat divergent directions since their classic statements in 1967 (Charmaz, 2006). While Glaser remained consistent with his earlier exegesis of the method and published "Theoretical Sensitivity" in 1978 to emphasize that categories should emerge from the data, and relied on direct and narrow empiricism, Strauss and Corbin refined the method toward verification. The latter focused on procedures rather than emphasizing initial strategies of the comparative methods (Charmaz, 2006). They proposed detailed procedures for data collection and analysis in "Basics of Qualitative Research" in 1990 and again in 1998. Their new technical procedures were criticized by Glaser as "forc(ing) data and analysis into preconceived categories and thus, contradict(ing) fundamental tenets of grounded theory" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 8). Further, comparing these two approaches of grounded theory, Annells (1997) stated that the difference was not only in the intended product, and procedural steps, but also in the ontological, epistemological and methodological bases.

Meanwhile, Charmaz (2006) further moved grounded theory away from positivism toward constructivism. Instead of viewing GTM as prescriptive, she treated it as a set of principles and practices, and emphasized examining processes, making the study of action central, and creating abstract interpretive understanding of the data. The major difference

between this and classic grounded theory is that Constructivist grounded theory advocates establishing everyone's (researchers and participants) vantage points and making their implications explicit, encouraging researchers to construct an interpretive rendering of the worlds from 'WE' study rather than an external reporting of events and statements.

As divergent directions of grounded theory have been proposed, researchers need to consider the diverse and unique nature of their own research question in order to ascertain the most appropriate direction to follow. In this study, the researcher followed suggestions from a number of innovative scholars (Bryant, 2003, 2002; Charmaz, 2006; Clarke, 2003; Seale, 1999) which took basic grounded theory guidelines such as coding, memo-writing, sampling for theory development, and comparative methods.

3.1.3 Research Process

Grounded theory method, along with systematic research procedures, is recognized as a rigorous tool in qualitative research. Based on the practices outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Charmaz (2006) the research process of this study is designed as follows and is shown in Figure 3.1.

First, observing the tourism phenomenon and then reviewing the literatures of tourism. Second, defining the substantive area and framing the research questions based on a literature review. Third, selecting the relevant method, in this case, grounded theory approach is adopted. Fourth, detailing

data collection and analysis. Fifth, triangulation of data, expert audit, and member checking are used for establishing trustworthiness of the findings. Finally, a theoretical conceptual framework is developed.

Figure 3.1 Research process
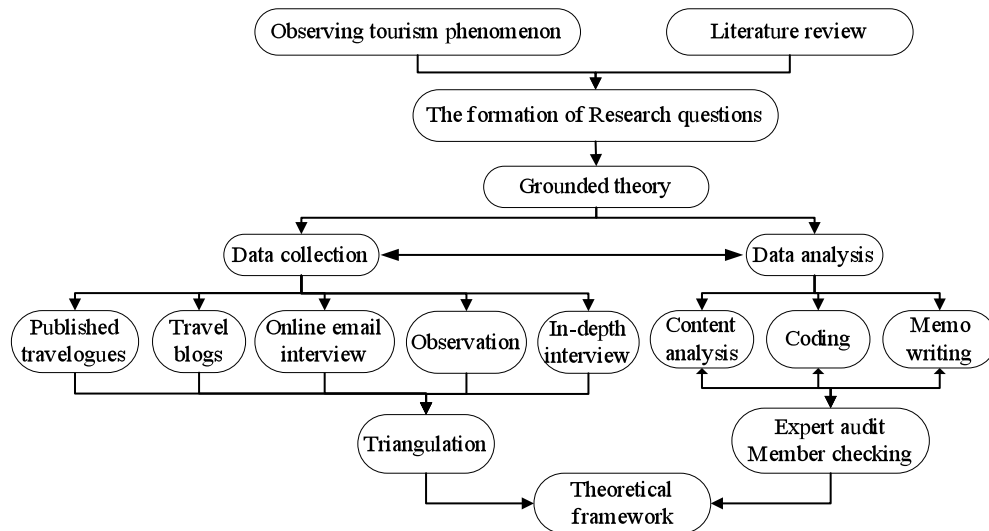
3.2 SAMPLING STRATEGY

Following GTM sampling instruction, theoretical sampling strategy was applied. Theoretical sampling is the purposeful selection of a sample according to the developing categories and emerging theory. This sample is cumulatively collected on the basis of concepts that have proven theoretically relevant to the evolving theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Sampling size is a debatable issue in qualitative research. As generalization is not the purpose of qualitative study, some researchers argue that sample size is not as important as the quality of the data. There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry, whether the number in the sample (N) is 1 or 20 or 30, depends on the purpose and rationale of the study

(Patton, 2002; Sobal, 2001). Similarly the criterion for judging when to stop data collection depends on theoretical saturation. Data collection stops when no new properties and dimensions of the developed categories are emerging (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). DePaulo (2000) holds a different view and argues that sample size does matter for a qualitative study. He points out that an appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is one that adequately answers the research questions. A total of 30 respondents for research is considered as a reasonable starting point that can reveal the full range of potentially important useable data. Marshall (1996) suggests that an appropriate sample size for qualitative study depends on the research questions. It is difficult to predict an accurate sample size before conducting the research. For simple questions or very detailed studies, small samples might be enough; for complicated questions large samples and a variety of sampling techniques might be necessary. Morse (2000) proposes that sample size relates to the factors of the scope of the study, the nature of the topic, quality of data obtained, study design, and the use of shadowed data. Shadowed data refers to the experience or opinion of others discussed by the interviewees. If the amount of data per interview question is relatively shallow, at least 30 to 60 participants are needed to obtain the richness of data for qualitative analysis. However, due to the dimensionality of grounded theory approach, as few as 20 to 30 participants may be sufficient.

Recruiting appropriate samples is challenging for researchers. Gobo (2004) argues that complete population lists are hard to obtain, and probability sampling procedures are rarely used - even for quantitative

research. Most research employs non-probability sampling, which is also appropriate for the objectives of this study. Therefore, all participants that met the following sampling criteria were recruited: a) 18 years or above; b) leisure travelers who had visited Shangri-la, Yunnan, China; c) able to communicate in English; d) aware of the Shangri-la myth.

3.3 SAMPLE OF DESTINATION

The non-existent world of Shangri-la, first created by James Hilton in his 1933 novel Lost Horizon, represents a utopian world which has caught the imagination of readers worldwide. Shangri-la refers to the phantasmal destination in this study and it is defined as an imaginative place based on mythical markers, similar to other created places in literature, film and mythical stories. The primary question is: Where is a phantasmal destination? Currently, some examples of locations which can be considered phantasmal destinations are UFO city, Roswell New Mexico in the United States; Middle Earth, which is embodied in New Zealand; Atlantis, which is supposed to have existed more than 30,000 years ago on the site of the Great Pyramid; the domain where Count Dracula, the vampire, is supposed to have lived in Romania; and Shangri-la, now proposed to be in Yunnan, China, in the region previously named Zhongdianxian.

All these destinations, openly or implicitly give support to surrounding myths in order to promote itself to a certain type of tourist. Two cases here illustrate the point. Dracula is the story of a vampire from Eastern

Europe who travels to Britain intent on colonizing the West. The best known version of this myth is through the 1897 novel by Bram Stoker. Although most of the novel is set in Victorian England, the story begins and ends in Transylvania - one of three regions that make up contemporary Romania. Similarly, Shangri-la, a mythical place created by James Hilton, is now proposed to have been discovered in Yunnan province of southwest China. For the purpose of this study, Shangri-la was selected as representative of phantasmal destinations.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

3.4.1 Natural Setting

Rooted in the canons of naturalistic inquiry, natural setting is an essential element in qualitative research design (Patton, 2002). Research should be conducted in real world settings rather than by manipulating phenomena outside their natural environment. Being aware of this, I went to the destination first as a tourist then as a researcher. The data in this study were collected onsite with individual tourists during those visits to Shangri-la, Yunnan. Five data collection approaches were applied for this study: secondary documentary data of published travel writing related to 'searching for Shangri-la'; online travel blogs and online email interviews with the bloggers; observations; and in-depth interviews. The procedures and forms of data collection via each of these methods are detailed in the following sections.

3.4.2 Published Travel Writing related to Shangri-la

Travel writing is defined as 'first-person non-fictional narratives of journeys conducted by the autobiographical subject of the text' (Korte, 2000; Kowalewski, 1992). The narration of travel writing almost always relates to the author's exploits and experiences along with the theme of travel, although there is always an inherent element of fiction that comes from the recreation of travel experiences in textual form (Korte, 2000). Travel writing has also been considered useful in the field of human geography (Gregory, 2000), and accepted as representation of cultural affiliations which can be analyzed, questioned, and reassessed (Holland & Huggan, 1998).

The selected travel writing for this research is only considered non-fictional, autobiographical first-person narratives that constituted a textual rendition of travels in Shangri-la area. Using this criterion, I identified eight travel writing texts published in both Chinese and English about Shangri-la since 1999 (Table 3.2). These works were utilized for secondary documentary data collection.

Table 3.2 Published travel writings of Shangri-la

Author	Date	Title	Location	Publisher
Brahm, L.	2006	Searching for Shangri-la: an alternative philosophy travelogue	Beijing	China Tibetan Studies Press
Gao, X.	2004	Cultural map of Shangri-la	Xian	Shaanxi Normal University Press
Li, J. F.	2005	Diqing: Shangri-la in the world	Beijing	China Photography Press
Li, L. Y.	2007	Travel through Shangri-la	Kunming	The Peoples Press of Yunnan
Liu, J. H.	2007	Shangri-la: the call of ancient	Chengdu	Sichuan Literary and Art Press
Roseberry, K	2004	Encounters with Paradise	Xian	Shaanxi Normal University Press
Tang, S. J.	1999	Shangri-la: form fiction to reality	Beijing	The Writer's Publishing House
Zhang, G. X.	2007	Grand Shangri-la: searching for lost horizon	Guangzhou	Guangdong Tourism Publishing House

3.4.3 Travel Blog and Online Interview with Bloggers

Data collection through analyzing documents is a method commonly employed in qualitative research. To some extent, what people do, how they behave and structure their daily lives can be traced using this approach (Berg, 2004). Online travel blogs provide insights into travelers' perceptions on a wide range of subjects and interest areas, and are seen as potential research data (Berg, 2004; Seale et al., 2004). The use of the Internet for tourism surveys and data collection started a decade ago (Schonland & Williams, 1996). Recently, the Internet has become a major medium for potential travelers to search for destination information, as well as a channel to share

individual travel experiences through blogs and forums. It has also been used by destination marketers to deliver their products to potential travelers. Blogs have become more popular and, by 2007, there were 31.6 million blogs on the Internet (Pan, MacLaurin, & Crotts, 2007). Forty thousand new blogs are uploaded each day (Baker & Green, 2008). Pan et al (2007) used travel blogs as a data source to examine travelers' experience of and feedback on Charleston, South Carolina, in the United States, and proposed that travel blogs serve as a type of digital word-of-mouth, carrying varied opinions on travel experiences.

Tourists' travel blogs on Shangri-la, Yunnan, China were collected from the top three travel blog sites and search engines: www.travelpost.com; www.travelblog.org; www.travelpod.com; Google blog search; and IceRocket. To obtain additional travel blogs, www.realtravel.com and www.travelbuddy.com were also included. All these sites have a hierarchical directory of blogs (continents, countries, states, and then cities) and most of the blogs have contact information and interactive features such as email, message, and comments sections. After searching the keywords 'Shangri-la Yunnan", 55 blogs from January 2006 to May 2008 that contained content in relation to travelers' experiences and comments on Shangri-la were identified, and a title or identifying information related to each blog was recorded. Online email surveys with 14 open-ended questions were sent to reachable bloggers in May 2008 for the purposes of gaining further information related to the research. Nine responses were received within two weeks. Further online email interviews were conducted with these nine

bloggers based on their answers in the email. The interview questions included inquiry into their travel motivation, adjusted expectation, and perceptions before and after visiting Shangri-la.

The profiles of bloggers (55) were collected from the hosting sites; in total, 41.82% were written by women and 58.18% by men. The ages ranged from 18 to 66, with 47.27% of the bloggers falling in the range of 26-35, followed in number by the 18-25 age group (34.55%). The majority of bloggers came from the following countries (Table 3.3): United Kingdom (18.18%), the United States of America (16.36%), Australia (12.73%), Canada (12.73%) and New Zealand (10.91%). These results could be due, in large part, to the fact that the search was carried out in English.

Table 3.3 Profile of bloggers

The total number of bloggers: 55			
Countries	**No. of bloggers**	**Age groups**	**No. of bloggers**
UK	10 (18.18%)	18-25	19 (34.55%)
USA	9 (16.36%)	26-35	26 (47.27%)
AUS	7 (12.73%)	36-45	7 (12.73%)
CA	7 (12.73%)	46-55	0
NZ	6 (10.91%)	56-65	3 (5.45%)
HK/CHINA	5 (9.09%)	Above 66	0
S/AFRICA	2 (3.64%)	**Gender**	**No. of bloggers**
GERMANY	2 (3.64%)	Male	23 (41.82%)
SWI	2 (3.64%)	Female	32 (58.18%)
SCOTLAND	2 (3.64%)		
FRANCE	1 (1.82%)		
IRELAND	1(1.82%)		
ISRAEL	1(1.82%)		

3.4.4 Observation

Observation techniques can be used in both quantitative and qualitative studies. Quantitative researchers, however, perceive this method as a preliminary or 'exploratory' stage of research and do not generally see it as a significant data collection method because of its subjectivity. Conversely, it has been identified as fundamental to qualitative research. Qualitative researchers believe that observational studies can provide a 'deeper' understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative data (Silverman, 2000).

In the tourism field, observation enables researchers to count, or chart, tourists' activities in certain spaces and times, and provides complementary evidence for other forms of data collection. Moreover, researchers' immersion in the context through the process of active participation can assist them constructing an in-depth interpretation of a particular time and place. The role the researcher plays in observation depends on the purpose of the study. From complete observer to complete participator, it is an awareness of the degree of participation involved which is essential (Hay, 2005).

The stages of participant observation in this study followed commonly recognized stages through which the process moves, from the choice of research site to presentation of results (Hay, 2005). Shangri-la, Yunnan, China was selected as the tourist space for observation. Although the observer is Chinese and familiar with Chinese culture, the place and

cultural background of Shangri-la were new to her. As the purpose of this research was to focus on tourists, especially non-Chinese tourists, this research setting suggested a balance between 'insider' and 'outsider' states (Hay, 2005). As the researcher in this setting was also a tourist, the role of researcher ranged from complete observer to complete participator, according to the situation on-site. The purposes of observation were planned according to data analysis of travel blogs and the secondary observation of pictures of Shangri-la which were uploaded by these bloggers, including the natural environment of the place, the physical setting, infrastructure, the key participants and their activities, the culture of the place, the interactions between tourists and residents, and the participants' expressions of their travel experiences. Observations were carried out from June 1 to 7 and July 13 to August 18, 2008. As the research site is a public area, gaining entry was relatively simple, and the observer could easily take on the role of participant without requiring permission.

3.4.4.1 First observation

Although preparatory research had been done, this was the researcher's first actual visit to Shangri-la. In order to obtain rich and valuable data for the study, the purposes of the first time site observation included:

- Experience and obtain familiarity with the setting

- Undertake preliminary observation of the most suitable locale for further data collection

- Undergo preliminary observation of tourists' activities and investigation of phantasmal tourists for final research decision method

- Investigate visitors' travel motives and their perceptions of the destination by conducting informal interviews with tourists

Natural environment of Shangri-la

Shangri-la is located in Yunnan province and is close to town of Lijiang, Tiger Leaping Gorge, and Meili Mountain. The original name of Shangri-la was Zhongdian, and although it was officially renamed as Shangri-la at the end of 2001, local residents and some tourists still prefer to call it Zhongdian. Actually, these two names are used interchangeably in this area, and they both often appear on public signboards. The sign on the front window of the coach from Lijiang to Shangri-la reads 'Shangri-la' and on the back window, 'Zhongdian'. Because of its plateau climate, the peak tourism season in this area falls in July and August.

There are two ways to access the setting. Visitors can directly fly to Shangri-la airport from Kunming, the capital city of Yunnan province, or travel approximately four hours by coach from Lijiang (another city in Yunnan) to Shangri-la. There is a narrow winding road from Lijiang to Shangri-la that runs among mountains at an elevation of over 2,000 meters.

The scenery along this road is scattered with villages, and was described as being 'close to the description of Shangri-la' by some bloggers. Shangri-la is in the Tibetan Autonomous Region. The town has been divided into a new town and an old town. The new town is designed with modern style concrete buildings and is not distinct from other towns in other Chinese cities. The old town, on the other hand, is designed for tourists, with Tibetan style buildings. The old town has no residents. Tourists can only find shops, restaurants, bars, cafés, and accommodation in the old town, giving the researcher the impression of a rather small shopping mall.

One interesting activity is the residents' dance every evening from eight until nine o'clock in a big square located at the center of the new town. Notably, a similar activity is also held at the old town square from seven to nine o'clock. While the activity is for the locals' own entertainment and exercise in the new town, it takes the form of a special dance for tourists in the old town, where the residents dress in Tibetan costumes to entertain. Some tourists like to join the team and dance with them, while others take photographs.

Other tourist activities available at Shangri-la include hiking, biking, horse riding and spas. There are also many bars and cafes within and nearby the old town. The major nearby attractions include Guishan Park, Songsanlin Monastery, Pudacuo National Park, Bita Lake Nature Preserve, Napahai, Baishui Terrace, and hot springs. There are two types of accommodation: Hotels located in the new town and hostels located in the old town. While

most Chinese tourists and group travelers stay at hotels, individual foreign tourists prefer to stay at hostels.

Tourists in Shangri-la

Individual foreign tourists usually go directly to the old town after arrival, engaging in activities such as shopping and dining at Tibetan restaurants and cafés. Following are typical examples of tourist behavior during the first observation:

At a souvenir shop in the old town, a French woman picked up a Tibetan silver ring and put it on her finger, the shop assistant enthusiastically tried to sell it to her. They did not understand each other at first, but after a few minutes of communication, the woman understood that the ring cost 10 RMB (less than 2 Euros). Without any hesitation, she bought the ring and told her friends to do the same.

After observing two young women window-shopping I conducted an informal interview with them. They were from Britain, one residing in Beijing with her husband the other, her friend, working at a travel agency in London. Both of them claimed to love Tibetan culture, but did not want to apply for entrance permission to Tibet, citing that it was difficult to obtain due to the Tibetan riot and Olympic Games. Shangri-la is a Tibetan town and 80 per cent of residents are Tibetan, this was the reason for their travel. They had heard about the Shangri-la story and knew a little bit about it, but

had no intention of searching for Shangri-la. They enjoyed the Tibetan culture and were satisfied with their trip.

Abu's house, approximately 370 years old, is the oldest private building in the old town. Abu, the owner of the house, had placed a sign on the door welcoming foreigners, including Hong Kong and Macao tourists. When I arrived in front of his home, I met with a German couple and the three of us were welcomed. He escorted us upstairs and proceeded to inform us about Chairman Mao's troops and the serious political prosecution he had suffered during the Cultural Revolution. Later, he guided us into another room and began to talk about Tibetan religion, while also asking for money. We all assumed that he wanted to collect foreign currency as a remembrance. The couple gave him five Euros and I gave him HK$10. Abu asked me to give him Chinese currency (RMB) instead because it was not possible to exchange foreign currency into RMB there, i.e. he could not use the money he had received from the foreign tourists. Shortly after, the German couple became disinterested in Abu's personal history. Preferring to learn more about the Tibetan culture, they asked me to translate their farewells, and the three of us left.

3.4.4.2 Second observation

Based on the results of first time observations and travel blogs, the purposes of the second visit were to conduct in-depth interviews and to observe the interviewees' behaviors. The initial focus was given to individual foreign tourists. I observed their behavior first, and subsequently

requested an interview when presented with an opportunity. After the initial interview, I discovered the length of their stay, the places that they had visited, and where or what they would visit next. Being a small town, with most of the interviewees staying more than two nights, I had the opportunity to meet after the initial interview and, during the ensuing days, I had informal discussions with them to gain more information about their travel experiences.

The second observation focused more on the interviewees' particular behaviors in Shangri-la, such as what they did, and where they went. Three noticeable behaviors were recorded. First was their eating behavior. The daily meals for these tourists were in the western style, and cafés located in the old town were popular. Eating yak meat and drinking butter tea were seen as experiencing Tibetan culture. They enjoyed the Tibetan food but did not eat it as a daily meal. The second was shopping behavior. These individual foreign tourists showed no interest in the souvenir shops because they thought the gifts were too ordinary and similar to those that could be purchased from many other places. The popular shops were the bicycle rental shops, which attracted long queues of mostly foreign tourists every morning. The third noticeable behavior related to choice of accommodation. The popular accommodations were motels and hostels in the old town which had been reviewed in travel guide books. The room rates were from US$14 to $19, or US$3 for a bed without private bathroom facility. The hotels located outside the old town charged the same prices but did not attract these foreign tourists, these tourists preferred spending time in the old town, observing

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how the Tibetan girls made handicrafts and exploring, while few explored the new town.

3.4.5 In-depth Interview

In-depth interviewing is a major data collection method in qualitative research. It enables researchers to gain insight into opinions, experiences, motives, and ideas which are not obtained from observation. To obtain rich data explaining a phenomenon, before each interview, several main questions should be prepared to direct the discussion. The wording of a main question should be open enough to encourage interviewees to express their own opinions and experiences, but narrow enough to keep interviewees from wandering too far from the subject at hand (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). To obtain further information and encourage the speakers to keep elaborating, probe questions should also be prepared. The quality of interview is important as this decides the quality of the subsequent analysis, verification and reporting of the interview findings. According to Kvale (2007, p. 80), the quality criteria for an interview should include:

- The extent of spontaneous, rich, specific and relevant answers from the interviewee.

- The shorter the interviewer's questions, the longer the subjects' answers, and the better the results.

- The degree to which the interviewer follows up and clarifies the meanings of the relevant aspects of the answers.

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- To a large extent the interview is interpreted throughout the interview.

- The interviewer attempts to verify his or her interpretations of the subject's answers in the course of the interview.

- The interview is 'self-reported', it is a self-reliant story that hardly requires extra explanations.

The role the researcher plays while conducting an interview is still debatable (Fontana & Frey, 2000; Seale et al., 2004). While the majority of methodological discussions are in consensus with rapport and neutrality, constructivism argues that 'being neutral' in an interview is impossible because the interviewers actively guide the conversation. To make the participant feel comfortable with the interview process, Rapley (2004, p. 25) has proposed mundane interactional 'methods' and cooperative interviewing should involve:

- Initially introducing a topic for discussion.

- Listening to the answer and then producing follow-up questions.

- Listening to interviewees talk and asking them to unpack certain key terms.

- Listening to interviewees talk and following it up with talk about your own personal experience or your personal opinion or ideas or the opinion or ideas of other people.

- And whilst listening, provide non-linguistic supports such as 'mm', 'yeah', 'yeah, yeah' alongside nodding, laughing, joking, smiling, and frowning.

Considering previous researchers' suggestions, the interviews were conducted from July 13th to August 28th, 2008 at Shangri-la, Yunnan, China. Interviews were initially conducted with 32 tourists, and the answers that they gave showed some convergence and similarity. Fifteen additional tourists were then interviewed to counteract the possibility of the unintentional collection of poor quality data. In total, 47 tourists were interviewed. Six interviews were eliminated due to poor recording quality, and 41 interviews were deemed useful and subsequently analyzed. The final demographic information regarding interviewees is presented in Table 3.4. The interview questions were prepared according to the research questions and data analysis of travel blogs and observations (Appendix 1). Six major topics are identified: general travel motivations; motives for visiting Shangri-la; perceptions and travel experience of Shangri-la; opinions of Shangri-la location; effects of mythical stories on travel decision making; and self-evaluation of personality. Each of the in-depth interviews lasted from 20 to 45 minutes, were digitally recorded, and transcribed into MS Word documents. During the interviews, the interviewer attempted to maintain 'rapport and neutrality' but also shared personal opinions when appropriate. Moreover, the previous interviewees' opinions were discussed with later interviewees, for instance, the concept of phantasmal destination

which was raised by some interviewees was shared and discussed with others

for comprehensive understanding of the new concept.

Table 3.4 Demographic profile of the interviewees

Nationality (41)		Gender (41)	
UK	8 (19.51%)	Male	24 (58.54%)
HK/China	6 (14.63%)	Female	17 (41.46%)
USA	6 (14.63%)	**Age Group (41)**	
France	4 (9.76%)	18-25 (1)	17 (41.46%)
AUS	3 (7.32%)	26-35 (2)	12 (29.27%)
Thailand	3 (7.32%)	36-45 (3)	6 (14.63%)
German	2 (4.88%)	46-55 (4)	3 (7.32%)
Netherlands	2 (4.88%)	56-65 (5)	3 (7.32%)
New Zealand	2 (4.88%)	66 or Above (6)	0
Israel	2 (4.88%)	**Education (41)**	
Canada	1 (2.44%)	Completed secondary/high school (A)	0
CZECH	1 (2.44%)	Some college or university (B)	7 (17.07%)
S/Africa	1 (2.44%)	Completed college/university/ diploma/degree (C)	25 (60.98%)
		Completed postgraduate degree (D)	9 (21.95%)

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

3.5.1 Processes of Data Analysis

The processes of data analysis based on grounded theory approach

was initially developed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, and refined by Strauss

and Corbin (1998) and Charmaz (2006). Strauss and Corbin refined the

notion of theoretical sampling, while Charmaz proposed constructed

grounded theory. In constructing grounded theory, she emphasizes the role of

researchers in the process of data analysis and stresses that researchers

should reflect their own interpretations about the data as well as those of the participants.

Grounded theory data analysis is a constant comparative process which means data collection and data analysis proceeded simultaneously. The goal of analysis is to generate an emergent set of categories and properties that fit, work, and are relevant for integrating into a theory (Glaser, 1978). Constant comparative data analysis is the core method to establish analytic distinctions. It consists of four steps: comparing incidents applicable to each category, integrating categories and their properties, delimiting the theory, and writing the theory (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978). Data analysis for each case involves generating concepts through four types of coding process: initial coding, focused coding, axial coding, and theoretical coding (Charmaz, 2006).

Based on previous discussions, an inductive-oriented approach was employed for this study, using methods of content analysis and coding. Figure 3.2 illustrates the interrelated process of the data collection and analysis for the study. Data collection and analysis started with published travel writings and travel blogs, uploaded online during or after these bloggers had visited Shangri-la Yunnan China. The travel writings provided comprehensive information about the culture and geography of Shangri-la, as well as the meanings of Shangri-la to the writers. The blogs provided ample information about the blogger's feelings and experiences during their visit, such as friendly residents, beautiful sceneries, the Shangri-la moment, etc.

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Two third of bloggers mentioned the Shangri-la myth and expressed their opinions about the reality and ideal Shangri-la. Approximately half of the bloggers also commented on their pre-arrival travel motives and perceptions. The blog analysis presented valuable information about why writers visited Shangri-la, and how they perceived the place and experiences in Shangri-la. Clearly, these findings could not answer all the research questions as the blogs were written according to the tourists' own interests. For instance, what were their primary motives to visit Shangri-la? What inspired them to visit Shangri-la? How did the mythical stories influence their destination selection? Semi-structured open-ended questions, based on the research questions, were designed to elicit further data (see Appendix 2), such as:

- What were the major reasons for the trip to Shangri-La, Yunnan province of China?
- How did you get to know about Shangri-La?
- What do you know about Shangri-La?
- What does "Shangri-La" as a word and a place mean to you?
- What did you expect before traveling to Shangri-La?
- Has Shangri-La met your expectations?
- What were the most significant aspects of your Shangri-La trip?

These questions were then sent to the bloggers through email, to which nine bloggers responded. Subsequent data analysis of the bloggers' responses in addition to the first onsite observation field notes, refined the interview questions for further data collection, and provided information on suitable places for conducting in-depth interviews. The second onsite observation and final in-depth interviews were conducted in July and August as these two months are the peak tourism season in Shangri-la. The interview

results were transcribed verbatim for data analysis after data collection. Although the interviews were conducted in China, as the interviewees were English speaking travelers, language translation was unnecessary.

Figure 3.2: The interrelated processes of data collection and analysis
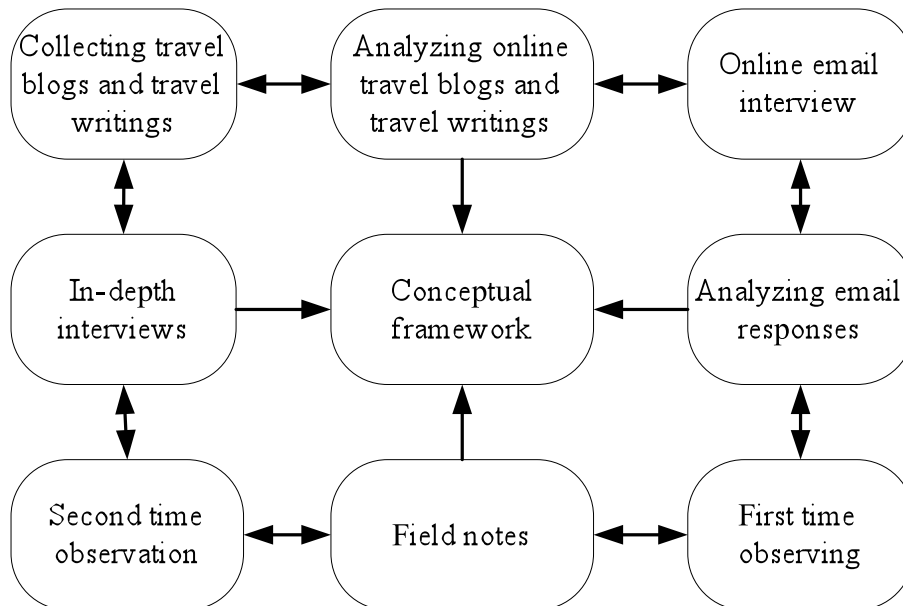
The computer software Atlas ti.5 was also used for facilitating data analysis. The software is designed to help researchers in managing data and categories through basic data "code and retrieval", and sophisticated analysis using algorithms to identify co-occurring codes in a range of logically overlapping or nesting possibilities, annotation of the text, or the creation and amalgamation of codes (Pope, Ziebland, & Mays, 2000). In addition, it offers more extended features for theory development, including the capacity to create conceptual diagrams showing links between sections of the data. This can protect the narrative structure of the data to avoid the problem of data fragmentation (Silverman, 2000).

3.5.2 Coding

3.5.2.1 Initial coding

Data analysis begins with initial coding - the process of fracturing data into analytic pieces and then examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). At this stage, researchers should remain open minded and adhere closely to the data, examining each word, line, sentence, paragraph and document. This ensures defining accurate core conceptual categories at later stages. In labeling the codes, researchers focus on actions and code data as actions by using gerunds (Charmaz, 2006), such as adopting, comparing. The guidelines for coding suggested by Charmaz (2006) are: short, simple, active and analytic. By doing so, she also proposes questions to facilitate researchers in identifying actions and significant processes. These questions include (p51): "What process(es) are at issue here? How can I define it? How does this process develop? How does the research participant(s) act while involved in this process? What does the research participant(s) profess to think and feel while involved in this process? What might his or her observed behavior indicate? When, why, and how does the process change? What are the consequences of the process?"

Following Charmaz (2006), this study attended to the actions in each segment of data and created as many codes as possible to maximize the best fit and minimize distortion from preconceived thought. The coding scheme was also derived from the literature on tourist motivation, perception, image

of destination, and tourist experience, which reflected the research questions, highlighting key elements that emerged.   The coding scheme comprised:

- Travel inspirations

- Tourists expectations

- Perceived image of Shangri-la

- Interpreting the meaning of Shangri-la

- The main destination of the trip

- Tourists' onsite behavior

- Tourists' impression of Shangri-la

- Tourist personality and personal interests

This coding scheme was used as a focal point through which to view the collected data. Each travel related factor was treated as a code/pattern. For example, participants' reasons for visiting Shangri-la, were categorized into travel inspirations and each reason was coded as a single code, such as visiting Shangri-la because of the mythical story; self challenging; word of mouth. Mythical story and word of mouth related to external stimulation, while self challenging related to internal desire. Therefore, travel inspiration is influenced by both external and internal factors. Much of the data analysis consisted of unpacking the interviews and documents into manageable blocks in order to classify them under each code/grouping. In total, 729

initial codes were identified. In-vivo codes were used whenever applicable (this code refers to the terms used by the interviewees). These types of codes serve as symbolic markers of interviewees' speech and meanings (Charmaz, 2006). To ensure the reliability of the information collected, extensive literatures were used either to validate or to justify the interviewees' viewpoints.

3.5.2.2 Focused coding

The second step in data analysis was focused coding, "using the most significant codes to sift through large amounts of data. Focused coding requires decision about which initial codes make the most analytic sense to categorize [the] data incisively and completely." (Charmaz, 2006, p. 57) At this phase, the initial codes were compared by similarity and difference in content and were clustered to elucidate the theoretical properties of each category (Table 3.5). Through comparing data to data, incident to incident, incident to concept, and concept to concept both within the same interview and amongst different ones, the focused codes were developed and coded as: feeling an authentic Tibetan town, impressed by the beautiful natural landscape, comparing the phantasmal Shangri-la and proposed Shangri-la, enjoying diversified activities, interaction with local residents, expecting the similarities between phantasmal and proposed Shangri-la, expecting an untouched natural environment, expecting adventure, expecting to experience Tibetan culture, keeping an open mind without expectation, fearing commercialization and modernization, identifying a Shangri-la

moment, perceiving the meaning of Shangri-la, locating phantasmal Shangri-la, travel for novelty, knowledge, relaxation, seeking phantasmal Shangri-la, being attracted by mysterious Tibet.

Table 3.5 Examples of focused coding

Code Family: [Experience/Impression] Identifying Shangri-la moment
Codes (6):   Feeling SL is outstanding / mysterious / sacred   Inciting a mysterious / sacred feeling   Inciting an unusual / special feeling   Obtaining inspiration from Tiger Leaping Gorge   Feeling peaceful / unexplainable qualities through scientific or realistic thinking patterns   Feeling something different in the region

3.5.2.3 Axial coding

Developed from a paradigm originally proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990), axial coding is a set of procedures to integrate concepts and categories identified at previous coding stages in new ways by identifying the relationship between a category and its subcategories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Axial coding focuses on each developed category relating to conditions, phenomena, context, action/interaction strategies, and consequences. Conditions answer questions of why, where, and when. Actions/interactions answer by whom and how questions. Consequences derive from actions/interaction and answer what happens. Although this coding paradigm is criticized as possibly leading to the forcing of categories on the data, and thus too removed from the underlying principles of grounded theory (Glaser, 1992) and encouraging the production of poorly integrated theoretical explanations (Kendall, 1999), it does represent a more

user-friendly concept. For researchers with limited experience of grounded theory, applying this method may guide them to more complex, systematic, and accurate ways of capturing much of the complexity and movement in the real world (Kelle , 2007; Kendall, 1999).

Axial coding in this study was developed on the basis of a coding paradigm, illustrated in figure 3.3. The media reports, word of mouth, and promotions on renaming Zhongdian to Shangri-la captured tourists' attention. It was mentioned by most interviewees that Shangri-la is a well-known eastern myth, and they were attracted by the Chinese government's announcements that Shangri-la had been discovered. They searched for online information and discovered Shangri-la's advertised attractions. These findings created their desire to visit Shangri-la when they had an opportunity

Figure 3.3: The impact of renaming on visiting Shangri-la
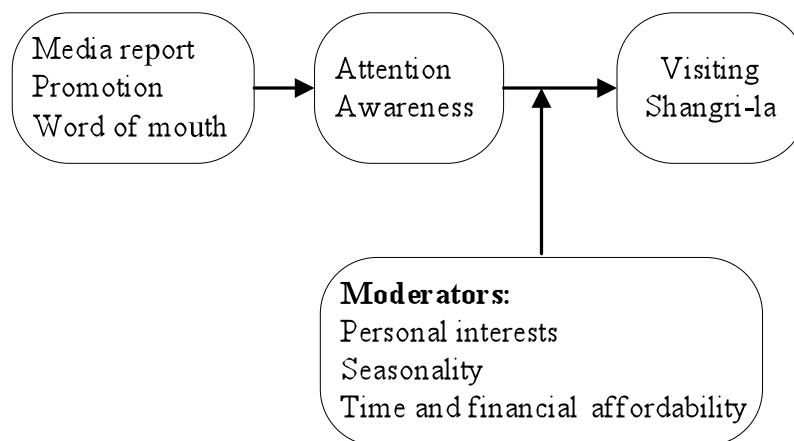
3.5.2.4 Theoretical coding

The final step in grounded theory data analysis is theoretical coding, the integration of identified core categories from the axial coding phase to

form an initial theoretical framework. At this phase, the theoretical coding families are useful to make the analysis coherent and comprehensible (Charmaz, 2006). To arrive at this theoretical conceptual level, researchers strongly suggest reading widely across disciplines to develop theoretical sensitivity. The strategies of doing theoretical coding are suggested through theoretical sorting of memos and analytic rules (Glaser, 2005; Holton, 2007).

Memos are theoretical notes of ideas derived from the data, codes, categories and the conceptual connections between categories. Memo writing allows the researcher to develop ideas with complete conceptual freedom and, in grounded theory, operates as interconnecting ties which build relationships between each core category, allowing the researcher to capture emerging frameworks – both conceptual and substantive.

Below are two of examples of memos.

MEMO: Mythical stories influence the destination choice

This interviewee doesn't believe in myths. He views himself as a logical and methodological person, however, he said that he was visiting SL because of the mythical story. This sounds like self-contradiction. Why has this happened? What made this happen? Does he really understand himself? How is this related to post-modernism?

According to psychology, personality is a contradictory concept. While the personality traits remain stable, a person's emotion and feelings are changed according to the mood and natural setting (context). [need to find out relevant literature]

Personalities may not have an effect on people searching phantasmal destination. What factors will evoke people's desire to search for this type of destination? emotion? feeling? mood? life experience?

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MEMO: Balancing between human being and nature

According to interviewee's response, I felt that the phantasmal or dream or imagined place must have a good balance between people and nature. (This point has been mentioned by some other interviewees too). Meili Mountain is a wild natural environment, in that area there are no residents except a few businesses serving tourists. This place hasn't become a touristy place so far. This might be the reason why Paul said 'Shangri-la needs people'. However, according to Paul's comments, 'if people moved to Meili Mountain, I am certain that they would ruin it and turn it into just another town'. In other words, people will destroy the unique feeling. As P2 said, 'if there were SL, modern people living there will destroy SL.' P1 said, SL needs quality people.

Human beings in part can create a phantasmal destination, and also destroy or ruin a phantasmal destination. So balance is the key point here. This is like 'Yin and Yang', the key point in traditional Chinese medicine. Everything needs balance, balance created peace, beauty and the best things in the world, if the balance is broken, things will go wrong. This should be a key point in phantasmal destination formation.

The important element of memo writing is its influence on theoretical sorting based on theoretical codes at later stage, without sorting, the theory will be linear, thin, and less than fully integrated (Holton, 2007). Theoretical sorting can also be guided by analytic rules, which are guidelines for constructing emergent theory. According to these rules (Glaser, 1978), memo sorting can start anywhere, the point is to start. Core variables are the focus when sorting memos, so that only relevant categories and properties under applicable conditions need to be sorted. This rule forces focus, selectivity and limiting of the analysis, allowing researchers to promote one core variable to the center and demote other, equally qualified cores, to a sub-core variable to achieve some theoretical coverage. All ideas need to integrate into this conceptual framework.

Resultant to this theoretical sorting, the "process of embedding a phantasmal destination into a physical place" as a theoretical code emerged (Figure 3.4). This theoretical framework explained how a phantasmal destination formed and interacted with a lived world. It was also the broadest category which could be related to the highest number of possible lower level categories. For example, categories such as travel inspiration, perceived image of Shangri-la, adjusted expectation, experiencing Shangri-la and the triggers reflected why tourists sought Shangri-la and how they perceived the imaginary landscape. The participants' expectations of and experience in Shangri-la explained an interaction between imagination and reality. Triggers played as catalysts in the whole embedding process.

Figure 3.4: The process of embedding a phantasmal destination into a physical place
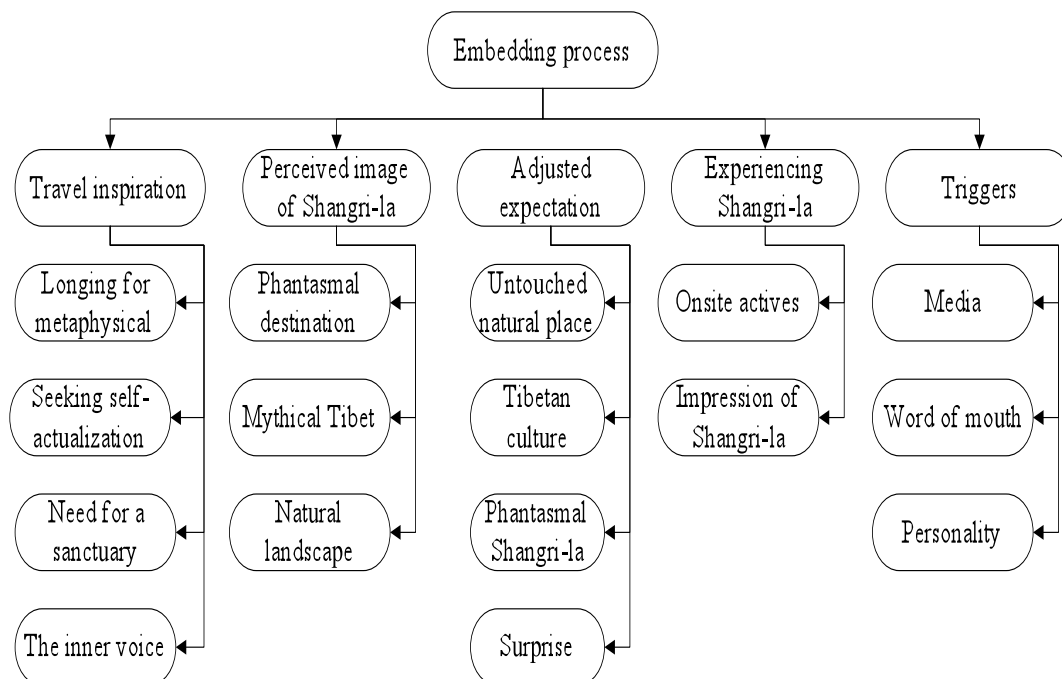
3.5.3 Field Notes

Field notes are a significant outcome of the observation process, connecting researchers and their subjects in the writing of the final data analysis report. There is some present debate over the question of how field notes are made (Mulhall, 2003; Wolfinger, 2002). While every researcher and observer has their own preferred strategies for recording field notes, Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (1995) suggest two strategic approaches to writing field notes: salience hierarchy and comprehensive note-taking. The strategy of salience hierarchy suggests researchers record whatever observations strike them as the most noteworthy, the most interesting, or the most telling for their particular research context. The alternative strategy of comprehensive note-taking advises systematical and comprehensive records of everything which occurs during fieldwork. This includes as follows (Spradley, 1980, p. 78):

1. Space: the physical place or places

2. Actor: the people involved

3. Activity: a set of related acts people do

4. Object: the physical things that are present

5. Act: single actions that people do

6. Event: a set of related activities that people carry out

7. Time: the sequencing that takes place over time

8. Goal: the things people are trying to accomplish

9. Feeling: the emotions felt and expressed

Building on Spradley, my own schema includes the following types of field notes:

- The natural environment of Shangri-la region including accommodations, restaurants, transportation, attractions, local culture.

- Tourists, especially foreign tourists – what they do, how they interact with local residents and other tourists.

- Special events or salient episodes related to my research purposes which occurred during the observation.

- A personal reflective diary – this includes both my thoughts about going into the field and being there, and reflections on my own life experiences which might influence the way I filter what I observe.

3.5.4 Triangulation of Data Analysis

Triangulation in qualitative research has received increasing attention in recent years due to its ability to strengthen qualitative findings by showing that several independent sources can converge on the findings, or at least do not oppose them (Decrop, 1999). It is thought that using multiple data collection methods would not only provide rich and valuable information about the investigated phenomenon but also test one source of information against another and scrutinize alternative explanations by bringing different forms of evidence from different hierarchies (Mehmetoglu & Altinay, 2006).

To minimize subjectivity, in this study, the final findings are derived through triangulation of the five sources, including published travelogue, travel blogs, email interview with those bloggers, field notes and in-depth interviews (Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5 Validate and explore findings obtained through data triangulation
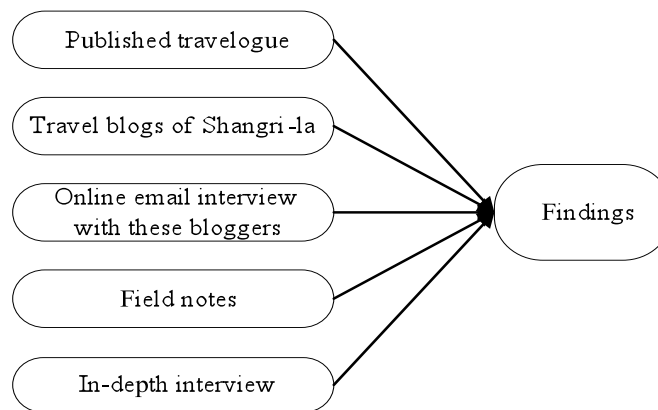
3.6 ESTABLISHING TRUSTWORTHINESS

As qualitative results are derived from subjective interpretation and description, the question of trustworthiness needs thorough consideration. To establish trustworthiness, Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose four assessment criteria for evaluating the quality of qualitative research: true value, applicability, consistence and neutrality. These four elements aim to provide the researcher and audience confidence in the results or findings. To achieve this confidence, the four aspects of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (as opposed to validity and reliability used in quantitative research) are applied in qualitative research (Berg, 2004; Koch, 2006; Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These four assessment criteria were followed in this qualitative study.

3.6.1 Credibility of the Study

Credibility relates to the quantitative criterion of internal validity and, in qualitative research, credibility is more dependent on the researchers' personal and interpersonal skills. In order to avoid any subjective bias, the techniques of prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy and member checks are proposed (Patton, 2002; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). These techniques emphasize the significance of the natural setting over an extended period, contextual information and multi-methods of data analysis.

Credibility in this study was enhanced through the techniques proposed by previous researchers (see, for example, Patton, 2002; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Prolonged engagement was achieved by continuous interaction with travelers who visited phantasmal Shangri-la. To better understand the site and the travelers, the researcher analyzed all the travel blogs on Shangri-la within the period of January 2006 to May 2008. With the travel blog analysis results, the researcher visited the site twice and also spent five days with seven travelers from France, Israel, Hong Kong, and Mainland China to further explore locales, which had been identified as similar to the fictional Shangri-la, such as Meili Mountains and Yubeng village. This increased the credibility of the findings about the phenomenon and identification of the essence of the phenomenon after exposure to a diversity of situations. In addition, the researcher applied the previously detailed data triangulation method for data analysis

Various techniques were used to minimize the possible unintended bias and inadequate recall as a result of memory failure. Travelers were photographed, their onsite activities were videotaped, and the interviews were digitally recorded. The consistency of information collected at different time periods and under different conditions were compared and cross-checked using data triangulation technique. Although data triangulation may not lead to a single, totally consistent pattern, it enables deeper comprehension of differences and finally contributes significantly to the overall credibility of findings (Patton, 2002). Furthermore, the researcher discussed the research method and findings with fellow-researchers operating in similar fields, to explore aspects of the inquiry that might unduly be influenced by loss of perspective resulting from extended periods of findings analysis. Through those activities, the researcher increased her self-confidence regarding the findings and minimized the time spent pondering over the same pieces of data. Negative case analysis is an important strategy for data analysis using qualitative methods. It provides readers clues of credibility. The negative cases in this research referred to attitude against renaming Zhongdian to Shangri-la. People interpret Shangri-la in various ways, the comparison between these two attitudes to Shangri-la enhanced validity of the results.

3.6.2 Transferability Issues

Transferability is associated with external validity and is concerned with the extent to which the research findings are applicable to another

setting or group (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Unlike quantitative research, it is neither possible nor desirable for qualitative research to generalize findings. Instead, to legitimize the external validity of an inquiry, qualitative researchers supply extensive data, detailed descriptions of the context of the study, and integrate findings with existing literature, thus enabling the research community or other audiences to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Based on these pre-requisites for transferable qualitative research, the results derived from the data analysis are illustrated by the quotations provided in the research findings chapter. Each category is also detailed by its properties and dimensions to facilitate description of the context of events which occurred in the traveling process.

3.6.3 Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability and confirmability share characteristics with reliability and consist of looking at whether the results are consistent and reproducible. For assuring these two criteria, a flexible research plan and documented changes, along with member checking / auditing are considered to be the most crucial techniques for establishing trustworthiness. Finally, leaving audit trails of the data and analysis procedures are also useful (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004).

In this study, interview transcriptions and data interpretation were sent to the interviewees via email for member checking, and 14 per cent returned with confirmation of their responses. Expert audit review, which

enables judgment about the quality of data collection and analysis, was also adopted. During the process, the data collection protocol, the categories and their relationship, interpretation of data, and the emerging theory were discussed with three expert colleagues and, subsequent to the expert audit, the categories were revised. Detailed data collection and analysis protocols are attached in the appendix section (Appendix 3).

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues, which are closely tied to fundamental differences in world views, have been extensively invoked in primary research questions. Ethical issues are considered as a key source of epistemological guidance in public discourse and policy, giving ethics conceptual and practical roles in controversial fields. In this study, interviewees were informed about the purposes of the study and the time required for interviews, the use of recording media was also explained. Interviewees were also made aware that participation in this study was on a voluntary basis and were given opportunities to raise any queries. During data collection, interviewees' requests, such as refusing to be recorded, were respected and, in these cases, the researcher used the interview sheet to record details provided by the interviewees.

During data analysis, interviewee and data security was assured, and access to the documents, files, transcripts and digital media was strictly limited to the researcher. Anonymity was also maintained through the use of

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a coded system for identification. Each interview was assigned a code with nationality, gender and age group - for instance, interview02_American male, 26-35.

SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter has detailed the methodology, based on the purposes of the study and literature reviews, applied in this research. According to Guba and Lincoln's (1994) alternative inquiry paradigms, qualitative research methodology is deemed more suitable for exploratory studies of this type and has thus been employed in this study. Grounded theory approach is adopted because it enables the researcher to gain insight into the phenomenon of phantasmal tourism. Following grounded theory sampling instruction, theoretical sampling strategy has been employed. Shangri-la was chosen as the sample of phantasmal destination because it is a well-known imaginary utopia, reportedly discovered in the Yunnan province of China. The data were collected in the natural setting from five sources: Eight published travelogues, 55 online travel blogs, email interviews with those bloggers, field notes derived from on site observation and 41 in-depth interviews. The data analysis was initiated simultaneously with the data collection in accordance with the procedures of grounded theory. As suggested by Charmaz (2006) and Strauss and Corbin (1998), an inductive oriented data analysis is adopted using methods of content analysis and four steps coding: initial coding, focused coding, axial coding, and theoretical coding. Memos for data, codes, and categories were written down for capturing emerging

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frameworks – both conceptual and substantive. The computer software Atlas ti.5 is also employed for the facilitation of data analysis. To establish trustworthiness, the researcher adopted various techniques, such as data triangulation, member checking, and expert audit. Ethical issues were also considered and satisfactorily addressed during the period of data collection. Detailed research findings and discussions are presented in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the research findings grounded on the triangulation of data analysis, guided by the research question on how a phantasmal destination interacts with the realities of a lived world. First, tourists' inspirations and their expectations for visiting Shangri-la are explored. Second, tourists' perceptions of Shangri-la are explained. Third, tourists' experiences in Shangri-la are investigated. Finally, tourists' self-evaluation of their personality traits and their personal interests are described.

4.1 INSPIRATION FOR VISITING SHANGRI-LA

4.1.1 The Impact of Renaming Zhongdian to Shangri-la

The majority of the participants stated that renaming of Zhongdian to Shangri-la had directed their attention to the region. Shangri-la has been promoted in popular travel guidebooks, such as Lonely Planet, and on the Internet. The majority of the visitors were not clear about the specific details of the story behind the name, but they knew of the key ideas that were presented in the novel. They recalled Shangri-la as an Asian myth, well-known in Western societies. They had heard about the book, Lost Horizon, although most of them had not read it. They were attracted to the region more by the Chinese government's announcements that Shangri-la had been discovered in a real location. The responses indicated that the information was obtained from various sources, such as word of mouth,

travel guidebooks, TV travel programs, photos, pictures, novels, and news

reports. The following statements are from the interviews:

> *Read an article in China Daily, which led me to read Lost Horizon. Before I came here all my knowledge was derived from the article and the novel and a few other reports I have read. (Interview05_ British male, 36-45)*
>
> *Sometimes, I get interested in a place based on what I read about it. Myth was the main reason that caused me visit Shangri-la. Meili Mountain was also a reason. (Interview 03_South African male, 46-55)*

After being renamed Shangri-la in 2002, Zhongdian County has been

promoted extensively. The County government of Shangri-la also invited and

funded many photographers, helping to further promote the destination

through publications. Well-known travel guidebooks, such as *Rough Guides*

and *Lonely Planet,* also introduced Shangri-la as 'paradise' and as one of few

natural places left untouched by civilization. In addition, the novel Lost

Horizon, both Chinese and English versions, has been sold in Lijiang,

Shangri-la, and Deqin. The film version of Lost Horizon is also played in

some cafés in Shangri-la and Deqin. The core promotional slogans for

Shangri-la are "paradise', 'heaven on earth'. The following excerpt is taken

from the book, 'Diqing Shangri-la in the World' edited by Li (2005, p, 14):

> *Shangri-la means a favor to both the natives and visitors. She bestows the harmonious and natural attitude of life to those natives living here for generations; as mentioned in the sutra of Tibetan Buddhism, the xiangbala spirit hidden in the deep snow mountains means a good state shared by man and god, under which man and man, and man and nature are coexisting harmoniously. Meanwhile, she gives hope to those on journey, and wakes quietly up disposition the most nature and having slept in their heats for a long time. And lets them to be steadfastly bold enough and even laxative to pursue until having found their original ego and to learn to keep quiet and*

peaceful.

Tourists obtain information from the popular media. This information stimulates tourists' desire and facilitates their decision-making. This finding confirmed Leiper's (1990) argument that markers bridge tourist and destination attractions in the tourism attraction system.

The popular media has also been recognized as having a significant impact on destination perception and image in shaping travelers' ideas, feelings, and motivations (Mercille, 2005). Urry (1990, p. 3) argues that the tourist gaze 'is constructed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist practices, such as film, television programs, literature, magazines, records and videos'. Conversely, travelers actively interpret media messages based on their personal characteristics and possibly in ways opposed to the projected images. Referring to these contradictory arguments, Hall (2001) proposes three hypothetical situations: a) audiences may decode media messages which refer to projected images; b) audiences may negotiate received messages and interpret them in the way of mixed opposition and adaptation to them; c) audiences may interpret media messages in ways totally oppositional to the projected meanings.

Hall's (2001) study better explained the results derived from the interviewees' responses. On the one hand, Shangri-la is projected as the 'lost paradise discovered on earth' based on the description in the novel of "Lost Horizon". On the other hand, travelers interpreted it in three ways (see Table 4.1): Some of them adopted its intents totally and wanted to investigate it

themselves. Twelve interviewees and nine bloggers were not only interested in the myth but also believed in it. They thought it would be fun to visit and check if the proposed Shangri-la was similar to the mythical Shangri-la. It is important to note here that those participants were not fans of the novel or the author, but they were fond of the imaginary place. As stated earlier, some of these participants had not read the novel or watched the film before they arrived in Shangri-la. However, they had heard about the story and knew the meaning of Shangri-la as a utopian world. The main destination route for this type of traveler was directly to Shangri-la. Because of their belief in the Shangri-la myth having been based on historical fact (although lost in the annals of time) and the fact that they traveled to Shangri-la specifically, they were referred to as phantasmal oriented tourists in this study.

> *I am seeking something that I cannot easily describe. Sometimes, I find this in the stories I read, the myths that I encounter. Shangri-la was like this. It intrigued me. I wanted to know where it was, how it looks in reality. This was the influence for my trip. (Interview41_France male, 18-25)*

> *There is a mystique about it all that makes me think it is more than just an imagined story. I felt that there was really such a place. It touched some longing inside me. (Interview46_ HK male, 18-25)*

Others had partially or totally opposite interpretations of the projected images. They did not believe in the Shangri-la myth. Sixteen participants and 21 bloggers were attracted to the Tibetan culture. They wanted to experience the authentic Tibet. Thirteen interviewees and 25 bloggers had come to the region for the untouched natural landscape. In their opinion, Shangri-la is a state of mind and it could be located anywhere or nowhere. They doubted that it could be discovered on earth. They thought renaming of Zhongdian to

Shangri-la for the purpose of tourism was silly. They were inspired to discover this place because the proposed Shangri-la located on the border of Tibet and they could discover Tibetan culture without going to Tibet. This area is also promoted as one of few places on earth left untouched, in the book Lonely Planet China (Harper, 2007). They wanted to explore this place "*before it is ruined by modernization*". The main trip route for them was following an attraction trail in Yunnan province, including Tiger Leaping Gorge, Shangri-la, Meili Mountain, and the glacier. These participants were named as 'Tibetan myth oriented tourists' and 'unspoiled nature oriented tourists' respectively. Below are some responses from interviewees.

> *I wanted to go to Tibet but it is too difficult to go there, then I decided to come here because it is close to Tibet. [when prompted as to why he wanted to visit Tibet] I think people there are different, I lived in Shanghai for 5 months, I saw the majority is Han Chinese, Tibetan is the minority. I think I like Tibetan culture. Because of the history and culture. [prompted whether the naming of Shangri-la would influence his decision to visit] Maybe yes, because this name is now more famous. This made it easier to find this place where Tibetan people live. I believe Tibetan landscape and people was the inspiration for Hilton's Shangri-la. It is not hard to imagine such a place would have existed in Tibet. (Interview35_German male, 18-25)*

> *I heard from friends that here is a beautiful, untouched place and there are not many tourists. I'd like to do something different from others; this is why I came here and experience it myself. (Interview41_ France male, 18-25)*

Table 4.1 Types of tourists visiting Shangri-la

Types of tourists	Interviewees	Travel blogs	Total
Phantasmal oriented tourists	12	9	21
Tibetan myth oriented tourists	16	21	37
Unspoiled nature oriented tourists	13	25	38
Total	41	55	96

Psychologists explain this behavior as perceptual distortions which help people to cope with a vast amount of information. They accept information that matches their beliefs and overlook data which does not (Ateljevic, 2000). In this respect, the travelers visited the same destination with different feeling states, expectations and perceptions.

4.1.2 Inspirations of the Tourists Visiting Shangri-la

Pleasure tourists are inspired by their inner desires whilst external information about places facilitates the tourist selecting a specific destination (Goossens, 2000). There are abundant studies on why people travel, but studies on why people travel to imaginary places are rare. Tourism motivational research also demonstrates that tourists are not a homogenous group (Cohen, 1972). Rather, they are people that travel for collective primary and secondary tourism motives (Robinson & Gammon, 2004). Again as Robinson and Gammon (2004) argue, the primary motives help researchers to identify typology of tourists whilst secondary motives positively affect the primary reasons for travel and serve as sources of enrichment for the primary ones. Drawing upon those viewpoints, the

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participants in this study are categorized into three groups, which are phantasmal tourists that desire to find the ideal Shangri-la; Tibetan culture oriented tourists that are attracted to the Tibetan myth; and nature oriented tourists that are inspired by the unspoiled natural landscape.

4.1.2.1 Inspirations of Phantasmal Oriented Tourists

Oscar Wilde states that "A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not even worth glancing at" (Harvey, 2000, p. 133). Human beings are "torn between dreams that seem unrealizable and prospects that hardly seem to matter" (Harvey, 2000, p. 155). The findings from the data analysis revealed that the tourists classified as 'phantasmal' among those that visited Shangri-la share some common characteristics. The essential one of these is the belief that an 'ideal' location exists on earth, although they are not clear as to where it is or what it would be like. The reasons behind the drive to search for this utopia are likely associated with industrialization and urbanization. All of the phantasmal tourists stated that it is no longer possible to distinguish the unique characteristics of places. Everywhere looks similar in an urban environment, with concrete buildings, chain restaurants, hotel groups, and similarly branded products. These individuals hold that such uniformity robs the places and consequently the inhabitants of their uniqueness. If everything is the same, then the people are also indistinguishable. These travelers stated that they increasingly felt that something was missing in their lives. The idea of a utopian world, a place where ideals and spirituality exist along with simple materialistic pleasures

inspired their imagination and compelled them to search for such a destination. Wang (2000) elaborates on this phenomenon as the 'dark side' of modernity. According to his argument, modernity includes three physical dimensions; systematic technological system, manufactured goods, and artificial or built environments. Whilst technology is designed to improve human environments, it also creates the undesirable consequences of deterioration in the quality of the environment. In such an environment, people may have negative psychological feelings such as rootlessness and helplessness. In some cases, people develop a desire to seek a paradise for self-fulfillment.

The phantasmal tourists have blurry images of the Utopian Shangri-la as they could not say what they exactly had hoped to discover. However, they feel wholeheartedly fed up with city life and they had hoped to escape from the modern urban existence. The journey to Shangri-la gave them a new lease on life and became a process of seeking some kind of spirituality. Some of the interviewees mentioned that there are many other places which claimed to be the real Shangri-la, and they intended to visit those places as well, if they had an opportunity.

In the process, while some of them continued their search for the ideal Shangri-la, others found it impossible to leave Shangri-la. They have transformed their lives and settled in the place where they think they have found their spiritual home. For instance, a German/South African male in age group 46-55 was formerly a mechanical engineer and his work involved

frequent business travel. Increasingly dissatisfied with his life, he decided to visit Shangri-la after hearing the mythical story, based on the novel, from various sources in his travels. After staying in the region, he felt that he found his Shangri-la and decided to spend the rest of his life there. This was a good example of Shangri-la becoming journey's end. This incident recalls Brahm's (2006) interviews with Chinese artists in Shangri-la, in his travelogue *Searching for Shangri-La: Off the Beaten Track in Western China*. The book is a record of his experiences in five years of travel in Western China and his interactions with the people and the land. In his book, Brahm sets out on his journey to find the answers to two questions that intrigue him: 'What is Shangri-la?' and 'Where is Shangri-la?" His interviews with artists show that many of these highly intuitive and restless individuals moved to Shangri-la to broaden their minds and escape the mundaneness of their everyday life. These artists were bored with modern city living, and now live in factory warehouses in a communal atmosphere of love and cooperation to create their own Shangri-la. According to Bishop (2008), Shangri-la is presented as a hopeful imagining of a future while people everywhere believe the end of the world is coming. Such imagining can create a belief in the goodness of old times and therefore give some hope that through imagination and faith, a clear vision can be restored.

The essential motive for the phantasmal tourist is an existential one. The most common trait among those individuals is a driving need for an alternative lifestyle or worldview or a desire for self-actualization. Some of them started to travel with the purpose of seeking a place or the origins of a

myth that would provide the change for which they long. Others recognized the need after they began traveling. Often, their need was incited by external factors during their travels. They stated that they were interested in unique environmental features. They ascribed 'mythical quality' to places that they visited to indicate why those places were special to them. They expected at least a temporary refuge in a mythical place. Searching for Shangri-la became the physical manifestation of their hope. However, they were unclear when they were requested to describe the actual properties that they were expecting. As Bishop (2008) asserted, Shangri-la as an imagined ideal world was occupied by a plurality of diverse and contradictory imaginings.

While phantasmal tourists differentiate themselves from other tourists by searching a utopian world in Shangri-la, they also share common travel inspirations, including travel for natural scenery and culture, knowledge, authenticity, and relaxation. These results are consistent with previous studies on travel motivation that found tourists are more likely to be influenced by collective motivators to travel (see, for example, Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). The inspirations of searching Shangri-la were extracted and further grouped into four properties based on the primary motives of phantasmal tourists as shown in Table 4.2: Longing for metaphysical; seeking self-actualization; need for a sanctuary; and the inner voice.

Table 4.2 Travel inspiration to Shangri-la

Properties	Dimensions
Longing for metaphysical	• There must be a truth behind the myth • The tranquil atmosphere fills my soul with joy • There is a mystery, a sacredness about the place • I came here seeking a sacred atmosphere • I was very much interested in the mystical qualities of the place • I have been interested in the place and the myth behind it for some years
Seeking self-actualization	• In search of a transcending experience • Looking for something that has been suppressed in daily life • Escape from a routine life • Seeking a lifestyle that is closer to the eternal truth • Making a new start • Seeking a balance in life between spiritual and material values • Searching for a road home
Need for a sanctuary	• Expecting a remote, peaceful, and unspoiled place • Avoiding big cities and commercial places • Seeking a quiet and calm environment • To get away from pressures at home and work • Escaping and hiding from friends • Modernization empties the world of spirituality
The inner voice	• I hear Shangri-la is calling me • I felt the lure of a utopian world • My heart itches to discover the paradise • I will find the Shangri-la wherever that might be

Longing for metaphysical

One common response of phantasmal tourists was the refusal to believe that a myth might have no base in any historical reality. The common conceptualization was that human beings have lost their connection with some kind of eternal truth through the modernization process. The terms 'mystery', 'mysterious' and 'sacred' were often used to describe the atmosphere of the 'Shangri-la' the participants had in mind – whether or not their search was satisfied by the place they were visiting. Those that had read

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the novel or read or heard about the myth behind it were captivated by the

mysterious and sacred ambiance created in the novel. They were compelled

to seek the place to experience the feeling in reality. Myth could be one of

the important attributes of a destination designed to attract tourists (Butler,

1990; Riley, Baker, & Van Doren, 1998). The function of myth may be to

arouse curiosity and evoke a mind focused on a variety of possibilities,

mystery intrigues the traveler's desire to learn more about the place and its

people (Kaplan, 1988). Belk and Costa (1998) emphasize that a mysterious

atmosphere in general evokes enjoyable feelings and creates an ambiance of

escape, pleasure, and relaxation. Myth provides potential consumers an

opportunity to tailor meaning to their own needs.

> *The beautiful scenery described by Hilton makes the name [of Shangri-la] stick in popular memory and arouses a certain curiosity and mystery whenever it is heard. Bearing the longing for the utopia portrayed in the Lost Horizon, I came to the Shangri-la County located in the Diqing prefecture in Yunnan province, in hope of finding the fairyland I dreamed. (Travel blog25A_Travelpost_20061024, Chinese female, 18-25)*

> *I have been interested in the concept and the myth surrounding it for some years. I have read Lost Horizon and many articles discussing the book and the phenomenon of a man who had never visited the East imagining such a place. I wanted to see how the proposed place matched the fictional descriptions. (Interview08_ Austrian male, 56-65)*

People need to believe in myth to satisfy intellectual and

psychological needs because myths represent primitive peoples' ways of

explaining natural phenomena. Myth is rooted in religious practice, as well

as power relationships and human intellectual processes as a whole

(Levi-Strauss, 1978). Mythical spaces reflect fundamental human needs of

feeling and imagination. Campbell, Moyers and Flowers state (1991, p. 5) "Myths are stories of our search through the ages for truth, for meaning, for significance. People are seeking an experience of being alive, so that one's life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances within our own innermost being and reality, so that one actually feel the rapture of being alive. That is what it is all finally about and that is what these clues help us to find within ourselves."

> *It's hard to tell, I am not religious. But I think we do a lot of things after myth. The things we do most, especially traveling maybe, you travel to places where there is a myth, I think I told you on the bus, when I came to China, I had this myth in my mind of high fields and people, simple Chinese people with the, you know, pointy hat, That was what I was looking for, I think we always look for a myth in anything we do in our lives. Even career, what I studied, it's all for the myth, stories.(Interveiw40_Isreal female, 26-35)*

Apart from seeking the mythical quality, discovering a sacred atmosphere is also one of the motives among the phantasmal tourists. As the interviewees said that the name of Shangri-la and remote mountains gave you a sacred feeling, and this feeling drove you to see more. Literarily, sacred places allow access to imaginable depth and meaningfulness and provide an essential continuity with the past, with the ancients of one's cultural tradition (Eliade, 1987; Lowenthal, 1975).

> *I feel here is a mystery and sacred place. Come here is not easy thing. It is not easy for people come here. I felt I am so lucky when finally I am here after long way and whole day travel. I have never had that feeling before. (Interview23_Thai male, 18-25)*
> *I am traveling here looking for a sacred and peaceful atmosphere. (Interviw33_Chinese female, 18-25)*

The important possibility here is that, although the phantasmal tourists stated that hearing about or reading the myth was the inspiration, it is more likely that the myth merely crystallized a longing that they had already harbored. Myths are clues to the spiritual potentialities of human life. (Even some of the non-phantasmal visitors to Shangri-la, whilst they did not believe in the myth, admitted to being interested and affected by it.) The phantasmal tourists, on the other hand, would willingly travel to seek the places described in mythical stories. Tuan (1977) proposes that mythical places are assumed to exist because these places are core factors in human beliefs. What happens when the individual has a longing to believe that there is a truth beyond the material world, but for various reasons cannot subscribe to any of the known religions, which are invariably based on myths that are accepted as history although often there is no proof that they are historically accurate? Phantasmal tourists appear to have a yearning for metaphysical truths that they cannot properly describe. Ostensibly, they believe that they are traveling to confirm a preconceived metaphysical truth, but, in reality, they are longing for such truth and traveling in the hope of finding a place that would help them to shape it.

Seeking self-actualization

Self-actualization is placed at the highest level of Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of human needs. According to Maslow (1943, 1954) people are more likely to be concerned with personal growth and searching for peak experiences subsequent to their lower needs being fulfilled. Maslow's

hierarchy of needs has, at the lowest level, the most basic needs which he referred to as 'the physiological needs'. At that level, the individual will seek out necessities like food and water and must be able to perform basic functions such as breathing and sleeping. After these needs are met, the person moves on to satisfying 'the safety needs'. These are security, physical comforts and shelter, employment, and property. The next level is 'the belongingness and love needs', where people try to achieve social acceptance, affiliations, a sense of belonging, and sexual intimacy. At the second highest level of the pyramid is 'the esteem needs', where the individual will try to attain a sense of competence, recognition of achievement by peers, and respect from others. Maslow (1943, 1970) originally has argued that once these needs are met, an individual is ready for self-actualization. Later, Maslow (1966) and Gleitman, Fridlund, and Reisberg (2000) argue that there are two more phases an individual must progress through before self actualization can begin: 'The cognitive needs', where the person will feel a need for knowledge and an understanding of the world around them, and 'the aesthetic needs' which include a need for symmetry, order, and beauty. Once all these needs have been satisfied, the final stage of Maslow's hierarchy, self-actualization, could take place. Self-actualization, therefore, is essentially based on the individual having their lower deficiency needs met. Once a person has moved through feeling and believing that they are deficient, they naturally seek to grow into who they are, that is to self-actualize.

Self-actualization, then, is the individual's feelings of his or her needs beyond the basic physical, personal and affiliation needs. The essential trigger for seeking self-actualization is the person's feelings, which require fulfillment (Heylighen, 1992). Maslow (1970) has argued that people who expect peak or mystical experiences are usually self-actualized or are on their way to self-actualization. Hood Jr (1977) also supports Maslow's assertion through his empirical study of the relationship between mystical experience and self-actualization. He found that self-actualization does not have a traditionally religious expression and it positively correlates with mystical expectations. The findings of this study bare out the claims made by these previous works.

The phantasmal tourists that look for Shangri-la show strong tendency for a desire for self-actualization. As shown in table 4.2, some of the interviewees stated that they found something lacking in their daily life and travel provided them the chance to find a real meaning in life. Shangri-la is considered as the place that enables them to find the answer because the lifestyle in Shangri-la diverges from their daily lives. In Brahm's (2006, p. 119) travelogue, a Chinese artist stated,

> *"Actually to me, searching for Shangri-la is like searching for a road home. We do not need to prove what Hilton described in his book. People are constantly trying to find Hilton's Shangri-la excavated in a piece of wood or a piece of grass. Shangri-la can be excavated around everybody."*

This artist pointed out that Shangri-la was created in the novel, but it is individualized when people search for it. This statement perfectly matches

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with the concept of imaginative geographies. Some people, including artists, prefer living an alternative lifestyle at the fringe of society to maintain a fresh mind and creativity. They travel various cultures to search for a lifestyle which they can adopt for themselves. Other people want to escape from mainstream society to re-energize and refresh. They believe Shangri-la is the place that fulfills their expectation as the unique landscape conserves the small community from interaction with mainstream society and allows it to maintain its distinctive characteristics. For example:

> *I want to extend myself. I want to reach a new level of relating to the world. The inhabitants of SL were above ordinary human life and concerns. They seemed to know something about the universe that we had long forgotten. I want to reach that level of enlightenment. This is what I'm looking for. (Interview08_Australian male, 56-65)*
>
> *I want to go mountaineering, hiking, trekking, challenging myself, I want to get to know how much I can do and what I can do or cannot do. I will get to know my limits. (Interview36_German male, 26-35)*
>
> *Escape from routine life, I like the feeling when I experience different things. I like to discover something that has been ignored in daily life. (Interview46_Hongkong male, 18-25)*

Pearce (2005) also proposed self-actualization as a travel motive in his new conceptual framework, Travel Career Patterns. Pearce and Lee (2005) examined the travel career patterns model and point out that self-actualization is a moderately important motive and was a higher priority for less experienced tourists. The profile of low-travel-experience tourists consisted of younger people with less experience in both domestic and international travel. Although the profile of tourists in this project was partially divergent from their study (some phantasmal tourists were mature

and experienced tourists), it nevertheless confirms that self-actualization is an important motive in travel. Further examination may be needed to test in what context self-actualization is an important motive for tourists.

<u>Need for a sanctuary</u>

The phantasmal tourists have communicated their Shangri-la as an imaginary and remote fairyland, and finding an ideal Shangri-la in a physical place is their core inspiration. Since the ideal world cannot be found in their home society in a well-developed modern existence, then it must be in remote parts of the world or in a timeless society like the one described in the myth of Shangri-la. The reasons behind this motive are closely associated with cultural curiosity and the desire to escape from the modern metropolis lifestyle. As they stated:

> *As I mentioned the above, this story is so interesting. I came here to enjoy the peaceful atmosphere. I live in a big city, it is too noisy in the big city, when I came here, I felt it is so peaceful, even when I sit in this bar, I have got special and different feelings compared to a big city. (Interview33_Chinese female, 18-25)*

> *Apart from a couple of local farmers there wasn't a soul to be seen. This was tranquility. I sat there for about an hour just taking it all in. Having lived in the hustle and bustle of the city for so long I was truly thankful to be able to experience this complete and utter solitude. (TB02A_travelblog_20080322, male, 26-35)*

Curiosity is recognized as one of robust motives in pleasure travel (Rojek, 1993). It drives people to explore novelty and diversity (Spielberger & Starr, 1994). In the context of international tourism, people are inspired by their curiosity towards different cultural values (Wang, 2000). The phantasmal tourists expressed strong interests in the paradise lifestyle. They

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were curious about the unknown world and hoped escaping from their normal way of life. Escaping from the personal problems of everyday life and obtaining personal and interpersonal rewards through travel are deeply rooted goals for leisure travelers (Iso-Ahola, 1987). In addition, according to the interviewees' responses, searching for the fictional Shangri-la is rather a starting point to discover their own sense of place. Shangri-la as a phantasmal destination is formed based on individual's imagination of the world as well as their cultural value system (Cosgrove, 1994). The reality of the place is not necessarily an object in its own right but rather a part of social construction with meanings that are contested by the visitors. Some phantasmal tourists, rather than searching ideal Shangri-la, are discovering meaning of cultural landscape.

> *I wanted to see for myself the truth of claims about the place being similar to that described in the book, which was a paradise-like location where different cultures and ethnicity lived in continuous harmony. I need that harmony, having lived in conflict-ridden places for so long. (Interview03_ South African male, 46-55)*

In this respect, cultural geographers such as Salter (1994) assert that people travel following their mental map which has been accumulated through an encounter with a person, a setting, or an event in the process of travel. The imaginary place of Shangri-la is embedded into these tourists' mental map. The essense of cultural landscape is the idea that space is interpreted by the individual and is dependent on personal cultural value and belief system (Sack, 1992). From this perspective, searching for the ideal Shangri-la is also associated with the tourist's beliefs. This group of phantasmal tourists is attracted to the fantasy and myth. They believe such a

supernatural land must exist somewhere on earth and is waiting for them to

discover it.

> *I'm sure there is. If you go to an isolated place, or away from people, you may find your own Shangri-la. (Interview 12, German female, 26-35)*
>
> *I came to Shangri-la because I wanted to find mountains to hide away from friends. (Interview42_France male, 18-25)*
>
> *Yes, I think so. It should be located in a remote and lonely place, like Yubeng village which is located in a quiet valley. (Interview46, Hong Kong male, 18-25)*

All of the phantasmal tourists referred to 'quietude', 'tranquility',

'peacefulness', 'calm' and some of them expressed a desire to 'escape',

'hide' and 'get closer to nature'. They seem to be motivated by a desire to

find the sanctuary that the mythical Shangri-la offers.

The inner voice

The phantasmal tourists were referring to a spiritual experience, hard

to explain verbally, that compelled them to find a place that they termed

Shangri-La, this was close to what is being described in James Hilton's book

- perhaps the success of the book was because the writer identified this need

in people and created a place that would fit most people's idea of paradise on

earth. Three interviewees stated that they felt kind of lost and confused by

their existence in a big city. They felt hearing a voice, a calling that told

them to run away from the city, towards a more peaceful atmosphere, a

simple lifestyle with mythical qualities. They thought that Shangri-la

possessed those attributes and this deeply impressed them.

> *Yes, I believe, Shangri-la is a peaceful place and located in my mind. (Interview 23, Thai male, 18-25)*

In Brahm's (2006,) travelogue, a female Chinese singer felt that Shangri-la kept calling her:

> *"Shangri-la is in people. It is the ideal world of our mind. But it seems that it is not a real world. If you keep going in that way to find the way in your mind, you will make things become true. It is something you think you realize. It is untrue, but if you keep going, that is the true way to go regardless of distance. The real Shangri-la is in you. That is why I am living in this world (p. 155)."*

She also emphasized the importance having a vision of an ideal world in one's mind and to keep going to find it in order to arrive at Shangri-la. In her version, Shangri-la is an imagined fantastic world to fulfill one's wishes that are unsatisfied in a realistic social world. People form the ideal world in their minds before they begin searching for it. In this sense, the call of the ideal world is the call of their own hopes and wishes. Ideal Shangri-la becomes a symbol of their ideal world. This was explained by the interviewees as a state of mind, a desire based on one's own values, Shangri-la can only exist in one's my mind.

This symbolic meaning of Shangri-la is also relected in the postmodern perspective that the concept of a human individual is as much a meaning-construction as anything else (Lemke, 1993). Postmodernism supports the individual's interpretation of the social world and encourages tolerance of incompatible alternatives (Lyotard, 1984). Tourists travel for the symbolic meaning of the space and place as portrayed in their image and transform ordinary places into extraordinary tourist landscapes (Urry, 1995).

In this way, the imaginary Shangri-la was embedded into a physical tourist destination.

Shangri-la is the product of a dialogue between individual fantasizing and the geographical landscape. Some of the participants mentioned that they felt the ideal Shangri-la was calling them and pushing them to look for it in the mountains. For these travelers, nature was alive and it stimulated their imagination in a way they had not experienced before. Norberg-Schulz (1980) asserted that places could be considered to have a *genius loci* that expresses things beyond the needs and aspirations of individuals – or even an entire culture. Bishop (1989) noted that the process of creating the images brought to mind in the encounter, between the travelers' imagination and physical places of Tibetan Shangri-la, were carefully manipulated.

Tuan (1990) has innovated the term 'topophilia' to describe the deep relationship between people and particular geographical entities such as forests, rivers, mountains, or more non-specific concepts as home, motherland, or fatherland and, sometimes, the entire earth. Aristotle resembled place to a vessel – not as a passive container, but an entity with its own boundaries. Places evoke a fascination – they are always affairs of the heart (Casey, 1981, p. 17). As such, Shangri-la became a mythical place, a source of boundless fascination over the centuries in the imaginings of many Westerners.

4.1.2.2 Tibetan Myth Oriented Tourists

There were 16 interviewees and 21 bloggers that emphasized their travel motive for this trip was particularly for Tibetan culture. They visited Shangri-la because they wanted to experience Tibetan culture and investigate the real Tibet, but they had difficulties gaining a Tibetan entrance permit. Shangri-la is a Tibetan autonomous prefecture outside Tibet and 80 per cent of the residents are Tibetan. Tourist in this group expected to see whether Tibetan culture is really threatened by China's political ambitions to incorporate it. The following extract from data can be the best illustration.

> *I am somewhat drawn to the Tibetan culture. I don't know much about it. I want to learn more about it. This was the highlight of the trip for me. It was very expensive and difficult for me to go to Tibet. I am Chinese ethnically so that makes me want to know more why people are oppressed by the government. (Interview37_ Chinese/Canadian female, 26-35)*

The core motives of this type of tourist were experiencing authentic Tibetan culture, including Tibetan architecture, arts, lifestyle and religions. Sociological and political issues were also major reasons for some tourists in this group. For example, one of tourists stated, "*I am interested in how culture shapes people and how inequality and conflict develops.*" Another one claimed that mingling with Tibetans to study their ideas about current politics, world and religion was his main aim. Moreover, they were also inspired by the natural landscape. The summary of motives for Tibetan oriented tourists is shown in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Travel motives of Tibetan oriented tourists

Properties	Dimensions
Authentic Tibetan culture	• I couldn't go to Tibet and so I am here to experience Tibetan culture to some degree • Tibet is quite different from China. I have heard some stories about it and I want to look at it myself • Even thinking about Tibet gives you some spiritual and sacred feeling • I want to see undeveloped an developing countries before they have been changed • The biggest monastery outside the Tibet locates here • I heard it is very close to Tibet and I cannot get in there, so I decided to come here and experience a little bit atmosphere of Tibet • Tibet has its unique culture, and special architecture, even though it is located in China, but the culture and art are totally different • I came here because I want to visit Tibet, and here is close to it and majority is Tibetans • It is in a Tibetan area, most of the area was not quite influenced or civilized by other cultures
Sociological and political issues	• Mingling with Tibetans to study their ideas about current politics, world and religion • My reasons are usually sociological and political • I am interested in how culture shapes people and how inequality and conflict develops • I want to see if Tibetans have freedom myself • Chinese government is pressing down on Tibet and this really moved me • Really any oppressed culture that makes me want to know more why people are oppressed and what are the reasons of government
Mountains	• I'd like to see the mountains • Here is also a preserved natural place • I like to stand on mountains and feel close to the sky

The participants in this group were more curious about residents' genuine lifestyle, "*Tibet is quite different from China. I have heard some stories about it and I want to look at it myself*". The stories he implied here were that Tibet is a non-materialistic and independent kingdom, Tibetans are devout Buddhists but their culture is being merged with Han people. Another

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tourist stated, "*Even thinking about Tibet gives you some spiritual and sacred feeling*". Shakya (1991) argues that the West has reduced Tibet to its own picture of Tibet, and forced upon this image its longing for spiritual life and escape from the material world. When they visit Tibet, they search for the ideal image of Tibet rather than the real one, because Tibet was reborn in western fantasy and psychedelic experiences, as the Shangri-la. This maybe the reason for the western world's lack of interest or engagement in what is really happening in Tibet today. The mysticism of Tibet is also emphasized by the promotions of Shangri-la in the international market, as well as by the travelers themselves when they returned home. For example, one of the interviewees said, "*I heard that the sightseeing is special. Most of the area was not quite influenced or civilized by other cultures. It is unusual comparing with our urban life.*"

> *Even though this place is in China, the place is very unique, outstanding and you don't feel you are in China. I feel very comfortable when I arrive here. (Interview23_Thai female, 18-25)*

The tourists selectively took photos and wrote their experiences according to their own interests. And then they uploaded the photos and the travel blogs onto the Internet. Online travel blogs and social networking sites are a major source of information for these tourists, as the participants mentioned in the interviews. For example, apart from the natural scenery, the most frequently uploaded photos include a young Tibetan girl dressed up in traditional Tibetan uniform, monks wearing red gowns and holding a small wheel, old Tibetan women with weather-beaten faces, and the old Tibetan house. These photos did tell a mythical story.

4.1.2.3 Unspoiled Nature Oriented Tourists

In this study, the interviewees claimed strong desires to seek an authentic world. Some interviewees said that their travel motives for this trip were to experience an untouched natural landscape, they liked being as close as possible to natural mountain areas and going hiking or trekking. They stated that there are few remote places which have not been affected by modernization and they hoped to experience this before it changed. Shangri-la is promoted as one of these extraordinary locations in many travel guidebooks and online promotions. The most important part of visiting Shangri-la was to challenge themselves, by trekking in high altitude mountains and, at the same time, experience the untouched natural landscape and a different culture. They tried to keep away from masses of tourists and wanted to do something special. For instance,

> *We want to go somewhere where there are not so many tourists. Like everybody goes to Shanghai and Beijing and Xian, but nobody goes to Shangri-La. (Interview13, British female, 18-25)*

> *As I said we were following what we considered to be a non-commercial, as authentic as possible trail. (Interview1, British male, 26-35)*

> *I heard from friends that here is a beautiful, untouched place and there are not many tourists. I'd like to do something different from others, this is why I came here and experience it myself. (Interview41, Chinese male, 18-25)*

Prebensen, Larsen and Abelsen (2003) find that some tourists intend to differentiate themselves from mass tourists. They therefore suggest that being a 'typical tourist' perhaps was seen as something related to the

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individual respondent's self-image. Adventure and self-discovery were also major motives for nature lovers:

> *Nature is the main theme. Simple, untouched. Hard to find places like this in China. (Interview34, American male, 36-45)*
>
> *I knew there were mountains and you will have problem with mountain sickness. And this made me excited to see if I can cope with a high altitude situation. (Interview16, Poland female, 18-25)*

Tourists in this group were mainly inspired by the natural attractions and activities they could do in Shangri-la area, such as biking, and hiking in wild mountains or through small villages. This finding is also consistent with the researcher's observation. In Shangri-la County, the bike rental businesses were very busy in the morning. Every morning you could see a long queue in front of bike rental shops, and most of those waiting were young foreign tourists. Visiting historical sites and searching for the Shangri-la myth did not interest them, not believing Shangri-la could be discovered on earth. Some even thought the renaming was a ridiculous idea. For instance, one of these interviewees said "*I heard of the book Lost Horizon, the Chinese government took the name and people started to visit here. But Shangri-la means nothing to me.*" The primary motives for this type of tourists are summarized in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Travel motives of unspoiled natural oriented tourists

Properties	Dimensions
Untouched natural landscape	• Experiencing the original world before it is changed • Enjoying natural and beautiful landscape • Looking for a high altitude wild mountain area • Undeveloped, non-commercial natural environment • Following what I considered to be a non-commercial, as authentic as possible trail • I heard from friends that here is a beautiful, untouched place and there are not many tourists
Adventure	• I want to go to somewhere a little bit wild • I knew there were mountains and you will have problem with altitude sickness. And this made me excited to see if I can cope with a high altitude situation • I would like to see high altitudes, mountains. I like trekking
Self-discovery	• The joy of movement – the illusion of change • Making a new start on my life • Testing myself if I can handle it in some difficult or new situations • I want to challenging myself by trekking in a wild environment to know my limits • I grow up from traveling, and learn a lot about myself
Differentiating self from other tourists	• Avoiding popular touristy places • I want to do something new • I want to do something unique • I would like to do something different from others
Knowledge	• Interesting to see different things • Obtaining new experience • Enjoying meeting new people from different cultures and belief systems

Table 4.4 shows the tourists in this group expressed similar motives to nature-based tourists, such as novelty, self-development, return to nature, knowledge and fitness (Luo & Deng, 2008). In addition, these participants focused more on the unspoiled and non-commercial quality of the natural landscape. Wang (2000) elaborates that this motivation is caused by environmental damage risk due to the undesirable consequences of technological development. He argues that the concrete buildings in big

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cities provide people a comfortable and convenient living environment, but concurrently disconnect people from original natural amenities. Consequently, causing people's desire to "search for roots, simplicity, wilderness, and authenticity in natural environment that are relatively unspoiled by artificial technologies. (p. 79)"

4.1.3 Comparison between the Three Types of Tourist

Table 4.5 shows the summary of the three types of tourist inspirations for visiting Shangri-la. While the core motives of visiting Shangri-la are different, they share some similar secondary motivesl.

Table 4.5 Travel inspiration of visiting Shangri-la

Travel inspirations	Phantasmal oriented tourists	Tibetan myth oriented tourists	Unspoiled natural oriented tourists
Primary	• Mysterious and sacred atmosphere • Searching for either alternative life or self-actualization • Seeking for unspoiled fairyland • The ideal world calling me	• Authentic Tibetan culture • Sociological and political issues	• Adventure • Self-discovery • Differentiating self from other tourists
Secondary	• Knowledge/ education • Natural landscapes • Authenticity • Escape/ Relaxation		

The phantasmal tourists were attracted to the ideal Shangri-la and eager to find it in the real world. They visited Shangri-la because they had learnt the news that Shangri-la was discovered in Yunnan, China. They wanted to examine how analogous the place was to their ideal Shangri-la. In

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their responses to the question of travel motivations, they did not emphasize

the natural landscapes and Tibetan culture because they thought these two

factors were integrated into the imaginary Shangri-la. Other participants said

that the myth was irrelevant to their travel motives. Their purposes for

visiting were particularly for finding the real Tibet and an authentic natural

landscape. Following are the quotations from these tourists.

> *I have read an article about the story of naming of the region to Shangri-la and that lead me to read Lost Horizon. Still the Shangri-la myth was attractive. My girlfriend and I have decided to experience how the reality matched the myth. (Interview05_ British male, 36-45)*
>
> *James Hilton wrote a book "The lost horizon" to describe the extraordinary view of Shangri-la (also called Zhongdian). I am here now! (TB20A-Travelbuddy-20070401, Hong Kong female, 18-25)*
>
> *Yunnan was recommended. But there was no special reason to visit Shangri-la for me. No particular reason, because it is on the trail. The name of Shangri-la won't affect the decision to visit. I heard they changed the name to Shangri-la, normally I don't like that kind of approach. It has no influence on my decision. Maybe more the opposite. (Interview36_ German male, 26-35)*

The three groups of tourists cannot be clearly separated, as motives

overlapped in some cases. While the eagerness of experiencing the 'fictional'

Shangri-la was the major motivation for some of these tourists, the natural

landscape was also a major attraction. The Tibetan culture, which forms an

integral part of the landscape, was appreciated as part of the phantasmal

Shangri-la referred in the original book Lost Horizon. Thus, one of the

interviewees (Hong Kong male, 18-25) believed that the myth of the

Shangri-la as told in the book was the main reason he felt the need to search

online for the actual location of that mythical and mystical place. He

discovered the place to be the Tibetan area of the Yunnan province in China, a place that claims to be the Shangri-la. He also found through photographs uploaded by tourists, that Shangri-la was in a beautiful natural environment. This is in contrast to the type of tourists that were mainly motivated by their desire to experience the untouched natural environment and the Tibetan culture of Shangri-la. There were those that, once at the destination, were enticed by the mythical atmosphere and feelings that exude from the place, to start thinking about searching for the 'real' Shangri-la if not for "their private Shangri-la". One tourist (American female, 26-35) believed that renaming Zhongdian as Shangri-la was preposterous. However when she walked along the streets in the old town and got a glimpse of the residents' daily life there, she reflected deeply upon the possibility that the place could be the real Shangri-la. That drove her to compare the area with the descriptions in the book. Another tourist wrote in her travel blog:

> *I never thought I'd find myself in paradise - but then I never thought I would be displeased by it either. When I got off the bus in a little town in the isolated mountains of southwestern China, I discovered myself in what bills itself as the paradise of James Hilton's 1933 novel "Lost Horizons." In less than 24 hours, I was ready to leave. ...*
>
> *...Finally, the terrain flattened out, leaving us with a panoramic view of the town on one side and an endless array of hills on the other. I sat down beneath the prayer flags that marked the peak and bit into an apple bought early that morning. Fresh cold air hit my face and filled my lungs, and a feeling of contentment settled over me. Paradise had crept up on me.*

This finding concurred with the previous study that found people travel rarely because of a single motive, rather there are collective primary and secondary reasons combined (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). The

primary motive is the distinguishing factor that drives people to choose a particular destination, and secondary motives have an enriching effect upon the primary ones (Robinson & Gammon, 2004). Searching for the ideal Shangri-la was the distinctive reason for the phantasmal tourists to travel to Shangri-la, and it is the only officially announced locale for ideal Shangri-la on earth. Otherwise, they would go to many other places to fulfill their secondary motives. As one of the participants observed, the natural environment of Shangri-la is quite similar to New Zealand, but you cannot call New Zealand Shangri-la because Shangri-la is an Asian myth, it must be situated in the Himalayan Mountains.

These tourists shared the degree of their favor in ideal Shangri-la. According to their travel motives, the pattern of the tourists visiting in Shangri-la can be mapped into five situations as summarized in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 Distribution of the tourists in Shangri-la
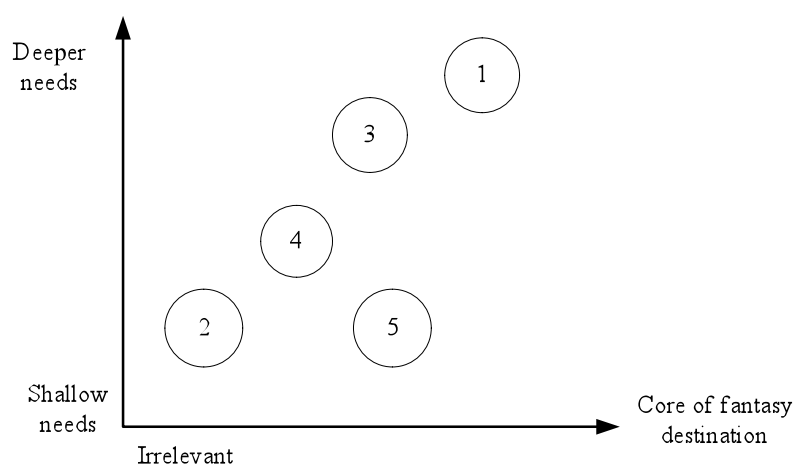
Situation one (No.1) represents phantasmal tourists who have a strong desire or need of fantasy. The ideal Shangri-la was the main destination of

their trip. Situation two (No.2) demonstrates total indifference to fantasy, the main destination of their trip was for physical natural environment. Situation three (No.3) represents   people who travel to a physical place for seeking a fantasized version of Tibetan culture. As Tibet is a physical place that has been mystified by the Westerners that overlooked its actual development, people who were looking for Tibetan culture can also be seen as another type of fantasy seeker. Situation four (No.4) represents the people who travel with no fantasy motive, but were affected by the mythical atmosphere once they are in the place and finally become the phantasmal tourists, or reject the idea altogether (No.5).

4.1.4 Discussion of Phantasmal Tourists' Motivation

One of the research objectives of this study was to explore the factors inspiring people to visit the phantasmal destination of Shangri-la. The above-mentioned premise has revealed that although Shangri-la has been promoted as 'paradise on earth' and 'the lost horizon', there was only a small number of participants who were attracted to the idea of a utopian world and visited there because of the name of Shangri-la. Most of the visitors were motivated by the Tibetan culture and unspoiled natural landscape. Based upon the phantasmal tourists' responses, their inner desire of seeking a utopian world was stimulated by the media promotion of discovering Shangri-la. These tourists had learnt that Shangri-la is a fictional place that did not exist on any map. However, the mythical and peaceful quality of a harmonious society aroused their hope and led them to believe that it must

exist somewhere on earth. Contrary to this, some interviewees expressed strong opinions against the idea of Shangri-la and said that they would not visit the place if it were the Shangri-la. Other participants said that they just expected relaxation in a natural environment but having no idea where to go, took their friends' suggestions and searched online. They found that this was a nice place and came to Shangri-la. This implies that the primary travel motivation pushes people to seek their favored destination, and the media promotions and word-of-mouth pull people to the proposed Shangri-la of Yunnan in China. Although the push-pull model explained tourists' motivation to Shangri-la, in this case, internal push factors played the essential role. According to Fodness (1994), external information is incapable of pulling people to the destination without adequate understanding of consumer's motivations. This suggests that people are seeking and escaping based on intrinsic motivations (Iso-Ahola, 1982). Iso-Ahola argues that people travel mainly because of an internal desire pushing them away from home for personal intrinsic rewards. Therefore, tourist motives mooted in the literature tend to categorize reasons for travel as *escaping from* and/or *escaping to* particular destinations in order to experience preconceived outcomes (Dann 1981). Leiper (1990) also argues that tourists are not 'attracted' or 'pulled' towards an attraction, but 'are pushed' by their own motivation towards the places that can satisfy their expected needs. The push-pull model would better explain the situation when people just feel a need to travel but have no particular interests in any type of

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destination, and a well presented destination is more likely pull the person toward visiting. For example:

> *I didn't real know about this place, my friend had read the story about Shangri-la and wanted to go there. I checked the internet and read the introduction about the Shangri-la, there are many photos online, I thought it is beautiful place, so I decided to go with him. (Interview47_HongKong male, 18-25)*

Previous motivational research has demonstrated that people's explanation of their destination selection is contradictory with their travel motives sometimes, because people travel not only for conscious reasons but also for subconscious reasons (Robinson and Gammon 2004). However, these studies mainly focused on specific places, such as countries or cities, or special interest tourism such as culture, film, literature, and pilgrimage. In this study, however, the focus is on the non-existent place of Shangri-la,, a phantasmal destination. The findings show that some people did have a desire to search phantasmal destinations to fulfill their hope, spirituality and curiosity. As the phantasmal tourists stated, industrialization and urbanization compelled them to explore a different quality of life. Although these participants endowed Shangri-la with various meanings, they all related to the harmony between human beings and natural amenities. This is suggested by Wang (2002), "human being is part of nature, and nature is in some way attuned to our feelings and evokes the best in us" (p79-80). In addition, urbanization and industrialization are two important sociological dimensions of modernity (Burns & Holden, 1995; Holden, 2000). In the process of urbanization, people are forced to move from semi-natural ecosystems into a built urban system. In the course of industrialization,

people have more leisure time, implying human beings living in modern society have become powerful geographical agents in our day-to-day lives (Sack 1992). Again, Sack (1992) proposes that we not only produce but also consume products. Consumption of a place is one of the examples. As consumers, we are not only consuming places but, more importantly, we are creating new places through consumption. Place helps make feelings real. As Tuan (1980, p. 463) argues "transient feelings and thoughts gain permanence and objectivity through things," and these landscapes or places become repositories of meaning (Sack, 1992). From this perspective, Shangri-la has been created and then consumed by phantasmal tourists.

Figure 4.2 summarizes the phantasmal tourists' travel motivations inspiration for traveling to Shangri-la. Social structural change such as urbanization, commercialization and industrialization caused a feeling of losing connection with nature and other experiences of disequilibria. These changes aroused some people's internal desire for an ideal world or a paradise like community. This result is based on the data collected and analyzed, and although it may only be applied in the context of Shangri-la, it could assist in comprehending why people have interest in a phantasmal destination.

Figure 4.2 Summary of phantasmal tourists' motivation of visiting Shangri-la
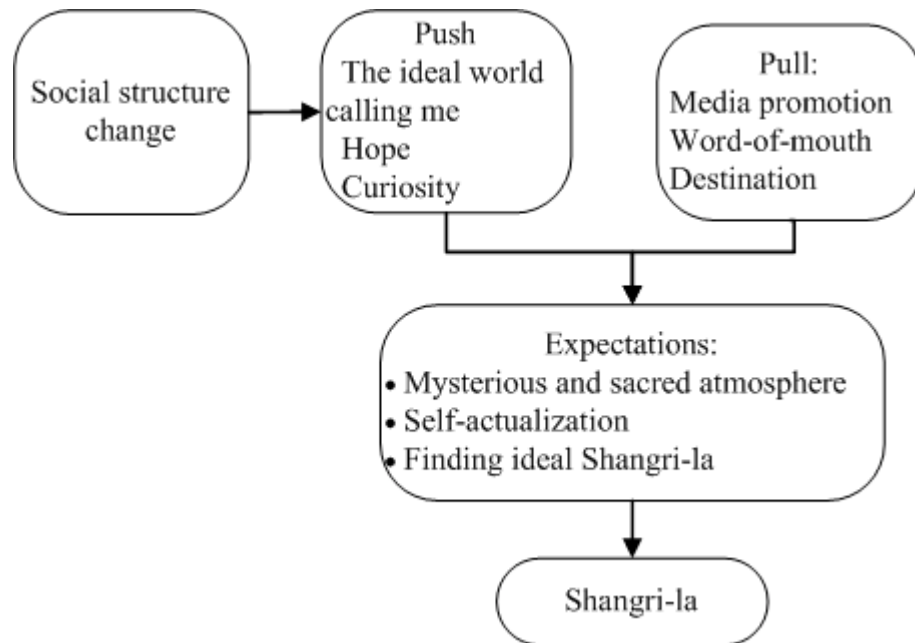
In addition, inner push and external pull factors drove people to and aroused expectations for the phantasmal destination of Shangri-la, including a mysterious and sacred atmosphere, achieving self-actualization, and confirming their hope to find an ideal Shangri-la on earth. This finding also revealed that the expectations of the intangible individually imagined place were influenced by both personal desires and external information.

4.2 PERCEIVED IMAGES AND EXPECTATIONS OF SHANGRI-LA

Tourist destination is a space created by both tourism organizations and travelers' imaginations. Destinations are like Gardens of Eden in which dreams can be indulged and desires satisfied, and beliefs are distortions of reality (Haywood, 1978). What tourists see, hear, feel and remember depend not only on the sensory input of the information, but also on which aspects

tourists selectively attend to (Driver, 2001). People choose to perceive and interpret the world according to their experiences and the cognitive images that they build. The arguments proposed in studies in psychology verify the phenomenon of phantasmal tourism. Individuals have an enormous potential for imagination through pictures and language. Empirically observable subjects are transformed by the imagination into representations of entities that are not present or do not exist. Crang (2004) suggests that tourism, as an active agent, is not only about consuming places. Tourists are also involved in creating and shaping society's evolving history. Both the destination and tourist's cultures are transformed and produced through tourism. The construction of a mythical realm responds to fundamental human needs of feeling and idealization. It satisfies intellectual as well as psychological needs. Shangri-la is a typical example of an imaginary space.

Shangri-la has long been perceived as a symbol of paradise in western society (Lopez, 1998), even before it was announced as an actual location in the Yunnan province of China. How tourists perceived Shangri-la prior to their visit is one of the research questions that are elaborated in this section. With the intention to explore the perception of phantasmal destination, the focus has been placed on phantasmal tourists' view, which was primarily attracted to the Shangri-la myth, rather than opinions of general tourists. For purposes of comparison, Tibetan myth and untouched nature oriented tourists' perceptions of Shangri-la are also illustrated.

4.2.1 Phantasmal Tourists' Perception of Shangri-la

Phantasmal destination is rooted in a myth or a mythical story's setting and interpreted individually based on tourists' personal background and belief. How people perceive the imaginative place and what they expect from it is examined in this project. Participants recalled their expectations of Shangri-la during the interviews. Although they could clearly remember their pre-visit perceptions of Shangri-la, those might have been affected by their onsite experiences (Gunn, 1988). The interviews were conducted onsite during their visit because of tight research time and funds. Therefore, the images of Shangri-la were described in this paper may be better named as adjusted perceptions.

The perceptions of Shangri-la were elaborated as "an Asian myth", "an intellectual and physical paradise", "a place you can hide yourself from the outside world", and "a state of mind". However, according to the book, the key concept of Shangri-la also means that it is the hub of cultures and religions worldwide. None of these tourists mentioned this point. These responses suggest that phantasmal tourists accepted the concept of Shangri-la and reinterpreted it based on their own value systems. These participants were attracted to the story and believed that this place must be found on earth, but only about half of them had read the novel, and only one had watched the movie before they came to explore Shangri-la. This finding revealed that phantasmal tourists differed from literature or film tourists who are concerned with the original setting in a book or film (Ryan, Zhang, Gu, &

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Ling, 2008) when they visit the literature or film destination. When asked where Shangri-la was, most of the participants said it exists only inside one's mind and heart, or it is a place where you call home. Others said that Shangri-la should relate to a beautiful natural place with open spaces. It is a place inciting feelings of relaxation, comfort, and peace. While some of the interviewees said the place must be far from your home, a few of them stated that Shangri-la should be hidden in the Himalayan Mountains because it is an Asian myth. Table 4.6 summarizes the assumed location of Shangri-la.

Table 4.6 Assumed location of Shangri-la

Location	● Natural place: open space, mountains, harmony, peaceful (e.g. Shangri-la Yunnan of China, Tibet, Fiji, Sardinia, Tuscany, Italy, Derwentwater Keswick lake district England) ● Process of searching through a lifetime ● Personal feeling, a state of mind ● Remote, non-commercial place: small, simple lifestyle ● Memorable place ● Familiar and comfortable place that gives the feeling of home

These answers provided a clear sign that the phantasmal destination was first formed by the tourists' imagination before they began to look for a place where the image would fit with their imagination. Imagination and feelings are connected with romantic ideals and refer to landscapes and scenes (Furst, 1976). The paradise-like Shangri-la is romanticized as a version of space where one's 'self' hopes to be joined with 'itself.' It is a celebration of individualism and the quest for and about one's own truth. Romanticism is spiritual intimacy in the tourism context, with people sharing values and beliefs (Trauer & Ryan, 2005). The romantics turn destinations to

sites of worship and pilgrimage for tourists. The essential influence of romanticism on tourism is altering people's perception of the place. In this respect, the natural environment has been symbolized as a holy temple (Hull, 2000; Trauer & Ryan, 2005) or a paradise. Also, Shangri-la is perceived as a kind of dream destination.

Dream destination is a term that frequently appears in destination marketing promotions. Many marketers claim that their destinations provide dream honeymoons or dream vacations for visitors. To set a dreamlike image for tourists, they promote elements, such as beaches, sunrise, and sunset with a romantic atmosphere, as evidence of dream destinations. The term "dream" denotes a vague and abstract concept that lends itself to subjective interpretation. Dreaming has been the focus of human inquiry for a thousand years. Although the definition of dream has not reached a consensus, it has been agreed that dreams are mental images and experiences that occur during both unconscious sleep and waking consciousness (Pagel et al., 2001). The psychologist Freud defined the dream as expressing the fulfillment of unconscious wishes (Arlow, 2008). This definition has been deliberately utilized in popular culture as "the projected image of conscious wish fulfillment" (Pagel et al., 2001, p. 198). The type of tourist attracted by dream destination marketing consider a dream destination connected with friendship, kinship, and the mood or feelings during the visit. This finding is consistent with Larsen, Urry, and Axhausen's (2007) argument that people travel for social networks with friends, family members and partners at a distance. They also point out that tourist studies have overlooked one of the

essential meanings of travel, that sociality is, in part, what makes tourism pleasurable. In light of this point, an ordinary place can also be transformed into a memorable and dreamy destination. For example, Australia was mentioned as being close to Shangri-la because one respondent had met her boyfriend there. Therefore, Australia became a memorable romantic place for her. This is a sign of love and romance. Fiji was identified close to the image of Shangri-la because of the isolated location, simple lifestyle and happy residents on the island.

The phantasmal destination is embedded into a physical place most likely based upon the tourists' feelings and emotions. Tourism is referred to as an experience industry, and travelers are not always rational when they make travel decisions. In other words, travel decisions are made irrationally in most circumstances (Bettman, Luce, & Payne, 1998; Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005). Emotions have the ability to strengthen ideas, repudiate ideas, create truths and destroy realities (Frijda, Manstead, & Bem, 2000). Emotion plays a significant role in producing belief systems. According to topological theory, the human condition can be represented as a map. Our individual needs, wants and desires are all operating with different forces and different aims shaping who we are and what we believe. Gestalt psychology, especially the gestalt laws of perception, argue that people perceive things not based on the individual elements but the wholes, people have the tendency to 'group' things that are determined by the intrinsic nature of the whole. Gestalt theory provides insight into why changes in external conditions, such as time, can have a significant impact on the way internal

conditions, such as meaning, are enacted (Graham, 2008). In the case of phantasmal destination, people intended to locate their imagined place into a geographical place where the topography of the place was negotiated with disparate topographies of the mind. For example, "*I wanted to check the similarity of the reality to the myth*" (Interview03_South African male, 46-55).

Based on the above discussion, the perceptions of Shangri-la are conceptualized according to six predominate subcategories namely 1) challenging but accessible, 2) sense of a natural air of mystery, 3) the place incites spirituality, 4) remoteness and primitiveness aspects are particularly endearing, 5) unspoiled landscape by development, 6) simple peaceful lifestyle present in the small village.

4.2.1.1 Challenging but accessible

Challenging but accessible was perceived as the main feature of this type of destination. Market access is used to assess destination competitiveness, it can be measured by the relative difference in time, cost, distance, or effort required to access different destinations (Pearce, 1989). Easy market access is considered as an advantage of destination competitiveness. Deng, King, and Bauer (2002) argue that accessibility for natural attractions is an important element in tourism. However, in the case of Shangri-la it is viewed as a disadvantage. The participants emphasize that Shangri-la should not be an ordinary tourist place with easy access, but should hide somewhere and wait for people to discover it by coincidence.

This definition is more related to the description in the novel. In the book, Shangri-la is difficult to find, hidden in high snow mountains. The following statements serve as examples of this perception.

> *... the place where nobody can approach (Interview46_HK male, 18-25)*

> *Yes, I think so. It should be located at some places where it is hard to approach and shouldn't have tourists, because tourists would destroy the original culture. (Interview47_HK male, 18-25)*

> *The place with good balance and it is not easy to find. (Interview42_French male, 18-25)*

This finding confirmed McKercher's (1998) study on market access. He demonstrates that strong market access does not in all cases enjoy a competitive advantage over destinations that have poorer market access. When the constraints of time and budget are removed, poorer market access will attract some people with certain desires, such as escaping and hiding.

4.2.1.2 Sense of a natural air of mystery

The perception of mystery is one of the major attributes of Shangri-la. According to one of the interviewees, "*Shangri-la sounds mythical; it gives you a feeling of beauty.*" A myth or a story as a stimulus introduces a place to the public, and results in their attaching a particular identity to it. In other words, myths or stories often provide clues to the spiritual potentialities of human life, with each story being embodied in a particular community and environment. However, although such stories introduce the tourist to a new world, the exact meaning will be defined by the individual's personal identity in relation to their physical environment. James Hilton's Lost

Horizon introduces Shangri-la as a Utopian world, unbeknown to the outside world, far out in the Himalayas somewhere. The atmosphere of mystery is the core contextual setting in the novel and subsequent film. In more recent times, travel agencies and tourists who have visited the Shangri-la have provided numerous thematic photos and videos that they have uploaded to the Internet and published in travel magazines that purport to reflect this atmosphere. The themes include splendid snowy peaks, wild gorges inviting adventure, and exotic Tibetan architecture. These visual images display physical attributes of the place that further reinforce visitors' perception of mystery gleaned from the original story. The physical attributes of the place, including snowy mountains, waterscapes, and open areas, positively affect the perception of mystery (Dolnicar & Huybers, 2007). Bishop (1989, p. 43) suggests, "The Landscape Mountains have been imagined as the dwelling-places of both malevolent and benevolent supernatural beings."

One of the participants also mentioned that he was attracted to a created place called "Lady's County" which was introduced in the film of "Pilgrimage to the West". He visited the place after hearing that the film was set at Lugu Lake in Yunnan, although he knew Lady's County was not a real place. This is similar to the phenomenon of Medjugorje tourism. Medjugorje is a town located in western Bosnia Herzegovina and best known for the reported apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which appeared to six Croats on 24 June 1981. The destination is now visited by thousands of pilgrims from around the world as an important Marian shrine (Jurkovich & Gesler, 1997; Vukonić, 1992). Since the apparitions began, the inexplicable

has become explicable and events endowed with a sense of divine intervention. Huntsinger and Fernandez-Gimenez (2000) examined the tourists' behavior in Mount Shasta in California, the United States. They found that tourists attached their personal spiritual beliefs to Mount Shasta and turnplacing it into a spiritual center. Another similar case is Alexandria, Egypt, which suggests a place as much of the mind as of the physical world (Dunn, 2006). Alexandria is more mythic than actual. It is the greatest historical city with the least to show, but visitors will get the most out of the city if they possess lively imaginations (Dunn, 2006).

> *I have an interest in history and maybe some myths and legends. Those things are kind of linked together. So, a lot of places I'd like to visit because of history and maybe because of myths and legends as well. This is probably the first one that I'd come to (Interview15_New Zealand male, 26-35)*

In a tourist destination, mystery is defined by the level of information one can gain by proceeding further into the landscape (Lynch & Gimblett, 1992). Lynch and Gimblett (1992) have studied the components of mystery in the rural environment. They used color photos of a natural landscape and they found that mystery attributes related to obstructed or obscured views, distance to the image from viewer point, and the degree of spatial and physical access. Perception of mystery is based on the inadequate information received from great distance; it is an attribute of involvement in the landscape.

Based on the findings of previous researches, a myth or a story is the primary predictor of a phantasmal destination. Participants in this study

believe that myths have their roots in reality. One of the tourists said that he does take myths and meanings of myths seriously, in that, he believes that ancient Egyptians had knowledge and insight into how the world operates, knowledge that was lost in time. Another tourist pointed out that religion came under the category of myth. If a myth is followed by sufficient number of people for a long period of time, it becomes a religion and for the followers of the religion, this becomes reality.

Or people prefer to find extraordinary places from mythical stories. For example, one of the participants said that most of places she visited were selected from mythical stories she had read. It can be concluded that a place is more likely to become a phantasmal destination if it is attached to a myth or a mythical story before being introduced to the public.

4.2.1.3 The place incites spirituality

Tourists who are attracted to the Shangri-la myth expect the place to engender spirituality. The participants elaborated that the term Shangri-la connoted "Asian myth," "an intellectual and physical paradise," "a liminal space," and as evoking "indescribable feelings." The explanation of spirituality varied among the participants. For some, it referred to the spirit of the Tibetan religion and its rituals, which were seen as "very impressive." Tibetans are viewed as notably devout, as revealed in the way that they pray. They are believed to live in a non-materialistic world, and the visitors interpreted this as innocence. Other participants referred specifically to the spirituality of the setting in the novel. The harmonious and peaceful

ambiance in the novel had captivated their minds, and they expected the

actual Shangri-la to match those descriptions. Photos of mountains uploaded

to the Internet by other tourists also evoked in them a spiritual feeling about

the place. To one tourist, the high altitudes made "one feel very close to the

sky and above the clouds." The following statements further illustrate this

point.

> *I perceived this place as a spiritually more inviting place. (Interview09_French female, 36-45)*

> *Every time you get into a high place or such a beautiful mountain area, it seems as if you are closer the heaven. (Interview40_Israeli female, 26-35)*

Balance was also viewed to as part of the spirit of Shangri-la. The

interviewees defined balance as harmony manifested in the interaction of

human beings with their natural environment. When describing the image of

Shangri-la, they perceived it to represent untouched nature without the

presence of modern people, which would have caused it to be destroyed.

However, if there were no people at all, it would be very boring.

> *I also like places where there are people (thinking) it depends, a place where there is good balance of people. In the moon, I will get bored because there are no people there. The place with good balance… (Interview42_French male, 18-25)*

> *Anywhere people live in harmony with nature, I think that is pretty much Shangri-la. Living with nature in a beautiful place, you're coming closer to the idea. If you are high up that adds to it. (Interview34_American male, 36-45)*

Perception of spiritual place is also related to the sacred lands in

pilgrimage tourism. Pilgrim tourists perceive the pilgrimage destination as

collective symbols rooted in mainstream religions. By contrast, tourists in

Shangri-la region were not there for known religious activities or beliefs. They were just like other ordinary leisure tourists all but for the Shangri-la myth and personal belief. Myths and stories, which add symbolism and meaning, play an important role in phantasmal destinations. The original use of 'sacred place' indicated a site of paradoxical power – a site of destruction as well as renewal. They are meant to stimulate a sense of tranquility as well as fear. Sacred places are meant to be terrible yet fascinating. Modern use of the term is devoid of such paradoxical meaning. Sacred places are now imagined as benevolent sites for healing and compassion (Swan, 1988). However, as we shall see in the case of Tibet, when the paradox of serenity and terror has been resolved, fear of the unknown gives way to indisputable hope, the sacred place is recreated as Utopia, leading to a new set of fantasies (Lukerman & Porter, 1976).

Bishop (1989) presents comprehensive discussions about the differences between utopias and sacred places. In his explanation, sacred places signify beginnings of a paradox that indicates anxiety and conflict. The concept of utopias eliminates the contradictions and resolves the conflict. In the phenomenology of imagination, the sacred place is centered on a cosmic axis, which connects heaven, earth and the underworld. In a sacred place, light and darkness, good and evil meet, turning the site into a location of terror as well as worship. However, there is no darkness within utopia. The darkness is either outside or never mentioned. Paradox is removed and there is no confusion and pain. Sacred places act as part of the social fabric; they are necessary for a proper orientation of the world. Periodic visits to

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such places must be taken in order to receive directions and guidance, and communications that can occur with the higher powers. By contrast, utopias are not part of the social life. Utopias are not temporary abodes like sacred places. They are for future residence. Sacred places are sites for worship and prayer and serve as panacea to the instability of the world and impermanence of human existence. Utopias are imaginary places where an alternative society is possible, visions can be realized and social experiments can be carried out. Utopias are places above society where the criticism can be directed towards the existing lifestyles and beliefs (Desroche, 1979; Manuel, 1967).

Personal belief is related to spirituality in psychology and religious studies. Spirituality is defined as individual interpretation of the meaning of symbolic systems in the everyday world (Hanegraaff, 1999). It is born in a person and develops in the person. It may stem from a religion, or a revelation, but being spiritual to the person is more important than being religious. True spirituality is something that is found deep within oneself. It is personal way of loving, accepting and relating to the world and people. It cannot be found in a church or through faith in a certain doctrine. In the postmodern context, searching for personal spirituality in a place is a new phenomenon in the tourism field. The dimensions of spirituality are dynamic due to personal characteristics. In the case of Shangri-la, the expectations of spirituality in the place are more related to an innocent world and peaceful lifestyle.

4.2.1.4 Remoteness and primitive are particular endearing

Remoteness and primitiveness are expected to be the natural qualities of Shangri-la. The interviewees expected to find a small remote village located in the mountains. Despite globalization, a place that has retained its uniqueness and primitiveness is rare indeed. Shangri-la is promoted as the "discovered paradise on earth." This evokes the expectation of an innocent world. In today's global environment and modern society, the chaotic world impels people to seek simpler non-materialistic lifestyles. The participants believed that the people that live in such a remote place would retain the positive qualities of human beings, such as being faithful, happy, and hard working. They expected Shangri-la to be close to its description in the novel and book, and imagined that the high mountains would give residents a feeling of being closer to heaven.

> *Personally, I've been to many 'Shangri-la's' during my travels - for me it's a state of mind - finding the untouched, and simple lives, the co-existence of many religions and cultures - feeling remote. I'm happy to say that you can find little pockets of that all over the world! (TB30NA_Travelnetwork_20071114, American female, 36-45)*
>
> *I think of place where people live very simply, not materialistic, just a small village in the middle of nowhere. I think there are many Shangri-las. People search for it. I desperately want to go to Fiji. My friends think Fiji is the image Shangri-la, because people there are simple, and happy. (Interview37_ Canadian Chinese female, 26-35)*

The romantic imagination of landscape depends upon a sense of natural power (Bishop, 1989). Nineteenth-century artists and poets of the Romantic Movement emphasized the solitary delights of nature, often

choosing untouched natural attractions over those groomed by human beings.

Later, Urry (2002) called this "the romantic gaze," with "an emphasis upon

solitude, privacy and [a] personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object

of the gaze."

4.2.1.5 Unspoiled landscape by development

Natural landscapes always attract tourists, and the scenery and natural

attractions are major attributes of a destination. In this study, the tourist

participants were not only expecting beautiful scenery, but also extraordinary

and unspoiled landscapes. In their mind, Shangri-la represented a virginal

land unspoiled by modern development. The following statements express

this expectation.

> *I was totally dreaming this place is on the top of mountains,*
> *there were lots of peaks. (Interview42, French male, 18-25)*
>
> *Extraordinary landscape, simple and less commercial*
> *atmosphere, different culture (Interview46, Hong Kong male, 18-25)*

Cosgrove (1993) and Bender (1993) describe landscape as a

signifying system that contains and conveys multiple, and sometimes

conflicting, sets of shared meanings. Tourism uses natural landscapes as

another process by which identity can be constructed within the imagination.

In this respect, a study that examines the role of landscape as a key element

in the construction of the Israeli national identity argues that "metaphors

drawn from the landscape constitute part of the moral discourse which is

used in the wider distinctions we make between 'us' and 'them'" (Selwyn,

1995, p. 119). Duncan and Duncan (1988) state that landscapes can be

"read" like literary texts. What they convey relates to the social, cultural, and historical values of those that prepare them for interpretation (Palmer, 1999).

4.2.1.6 Simple peaceful lifestyle present in the small village

The idealized Shangri-la was referred to by some of the interviewees as a dreamy Utopia derived from the novel Lost Horizon. The tourists expected to find the real world destination closest to the Shangri-la. The simple, peaceful lifestyle of its small community and its hidden quality were also deemed to be important attributes of the ideal Shangri-la.

> *Only a few people know about it… The way it is described before is like a small town, a small village, hidden by the mountains... (Interview15_NZ male, 26-35)*

The phantasmal tourists tired of crowded and complex relationships in big places, "fantasized" about living in or at least temporarily hiding in a Utopian world. In the industrialized world, individuals, removed from their bond with nature and their fellow people, have become fragmented. The emphasis on rationalization and self-discipline prevents the redemption of a unitary self. The need to "escape" this harsh reality becomes a romantic project. Searching for a simple and peaceful lifestyle becomes an ideal, and tourism represents a medium for this "escape."

4.2.2 Tibetan Myth Oriented Tourists' Perception of Shangri-la

The tourists who traveled in search of Tibetan culture described their perceptions of Shangri-la mainly by focusing on authentic Tibetan lifestyle, Tibetan art and architecture, Tibetan religion, and a threatened Tibetan

culture and people. Responses from this type of tourist revealed the image of

Tibet to be one of a community of friendly and religious people that live in a

beautiful remote mountain area. To these tourists, the non-materialistic and

spiritually oriented Tibetans have been forced to accept Communism and its

values, and what used to be an independent paradise has been invaded by the

Han people. At the same time, the area has not been modernized and the

"poor Tibetans" have no freedom and human rights under the army's control.

The following quotations illustrate these perceptions.

> *It is Tibetan culture, and the biggest most important Tibetan monastery outside of Tibet locate here. Nice mountain scenery, and the local people are very guileless, friendly and pure-hearted. (interview 47_ Thai male 18-25)*

> *In Tibetan areas, the sightseeing is special. Most of the area has not been influenced or civilized by other cultures. It is unusual compared to our urban life. (interview 32_chinese female 36-45)*

> *From what I heard Dalai Lama teaches us peace and non-violence. Considering what his people have been through, I think this is very admirable. I want to see by myself if they have freedom, and now China is pressing down on Tibet and this really moved me. People are very warm and peaceful. (interview3_Chinese/Canadian female, 26-35)*

It is clear that the formation of such images has been influenced by

the Western media and the Dalia Lama's speeches. An examination of the

history of Tibet shows that it has long symbolized a sacred land of

extraordinary scenery and imagined geography in Western fantasies (Bishop,

1989). These fantasies are likely influenced by the Tibetan

government-in-exile's strategy since the late 1980s to lobby western

countries for support in its struggle for autonomy (Barnett, 2001).

In this case, the actual world of Tibet has been mystified to a phantasmal destination. Lopez (1998) points out that the image of Tibet as a mysterious land is deep-rooted in the history of the Western relationship with Tibet. Tibet never became a European colony although England and Russia wished to add Tibet to their empires at the end of the nineteenth century. Tibet, protected from free trade with the West during the age of imperialism, became the last unconquered and unpolluted land. That image of Tibet was firmly fixed by the time the Chinese invaded Tibet in 1950 (Shakya, 1991).

Furthermore, Lopez (1998) has studied Tibetan Buddhism and the West in his book "Prisoners of Shangri-la" and discloses that the book, The Third Eye, published in 1956, significantly influenced the image of Tibet in the West. The author, who was in reality an unemployed son of an English plumber, claimed to be a Tibetan lama. The book purported to be the autobiography of a Tibetan lama who at the age of eight underwent the operation to open a third eye for seeing auras. Such a procedure was not known in Tibet (Lopez, 1998), but believers have been growing in Europe and North America since the publication of the book in 1956 (Bharati, 1974). In addition, Bharati (1974) and Lopez (1998) assert that Tibetan Buddhism has no relation with Tibetans. Blavatsky and Leadbeater, founders of the Theosophical Society, created the concept of Tibetan Buddhism based on other religions, such as ancestor worship, Hinduism, animism, with gods that are borrowed from one ancient religion or another. Western scholars depicted true Buddhism as a religion of reason and restraint, filled with deep philosophical ideas and free from the confines of rituals. In fact, such a pure

form of Buddhism has never been practiced in the East, and was to be found only in the libraries and lecture halls of Europe and America.

Shakya (1991, p. 22) further criticizes that "Tibet was being re-created and re-formed into Western imaginations and enthused with psychedelic experiences . . . Tibet has become a Disney World for the Western bourgeois. Tibet possesses all the thrills and adventure of a customized fantasy world: danger, romance, magic and cuddly natives, since the opening of Tibet to mass tourism in the 1980s." This argument is somewhat in consensus with the Tibetan author Alai (2008), who points out that Tibet has been misunderstood by both Chinese and foreigners because it has been closed until recently to the outside world. Tibet has been mystified, and changed from a noun to an adjective. It is perceived as the opposite of the modern world: if we are civilized, then Tibet is relatively wild; if we are corporeal, then Tibet is incorporeal. Tibet is an imagined and solemn image of "heaven" because of its geographic location, which is generally considered to be at the ends of the earth.

These views reflect Said's (1985) argument against the underlying assumptions of Orientalist thinking. From the 19th century onward, Western scholars, artists, and intellectuals came to believe that true colonialism required knowledge of the colonized. As a result, they constructed "the Orient," transforming a vast region that spreads across a multitude of cultures and countries into a single object. By gaining knowledge of the "Orient," the West assumed ownership of it. According to Said,

Orientization is "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient." (p. 3) More importantly, Said emphasizes that by becoming the object that is studied, the "Oriental" became "the Other" against the "Us" of the Western world. "Other" is represented and reconstructed by "Us" through the use of various powers: political, intellectual, cultural, and moral. The "Us" travel to the "Other's" place and attempt to seek the fact of "a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections" (p. 8), rather than the empirical reality of the "Other." The wide-eyed, uncritical admiration of the tourists oriented by Tibetan culture has overtones what Said, among others, criticizes. In this respect, these tourists also fall into the category of "phantasmal tourists," but their journey is to a different phantasmal destination.

4.2.3 Unspoiled Nature Oriented Tourists' Perception of Shangri-la

The tourists who emphasized the natural landscape category described their perceptions of Shangri-la as basically constructed upon and framed within descriptions obtained from guidebooks and gleaned from pictures uploaded to the Internet by previous visitors to the place. Shangri-la, as a destination, was perceived as a less commercial and not so touristy place, because its remoteness and its position as a high-altitude mountaintop area should not attract very many tourists.

> *[…] fabulous mountain area, quiet small village, people have a peaceful life there. I can take some good pictures. Less commercialized, simple lifestyle (interview45_ Chinese female, 18-25)*

It was also perceived to be natural and unsophisticated at a time when those qualities are disappearing from many destinations, allowing the possibility of enjoying more rudimentary outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, and horse riding.

> *In my imagination, I thought that on the top of mountains, there were lots of peaks; I was totally dreaming you know (Interview41_French male, 18-25)*
>
> *I have read book and searched internet, I saw some nice pictures. There are few people come here. (Interview25_Thai male, 26-35)*

The tourists also perceived Shangri-la to be striking by its ordinariness. It is simply a generic name for any remote Chinese town, but which nevertheless conveys the possibility of wild adventures.

> [Shangri-la is] *Recommended by other tourists that it is the place you must go if you like trekking in the wild mountains. (Interview41_French male, 18-25)*
>
> *Home of beautiful mountains, glaciers and plants (interview39_ Australian female, 56-6),*
>
> *Nature is the main theme. Simple, untouched. Hard to find places like this in China (interview34_American male, 36-45)*

A review of the interview transcripts revealed that this type of tourist had heard about or read the story of Shangri-la, but did not believe in the myth and did not perceive the place to be mystical. Some even thought that the renaming of the place was a ridiculous idea. The key image for them was a natural environment for adventure in a small Chinese town with a Tibetan culture. These tourists claimed that they did not select the destination because of the mythical story, but were rather driven by their preference for mountainous areas with the possibility of adventure. However, some of these

nature-oriented tourists were so awed by the magnificence of the landscape that they had out-of-character mystical reactions.

4.2.4 Expectations of Shangri-la

Tourists' expectations for a destination concern destination planners because it affects tourists' overall travel experiences (Gnoth, 1997). In this study, the three types of tourists' expectations of Shangri-la were quite different, although there was some overlapping in the case of natural sceneries. Table 4.7 shows the summary of the participants' expectations of Shangri-la.

Table 4.7 Expectations of Shangri-la

Type of tourist	Expectations
Phantasmal oriented tourists	• Expecting to find a place closer to the descriptions of Hilton's novel • Expecting an inviting place • Expecting non-commercial place • Expecting wild natural landscape • Expecting a small village
Tibetan myth oriented tourists	• Expecting authentic Tibetan culture • Expecting an untouched natural beauty
Unspoiled nature oriented tourists	• Expecting adventurous experience • Expecting wild natural landscape • Expecting non-commercial place • Keeping an open mind, without expecting much

Findings revealed that phantasmal tourists expected this place to be a small peaceful village and surrounded with a sacred and mysterious atmosphere. They emphasized comfort, safety, good balance between nature, locals and tourists, and arousing a quiet and peaceful feeling. Their

expectations mainly related to the imagination of the Shangri-la myth. For example:

> *I expected some effort to recreate Hilton's fictional place. (Interview08_Australia male, 56-65)*
>
> *I wanted to check the similarity of the reality to the myth. (Interview03_South African male, 46-55)*
>
> *I was hoping this was a small place, smaller than it is. This area is quite big. I did not expect the new town here. There should not be a new town here. (Interview17_ British male, 18-25)*

Those tourists' expectations were also formed by guidebooks and friends or other travelers. Some of them made the decision to travel to Shangri-la after they arrived at Lijiang in Yunnan province. Lijiang is a touristic place and was developed as such years ago. It is famous for its Naxi culture and beautiful natural surroundings. This town was claimed as Shangri-la before, however, the government decided to rename Zhongdian as Shangri-la. The novel *Lost Horizon* is sold everywhere in Lijiang. Some travelers heard this story when they arrived in Lijiang and bought the book there. Interview07 (Australia male, in age group 46-55) told me: *I first read about it in the guide book Lonely Planet. After that, I have read some articles. After visiting Dali and Lijiang, I have decided to come here. I have bought Lost Horizon in Lijiang but haven't read it yet. Of course, from the articles and Lonely Planet, I know enough about the story.*

Tibetan myth oriented tourists expected experiencing the authentic Tibetan culture and beauty of the landscape. Unspoiled nature oriented tourists expected adventure by trekking along the mountains 3,500 meters above sea level. Below is an example of this type of tourist.

> *I knew there were mountains and you will have problem with altitude sickness. And this made me excited to see if I can cope with high altitude situation. (Interview16_ Poland female, 18-25)*

Some of them did not attempt to search more information prior to their visit. They preferred to keep an open mind and allow themselves the possibility of surprise.

> *I didn't know much at all, not a great deal. Read a few descriptions and that is it. I keep an open mind wherever I go. You read all these things, you try to put a picture of what you read, then you are either disappointed or shocked. (Interview14_ British male, 46-55)*

Overall, apart from their particular expectations, they all expected to experience an extraordinary natural landscape.

4.2.5 Comparison Among the Three Types of Tourists

Although people understand that Shangri-la is a fictional place, the ideal world depicted in the novel is so touching that it evokes a need to believe in it as an alternative reality. The components of phantasmal destination expected by the participants overlap with some other types of tourist destinations, such as literature destinations, film destinations, and religion destinations. However, in literature and film tourism, tourists know the setting of the destination design based upon the context of literature or film. In phantasmal tourism, destination setting is formed upon the individual's belief in an ideal world. There is no actual setting for such place − it is created in the individual's mind. It is also different from religion tourism in terms of lack of symbolic system. Unlike mainstream religion destination, which is based on a system of symbols shared by its followers,

phantasmal tourists manipulate the symbolic system individually. Table 4.6

shows the summaries of perceptions of Shangri-la.

Table 4.8 Perceived images of Shangri-la

Properties	Dimensions
Phantasmal Shangri-la	• Challenging but accessible • Sense of a natural air of mystery • The place incited spirituality • Remoteness and primitive are particular endearing • Landscape unspoiled by development • Tibetan authentic lifestyle presented in the small village
Mysterious Tibet	• Authentic Tibetan lifestyle • Tibetan arts and architecture • Tibetan religion • Forbidden and threatened Tibetan culture and people
Untouched natural landscape	• Unspoiled beautiful natural environment • Less commercial and non touristy yet • Diversity outdoor activities • Adventurous place • Remote high altitude mountain area

This study reveals that the perceptions of Shangri-la fit into three

categories. First, it is a phantasmal site (PS) created from a phantasmal

allegory. Second, it conveys an image of mysterious Tibet (MT), because of

its special location just outside of the region of Tibet. Tourists can

experience Tibetan culture there without going through complex and

expensive governmental travel permission procedures, although the area is in

fact home to a mix of ethnic groups. Finally, it is perceived as a geographic

Himalayan mountain area with a typical natural landscape (NL). Although

each of these perceptions is presented as a distinct category, they overlap, as

shown in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: Multiple types of destination
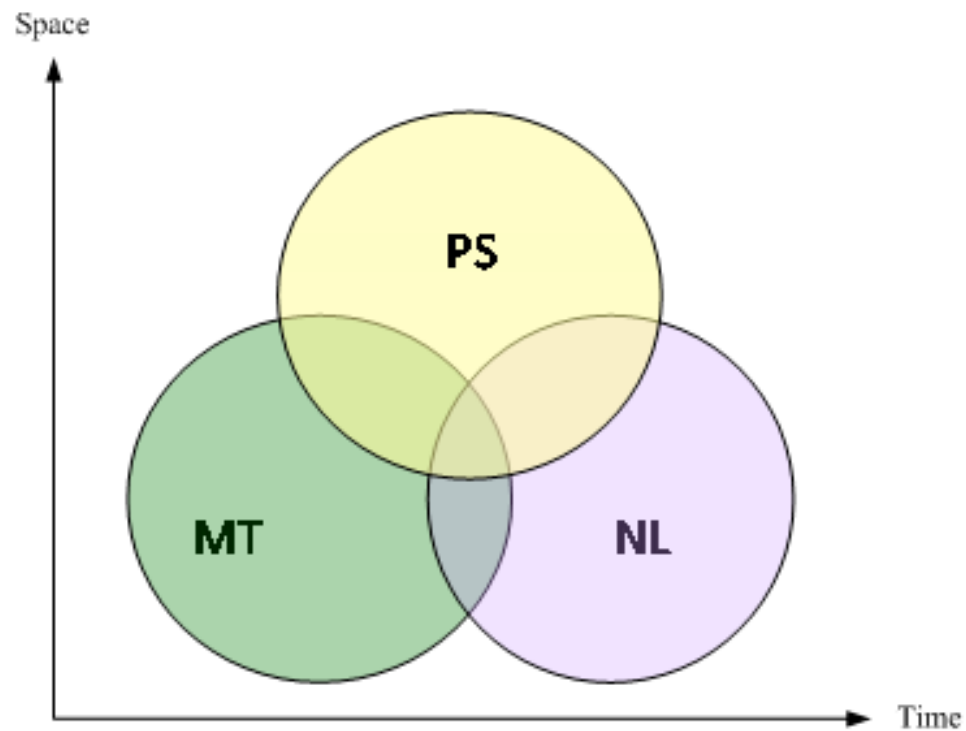
Notes: PS is phantasmal Shangri-la; MT is mysterious Tibet; NL is natural landscape

Figure 4.3 shows that the phantasmal Shangri-la is embedded in the physical Himalayas, and is perceived as the actual location of a phantasmal destination. Conversely, the physical Tibet is mystified as a phantasmal destination by the Tibetan government-in-exile and by the speeches of the Dalai Lama in Western society. Most of the tourists interviewed perceived Shangri-la to be an actual place and an irrelevant fantasy, although all of them admitted to a sense of profound admiration when faced with the magnificence of the landscape. The overlapping parts show that some of the tourists saw a link between the actual place and its phantasmal quality before or during their visit, but did not fully subscribe to the idea. For instance, one travel blogger wrote (Swiss male, 26-35) "…*I sat on this mountain and caught my breath, observing the wildness around me. This was Shangri-la.*

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This was untouched, natural and very free. Gazing at the pair of eagles gliding along the horizon I felt a sense of freedom and thought back to Zhong Dian. James Hilton hadn't been describing a particular temple, town or valley: Shangri-la caught me by surprise, it was a state of mind. A state of mind brought on by a place like this." This blogger denied that he traveled for the Shangri-la myth at the beginning of his travel blog. The 'Shangri-la moment' appeared during his visit. The sense of freedom and the wild mountains brought him to his Shangri-la. This suggests that a phantasmal destination can be created by the media, but pursued and recreated by individual tourists. This leads many tourists to believe that such physical locations actually exist and encourages them to seek them out. The interviewees who were either seeking Shangri-la or had a passion for unspoiled nature feared that development would ultimately destroy the pristine nature of the place. However, there are reasons to believe that what they really feared was the destruction of their own belief in a phantasmal destination that they would have readily created had they found the place somewhere else. The data suggest that these tourists were not only searching for the natural and cultural features of the region, but also for unique attributes that they had created in their own minds.

4.3 FEELING STATE OF SHANGRI-LA

Traveling is about feeling states; the overall tourist experience relates to personal "expectation, motivation, value systems and attitudes, personality traits, self-esteem and states of affect (mood and emotions)" (Larsen, 2007, p.

9). Tourists travel for experiencing atmosphere and ambiance; full of varying intimacies, intensities and complexities (Trauer, 2006). They spend money and time to seek emotional stimuli, looking for feelings and immaterial qualities rather than products. Along with the promotion of Shangri-la, some travelers were attracted to the tranquil, peaceful, harmonious, ideal lifestyle, and they wanted to discover their own Shangri-la. Other travelers said that they wanted to discover, for themselves, real Tibetan life after enduring years of dispute over political issues. Nature lovers' attitudes more focused on the unspoiled landscape and the exploration of their potential ability in a high altitude mountain area. Tourists are not only romantically gazing and focusing on visual experience (Urry, 1990), they are also being, doing, touching and feeling the places. Tourists do not only consume experience, but also actively co-produce, co-design and co-exhibit experience (Ek, Larsen, Hornskov, & Mansfeldt, 2008). In this section, the three types of tourists' experiences are elaborated, and compared based on their onsite activities, travel experiences, and their evaluation.

4.3.1 Onsite Activities

In line with the conceptualization of postmodernism, tourists subjectively interpreted the objective things. Different tourists may seek different inspirations and experience in the same destination (Uriely, 2005). To understand tourists experience at a destination, the major travel activities provide useful indices (Ryan, 2002). In addition, onsite activities reflect travel motives to a certain destination (Moscardo, Morrison, Pearce, Lang, &

O'Leary, 1996), that influence tourists experience (Graefe & Vaske, 1987). The current research findings were consistent with previous studies. The participants' primary onsite activities provided useful understanding of their behavior at the destination. For example, a young couple visited the hot spring as soon as they arrived in Shangri-la. According to their responses, they had heard that there are hot springs in Shangri-la, and their main purpose for visiting was relaxation. Only after their spa, did they continue to visit other attractions nearby.

Referring to the interviewees' responses, while the three types of tourists' on-site activities were mostly similar, their primary activities were different. For phantasmal oriented tourists, while they experienced and were involved in the local culture and outdoor activities, they spent more time on observing, seeking and comparing the actual place with the imagined one. They explored many locations around Shangri-la and endeavored to investigate whether there were some sites that might match their ideal perceptions of Shangri-la. For Tibetan myth oriented tourists, their initial activities were visiting shrines in the area, such as Guishan temple and Songzhanlin monastery, and visiting local Tibetan houses, having dinner with the local people. For unspoiled nature oriented tourists, priority was given to explore the natural environment, of which the major activities included hiking, trekking, horse riding and biking. Table 4.9 shows different tourists onsite activities in Shangri-la.

Table 4.9 Tourists onsite activities

Onsite Activities	POT	TMOT	UNOT
Primary activities	• Searching sense of Shangri-la • Observing local lifestyle • Visiting monastery	• Visiting monastery • Visiting Tibetan family, • Join local community dancing	• Outdoor activities, including hiking, biking, trekking, horse riding
Secondary activities	• Outdoor activities • Join local community dancing	• Outdoor activities	• Visiting monastery • Join local community dancing
Notes: POT: phantasmal oriented tourists; TMOT: Tibetan myth oriented tourists; UNOT: unspoiled nature oriented tourists.			

4.3.2 Overall Experiences

In this research finding, the participants' travel experiences in Shangri-la were associated with their expectations and travel inspirations. In summary, four categories of feeling state were extracted (Table 4.10): feeling of mythical Shangri-la atmosphere, authentic feeling of Shangri-la, attractive natural attractions, and social reality. The subcategories for each property were identified. The feeling of mythical Shangri-la atmosphere included experience of searching fictional Shangri-la and a Shangri-la moment. The authentic feeling of Shangri-la included authentic Tibetan town, friendly and happy Tibetans, memorable Tibetan dancing, and unspoiled natural landscape. Natural attractions included the natural beauty and diverse outdoor activities. Social reality included issues of cleanliness and hygiene, coping with poverty and fear of becoming modernized.

Table 4.10 Tourist feeling state in proposed Shangri-la

Categories	Subcategories
Feeling of mythical Shangri-la atmosphere	• Experience of fictional Shangri-la • Shangri-la Moment
Authentic feeling of Shangri-la	• Authentic Tibetan town • Friendly and happy Tibetans • Memorable Tibetan dancing • Unspoiled natural landscape
Attractive Nature attractions	• Natural beauty • Diverse outdoor activities
Social reality	• Cleanliness and hygiene issues • Coping with poverty • Concern about becoming modernized

4.3.2.1 Feeling of mythical Shangri-la atmosphere

As mentioned earlier, tourist experiences are diverse and heterogeneous, and experiencing mythical Shangri-la atmosphere was only considered and described by the phantasmal tourists. Other types of tourists did not consider the feeling of mythical Shangri-la as their experience. Although the majority of phantasmal tourists claimed that this place did not fit their imaginary Shangri-la, they did feel the mythical atmosphere in the surrounding natural environment. For example, one interviewee said:

> *Shangri-la is so sacred and beautiful place. Before I came here I heard about this place, and it gave me a secret feeling. After I visit it, it met my expectation. (Interview33_Chinese female, 18-25)*

Other types of participants mentioned the Shangri-la moment. Shangri-la moments were the strong emotional feelings experienced while traveling in the area. It refers to the feeling of paradise evoked during traveler's visits to the areas. Travel experience is a personal feeling, and it is

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related to travel motivation and tourist types (Shaw & Williams, 2004). Tourists who visited Shangri-la for culture and natural environment reasons stated that the Shangri-la myth was not their interest, but the atmosphere incited their 'Shangri-la moment' when they engaged in the area. For instance, Liam Bates (TB29NA_genevalunch_20080103, Switzer male, 26-35) wrote in his blog that he was not in search of paradise, but when he sat on the mountain and observed the wildness around him, he wrote: "… *I sat on this mountain and caught my breath, observing the wildness around me. This was Shangri-la. This was untouched, natural and very free. Gazing at the pair of eagles gliding along the horizon I felt a sense of freedom and thought back to Zhong Dian. James Hilton hadn't been describing a particular temple, town or valley: Shangri-la caught me by surprise, it was a state of mind. A state of mind brought on by a place like this.*" Table 4.11 summarizes three types of tourists feeling state of the mythical Shangri-la atmosphere. It clearly shows that among the phantasmal tourists (12 interviewees and nine bloggers), only three of them thought Shangri-la close to the mythical feeling. Eleven interviewees and seven bloggers felt this atmosphere in surrounding areas. Among the other two types of tourists, eight interviewees and eight bloggers sensed a Shangri-la moment.

Table 4.11 Feeling of mythical Shangri-la atmosphere

Mythical Shangri-la	POT (21)		TMOT (37)		UNOT (38)	
	Int. (12)	TB (9)	Int. (16)	TB (21)	Int. (13)	TB (25)
Agree	1	2	-*	-	-	-
Disagree but to some degree in surrounded areas	11	7	-	-	-	-
Shangri-la moment	-	-	2	3	6	5
No interest	-	-	14	18	7	20
Note: POT: phantasmal oriented tourists; TMOT: Tibetan myth oriented tourists; UNOT: unspoiled natural oriented tourists; Int.: interviews; TB: travel blog; * = 0						

4.3.2.2 Authentic feeling of Shangri-la

Authentic experience has been promoted and emphasized by tourists in special interest tourism, such as culture and pilgrim tourism, wine tourism, literature and film tourism. This experience was also the major reason attracting travelers to Shangri-la. Although travelers' perceptions of 'realness' or 'originality' might be strongly biased, as will be discussed shortly, getting in touch with the 'real' county and meeting local people, seeing 'authentic family life', and unspoiled nature were memorable experiences for all three types of tourists. While phantasmal tourists expected to find the closest utopian Shangri-La in a lived world, Tibetan myth oriented tourists and unspoiled nature lovers were selectively seeking their authentic Tibet and an unspoiled natural landscape.

Most phantasmal tourists stated that the surrounding small villages were similar to their imaginary Shangri-la while the proposed Shangri-la County disappointed them. Only three of them seemed satisfied with the proposed Shangri-la. For example, one wrote in her blog:

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> *"...the unique scenery and traditions in the splendid Shangri-la indeed brought me extremely great spiritual enjoyment. Shangri-la's peaceful atmosphere could be described as spiritual, and with the amount of religious heritage, that seems quite a fitting description." (TB25A_travelost_20061024, Chinese female, 18-25)*

but with the different view, a New Zealand male, in age group 26-35 responded:

> *It doesn't look like a magical place. It looks like any other part of China. The town here, the main road, it doesn't really give the right impression. It gives the impression it might not be what you were thinking of until you get to the lake. Maybe, the old town here is quite different. It has history the other part of the town is quite different. (Interview15_ New Zealand male, 26-35)*

He evaluated himself as quite the introverted person, and, did not mention the Shangri-la myth at the beginning of the interview, until later, I asked a question related to the story, and he grinned with a red face, admitting that he had visited Shangri-la mainly because of its name. He hoped to find out the described utopian world in a lived world because it was so attractive. He bought the novel and film of Lost Horizon before he went to Shangri-la. He stayed in Shangri-la for seven days experiencing the town and surroundings, he tried harder to find the overlap between the actual place and fictional Shangri-la, and ultimately he was very disappointed with the town of Shangri-la but to some degree, he sensed his Shangri-la in the surrounding areas.

> *"There are some parts - like the lake [Baishuitai]- that meets the expectations. And when you get away from the main town here and you see other part, then you think, maybe. Like going to Baishuitai, on the way, you see a lots of villages and houses built on the mountain and hills and the crops and things... they look like what you'd expect."*

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His opinion was relatively consistent with others. According to the description of the travel blogs and interviewees, several places in the wider Shangri-la area were thought close to the the subject imaginary Shangri-la, such as Tiger Leaping Gorge, Baishitai, Napa Lake, Meili Mountain, Yubeng Village and surrounded small villages in these area. The promoted Shangri-la town disappointed both phantasmal tourists and other types of tourists.

> *The town is just another Chinese town. [it is] quite ordinary and mundane. (Interview05_ British male, 36-45)*

> *If ZhongDian is paradise then I want my money back. (TB05A_Travelblog_20061013, New Zealand couple, 26-35)*

Analyzing both the interviews and the travel blogs, seeing 'real' Tibetan culture, lifestyle and 'original' villages, is given strong emphasis. Table 4.12 shows travelers' evaluation about the issue of authenticity. The table demonstrates that phantasmal tourists and Tibetan myth oriented tourists paid more attention to the authenticity issue than unspoiled nature lovers. Friendly and genial residents left a deep impression on them. While 12 interviewees and 14 bloggers thought the area still retained its authenticity, 23 participants and 24 bloggers were quite disappointed with its inauthentic appearance. Twenty-three nature lovers did not mention the authenticity experience.

Table 4.12 Experience of authenticity

Authentic Shangri-la	POT (21)		TMOT(37)		UNOT (38)	
	Int. (12)	TB (9)	Int. (16)	TB (21)	Int. (13)	TB (25)
Authentic	1	2	7	9	4	3
Non-authentic	11	7	9	12	3	5
Friendly resident	10	6	12	18	11	19
No interest	-*	-	-	-	6	17
Note: POT: phantasmal oriented tourists; TMOT: Tibetan myth oriented tourists; UNOT: unspoiled natural oriented tourists; Int.: interviews; TB: travel blog; * = 0						

Examples of positivity toward the authentic experience are presented

as follows:

> *I thought Tibetan culture would be just for tourists, I didn't realize that Tibetan people wear Tibetan cloths, like everyday, even when tourists are not around them. (Interview16_ British/Poland female, 18-25)*

> *It is a quaint town in comparison to other small Chinese towns still mainly authentic. (Interview06_ American male, 18-25)*

> *Old Town is still undeveloped, fairly authentic. (Interview07_ Australia male, 46-55)*

> *It was actually more Tibet than I had anticipated. I know this is part of China, not far from other Chinese cities. I know that government has a policy to move Han people to those areas. I thought that would happen here, too. I thought here they may have more Han people than Tibetan, but it seems that most people here are Tibetan. After seeing in most places people just dress up for tourists, here it seems that people dress more traditionally as part of their lives. It is more genuine. (Interview37_ Canadian Chinese female, 26-35)*

> *The town is much more authentic than Dali, or Lijang, which are entirely built up for tourists. I'm glad we get to see it before it becomes another major tourist destination. (TB12A_Travelpod_ 20050919, American female, 18-25)*

The negative reviews of authentic experience is shown below:

> *However, the town was just another Chinese town, bent on making its money on tourism without much to differentiate itself from*

dozens of other Chinese towns. (Interview03_ South African male, 46-55)

The place is fantastic at first sight, but its impossible to say which part is still original and which part has been rebuilt by arriving Han Chinese who come here to overtake the business of the Tibetan people as it is the case in Lhasa. (TB18NA_Travelpod_20080511, Switzer male, 36-45)

It looked brand new, the Old Town is being rebuilt to resemble an old Tibetan town. (TB26A_Globenotes_20050805, British female, 18-25)

Authenticity is a debatable term as used in tourism studies because authenticity is formed by personal commitments, bureaucratic mandates and economic necessities that destination managers face (Fawcett & Cormack, 2001). Tourists also have the ability to create different notions of authenticity with a socially-conditioned quality. A discussion of authenticity arises in tourists' accounts of their experiences and the term has more than one meaning (Cohen, 1988; Littrell, Anderson, & Brown, 1993). The search for a satisfying and authentic experience frequently involves tourists defining themselves and their experiences against other tourists (Pearce & Moscardo, 1986; Redfoot, 1984; Ulin, 1995).

In this study, as interviewees mentioned above, an authentic feeling was recognized by Tibetan myth oriented tourists and nature lovers based upon Tibetans' lifestyle, their costumes, historic buildings, Tibetan architecture, their language, cuisine, rituals, small village in a remote area, and the wild space. Phantasmal tourists identified authenticity as a remote and hard to find small village, with few inhabitants living a simple lifestyle in harmony with extraordinary natural surroundings, far away from modernization. In fact, the authenticity for phantasmal tourists is largely a

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matter of individual affection as there is no such concrete place on earth. The authenticity of Shangri-la is deeply rooted in personal interpretation of Shangri-la. Inauthentic feelings were caused by commercialization and touristy places. Some of the interviewees said that they decided to visit proposed Shangri-la because this place was not yet ruined by development.

To summarise, authenticity is more constructed by the subjective traveler, authentic feelings affected by an individual's cultural background, personal beliefs and values,. Those feelings are also determined by a destination's physical attributes; the authentic feeling is influenced by the destination's physical attributes, which in turn affects the overall travel experience. This finding is consistent with Waller and Lea's (1999) study on authentic Spain. They identified four factors related to the authentic travel experience, which include a) direct contact with the distinctive culture of the place visited, in terms of historic buildings, traditional events, and local language; b) tourists interactions, which means any experience involving large numbers of fellow-tourists was unauthenticated by that very fact; c) level independency and d) conformity to the stereotype of the country. Recently Belhassen, Caton and Stewart (2008) proposed a conceptual framework for the study of authenticity for pilgrimage tourism. They point out that authentic experiences are shaped by the beliefs of, the places visited, and the activities undertaken by, the pilgrim. These three components are interrelated. Place and belief are considered as the physical and social contexts where individual pilgrims negotiated meaning regarding their tourist

activities, and then to view this sense of meaning as the foundation that gives rise to experiences of existential authenticity.

4.3.2.3 Natural attractions

Shangri-la is promoted as "one of few untouched natural places", and this was also the major reason for travelers who wished to experience this unique natural environment. While the town itself disappointed the travelers, the surroundings and attractions within the wider Shangri-la area satisfied the travelers' quests for experience of the unique landscape, outdoor activities and potential for adventure. Phantasmal tourists also showed positive attitude towards the natural attractions that surrounded the town of Shangri-la. Table 4.13 shows the summary of overall experience of natural attractions. Overall 65 interviewees and bloggers were happy with the scenery, and while 27 of those tourists did not mention the natural scenery, only four travelers who expressed a negative view. Two respondents said that it might be because July was not the right season for experiencing scenery. They would come back in another season, because the pictures they had seen online were so splendid. One who had high expectations of experiencing mysterious Shangri-la, but suffering from altitude sickness, did not have a chance to explore, reported a negative view with her travel experience. Table 4.13 also shows that Tibetan myth oriented tourists paid less attention to the natural environment but focused more on Tibetan culture as discussed above (see table 4.12).

Table 4.13 Experience of natural attractions

Nature Attractions	POT (21)		TMOT(37)		UNOT (38)		Total
	Int. (12)	TB (9)	Int. (16)	TB (21)	Int. (13)	TB (25)	
Positive	7	7	6	9	11	25	65
Negative	2	0	0	0	2	0	4
Null	3	2	10	12	0	0	27
Note: POT: phantasmal oriented tourists; TMOT: Tibetan myth oriented tourists; UNOT: unspoiled natural oriented tourists; Int.: interviews; TB is travel blog.							

Quotations from interviews and travel blogs:

Impressive, I've not seen such a big plain, big mountain. I've never been to high altitude before. (Interview17_ British male, 18-25)

As a region, I have seen Tiger Leaping Gorge, which was quite inspirational. It was also well organized and what little development there was in keeping with the nature. Looking at those mountains reminded me of how myths could be created. They were like gods watching over us and they have always been there. It was quite remarkable. (Interview09_French female, 36-45)

I like the mountaineering, blue sky and nice cloud, winding road, less crowded. (Interview36_ German male, 26-35)

Stunning: imposing mountains sheer cliff drops and a very winding road to pass through it all. (TB26A_Globenotes_ 20050805, British female, 18-25)

The fantastic experience is to walk down to the river side, the path on along the mountain is so dangerous and it's something to test you will. You can't imagine how dangerous it was until you experience yourselves. (TB21NA_Realtravle_20060621, Hong Kong female, 18-25)

4.3.2.4 Social reality

Experiencing social reality was referred to by most tourists, especially phantasmal and Tibetan myth oriented tourists. Three major themes stressed when referring to social reality were loss of uniqueness by inconsiderate development, encountering poverty, cleanliness and hygiene problems.

Shangri-la has been developed only since the late 1990s and still remains less developed than other parts of China. One of the motives for visiting this place was to experience pre-modern life before the area was modernized. One of the tourists from London, in the age group 18-25, said that he wanted to see China before it became like other developed countries such as Japan and the USA. He believed that such a unique place would be spoiled by modern development within five to ten years given the rate of current progress in China. He came to Shangri-la because he had been told it is not a well-developed location. Fear of Shangri-la losing its unique characteristics and becoming modernized was a major concern of the interviewees and travel bloggers.

> *My hopes were crushed when the bus pulled into the Zhongdian Bus Station. Town was here ages ago - or better, a village. Now it is surrounded by 20 times bigger modern town with large cement buildings built in the imitation of Tibetan traditional style with hope that Shangri la will become a hot tourist destination, especially for domestic guests. Modern constructions on 3200 meters altitude open for the first impressions of the paradise. One good aspect of material development is that you can get ice cream everywhere; same as we have in Europe. (TB28NA_Tibetupclose_20040424, N/A)*
>
> *Shangri-la is the next in line for being "Lijianged". The Chinese have pumped an enormous amount of yuan into this area to develop tourism - rapidly. And, they continue to do so. We had a great conversation with some road bikers, one who had been here about a decade ago and he said that aside from the surrounding scenery, the place is unrecognizable. And I can only imagine what it will be in another 10 years. It still is much less developed than Lijiang and is more laid-back, but at the rate the guesthouses and hotels are popping up there is bound to be a dramatic shift. (TB06A_Travelpod_ 20071020, American male and female, 36-45)*

One of the interviewees responded to the question of whether their experience of Shangri-la met their expectations with:

>   *Yes and no, the old town is very nice and pretty, but it is very touristy. This is no part. Yes, because the rest of Shangri-la looks like Chinese town more or less, this was what I expected, it is in China. (Interviewe28_ American male, 18-25)*

The fear stemmed from the recognition that their phantasmal idea about the locale was in jeopardy when they find there are similar places elsewhere. According to the data, these people were not only searching natural and cultural attributes of the region, but also spiritual attributes which had been created in their mind. One of the interviewees pointed out that "[Shangri-la] *Beautiful environment, but unthinking, destructive, greedy approach to development. This follows my impression of China as a whole. There are some places outside town close to the description in the book, but it is definitely not the Shangri-la…*" This comment is interesting because the person had some preconceptions about China that he had hoped would not include Shangri-la because of the power of his phantasmal creation. A phantasmal creation can exist within the ordinary and the mundane and yet is demystified by their reality. Preconception, created out of fiction, of course, but part of the phantasmal reality of the traveler, which *in situ* was readily ephemeral. The implication is that maybe the destination planners in their zeal to create the Shangri-la of what they thought the tourists would want to see have in fact overdeveloped it and burst the "phantasmal" bubble these tourists created. The phantasmal destination thus becomes a liminal search path to an ever evasive "truth". The absence of the physical evokes the presence of the phantasmal void and nothingness. Natural and remote places are more likely to become the basic spirits of a phantasmal destination.

Besides experiencing pre-modern life, encountering poverty, and problems of cleanliness and hygiene made deep impressions on travelers as well. One blogger wrote that it was sad to hear the first English word the children learned was 'money'. At nighttime, they claimed, there were many children and beggars walking into restaurants asking for money from visitors. Some travelers sympathized with these people and tried to help them. This experience generated feelings of appreciation for their current life at home. Other travelers perceived this experience as sad and negative. The following quotations express the experience with coping with poverty

> *I noticed two American girls standing at the top of the stairs taking photos. A local old Chinese man, who had been approaching people for money, approached them with a cup, asking for some money. One of the girls asked the man in English (slowly and pronouncing each syllable): "Is thissssss... a donationnnn, are you going to blessssss me?" The man just shook the cup feverishly. The girl responded, "ok—a—y, this is for my blessinggggg." She gave him a couple of coins in the cup and then he suddenly turned around and walked away. She stood there dumbfounded, scratching her blonde locks, and figuring out if she was really blessed or if she had just given money to some poor guy (TB30NA_Lizblog_20060405, American female, 18-25)*

Cleanliness and hygiene problems also affected travelers' experience.

> *Sadly though most people don't seem to have much respect for the environment, and it doesn't matter if you're on a train, bus or just on the street, people will deposit their rubbish wherever is most convenient to them.(TB05A_Travelblog_20061013, New Zealand couple, 26-35)*
>
> *Zhongdian is set on an alpine plain. Lots of yaks meandering about. The town fairly small and dusty. There is an "old town" section which they are building for the potential influx of tourists. Lots of bars, restaurants and gift shops. I think that some of the bars are missing some things as asking for the toilet got the response, "outside, anywhere." (TB17A_Travelpod_20050706, Australian male, 26-35)*

4.3.3 Evaluating the Experiences

To examine the overall attitude toward the tourists' experience in Shangri-la, cross comparison among the data of interviews was conducted by adopting expectancy disconfirmation theory approach. This theory is a widely applied method in consumer experience assessment (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001). The implication of the theory is that consumer's satisfaction is related to the gaps between their expectations of the destination and quality of the destination. If the abilities of the destination match consumers' expectations, they will have positive experience with the place; otherwise, disconfirmation will cause negative view about the place. Pizam and Milman (1993) have applied this theory in tourism satisfaction studies. They tested tourists who traveled extensively to overseas destinations but had never traveled to Spain, and confirmed that disconfirmations are relatively good predictors of overall satisfaction with a destination. It is a more effective predictor when the tourists' population is sub-divided into market segments based on reasons for travel. In this study, all the interviewees were first time visitors to Shangri-la and experienced overseas travelers, except one interviewee being a repeat visitor. These interviewees' expectations, travel motivations and their overall experiences were comparatively analyzed, and the details of results are elaborated below.

Table 4.14 shows the overall review of positive and negative experiences. The majority of interviewees and bloggers really enjoyed their trip, and some of them expressed intentions to revisit when they had time.

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While they were satisfied with the natural landscape and Tibetan culture, 'greedy unthinking development' worried these interviewees and bloggers. These travelers feared that development will destroy the area's uniqueness and in turn it would become another commercial tourist place.

Table 4.14 Overall experience

	POT	TMOT	UNOT
Positive	• There are some places outside town close to the description in the book (Lost Horizon)		• Enjoying outdoor activities • (Incite me) Finding my own Shangri La - another place entirely
		• [SL] Definitely more authentic and an interesting combination of Tibetan and Chinese traditions than, for example, Lijiang. • Leisure, peace, relaxation, and suitable for living, feeling very comfortable	
	• Enjoying the natural, wild, peaceful, outstanding landscape • Enjoying the Tibetan culture • We were impressed that in rural parts outside the city communal life appears to remain very authentic.		
Negative	• It is definitely not the Shangri-la	• It is too oriented towards foreigners • It is a sleepy town	
	• The town is bigger than I expected and was just another China town. • The places that proposed to be Shangri-la are far from it, they are manufactured • Fearing the unthinking, destructive, greedy approach to development will crowd the place and spoil it • Disappointed with manufactured place • Not romantic and too commercialized		
POT: Phantasmal oriented tourists; TMOT: Tibetan myth oriented tourists; UNOT: Unspoiled natural oriented tourists			

While all the interviewees and bloggers were satisfied with Tibetan culture and the natural environment, they refuted that the proposed Shangri-la was close to their imaginary Shangri-la and in fact they thought it

was far from it, even though it has a beautiful landscape and friendly residents. The interviewees and bloggers mentioned some places outside the town that were close to the fictional Shangri-la. Tibetan myth oriented tourist showed no interest in the mythical story. Unspoiled nature oriented tourists expressed strong feelings of mystery and sanctity when they went to Tiger Leaping Gorge, Baishuitai and Meili Mountains. Some also mentioned that they found their Shangri-la in the wider Shangri-la area. All phantasmal tourists were disappointed with the promoted Shangri-la, even though they were satisfied with the friendly local people and beautiful scenery, excepting one Chinese female interviewee claiming that she was happy with the Shangri-la town. She said: "*even sit in this small bar and hold a cup of coffee, I had special mystery feeling. This feeling was never happened when I visited other big cities.*" The reason she was satisfied with the promoted Shangri-la might be because she lived in a big city and was studying at a university in Beijing. Korski (2004) indicates that urban Chinese attracted to Shangri-la relate it to their school education which claims that, prior to its liberation, Tibet was a slave state ruled by a despotic lamaist clergy..

Shangri-la fulfilled the tourists' expectations with its untouched natural environment and Tibetan culture. While phantasmal tourists were dissatisfied with their findings there, they did find some places around the area matched a utopian world. This is a valuable point for destination planners; that although Shangri-la is a fictional place, everyone has their own imaginary Shangri-la. This area has potential abilities to match these types of tourists if the planner carefully designs the location according to tourists'

expectations, which is in this case, is perceived in their mind as: "*Only a few people know about it. Here it is a whole county, it doesn't really fit. It is like anybody can come here, anybody can live here and it covers such a huge area. The way it is described before is like a small town, a small village, hidden by the mountains. This doesn't fit the image.*" (Interview15_New Zealand male, 26-35)

Proposed Shangri-la was recognized as fairly authentic compared to Lijiang and Dali, and other tourist destinations within Yunnan province. This could be because it was planned and promoted about ten years later than Lijiang and Dali. The authenticity issue caused travelers concern after they had visited comparatively developed towns.

> *Contrary to Lijiang, however, it has retained much of its authenticity, and we have found ourselves extending our stay day by day, as we merged into the life here, and felt increasingly "at home".* (TB19A_Travelpod_20070821, British couple, 26-35)

This finding suggests that an authentic feeling builds on constructivist authenticity, which means authenticity is socially constructed and not objectively measurable (Bruner, 1989). Wang (1999) also proposes three types of authenticity, objective, constructive and existential authenticity. "Objective authenticity refers to the authenticity of originals; constructive authenticity refers to the authenticity projected onto toured objects by tourists, in terms of images, expectations, preferences, beliefs and power; existential authenticity refers to a state of being that is to be activated by tourist activities" (p.352). Shaw and Williams (2004) modified Bruner and Wang's studies, as "there is no absolute authenticity, traditions are invented

and constructed involving power and social constructs. Authenticity is pluralistic, depends on the tourist and the perspective. Authenticity is a label to visited cultures in terms of stereotypical images and expectation held by tourists. The inauthentic or artificial can become an emergent authenticity." (p.137)

Friendly and happy local people were recognized by all interviewees and travel bloggers. Enjoying meeting new people from different cultures and belief systems was a major motive for traveling, and the existence of genuine local people satisfied this quest.

> *The people who lived in the town and around the area were pleasant, appeared honest and friendly. (Interview03_South African male, 46-55)*
>
> *An extremely friendly, kind and humble people, with a sense of community that we have lost (TB19A_Travelpod_20070821, British couple, 26-35)*
>
> *The people were relaxed and genial. There were many little old ladies that wandered the streets, all bundled up with scarf and jackets, and characteristically had fascia scarves wrapped around their heads. Even though there seemed to be little to see, we really liked the character of the town. (TB21NA_Realtravel_20061211, N/A)*

The travelers positively rated the experience of interacting with local people. The most popular activities were visiting a Tibetan house and having dinner with them, exchanging musical knowledge with local musicians and dancing with locals. For instance, a German couple (TB01A_Traveblog_2008042, 26-35) uploaded their photo on the travel blog site and wrote the note under the photo: "*WHAT ?? Never heard about dripping ham, the world's best rock band from Cologne, check out*

www.drippingham.com immediately!! While my beloved band and buddies back home keep on rocking, I try to hear... [more] dripping ham goes east." The photo showed that they were using traditional Tibetan musical instruments. The blogger had told the local resident about his favorite rock band from Cologne, but the man had never heard about it. They were learning from each other how to use Tibetan musical instruments. Quotes below demonstrate the pleasant experience of interacting with genial Tibetan people.

> *Enjoyed shopping in the ordinary local shops in the old town. Probably the best thing was the visit (my second) to the Tibetan house in the village of Oono. Really enjoyed the mule ride up to the Ming Yong glacier. (Interview39_ Australia female, 56-65)*
>
> *After eating our yak hot pot dinner and having a few beers to wash it down – we walked around the town square to watch the locals kick up their heels and dance the night away. I wasn't necessarily expecting to see a bunch of Tibetans in leisure suits 'stay in alive', but one could hope. Instead it was circles of Tibetan and some mixed in tourists dancing around the square in a 'line dance' style. The movement of the hands and arms were much more complex and there was a bunch of hopping involved. Since I was high on yak...I decided to try and join them...plus the alternative was to stand around and freeze – so movement sounded like the best option. I tried to pick an older local lady who looked graceful to follow along and mimic. All I can say is THANK GOD no one had a video camera in our group! I was pretty pathetic and 4 steps behind the group most times – but I was getting warmer and warmer...thanks to the embarrassment of eyes on me laughing! (TB30NA_Travelnetwork_20071114, American female, 36-45)*

In summary, these findings reveal that the level of positive experience depends on the level of expectations to reality and imagination of destination attributes (see Figure 4.3). Nature lovers had high expectations of physical natural settings and associated activities, such as hiking, biking, trekking in the mountains and natural landscapes, and were very happy with

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travel experiences in those places. They were also mystified and felt that they had found their Shangri-la when they were surrounded by a magical natural atmosphere, which they had not expected before their visit.

Participants who traveled for Tibetan culture viewed themselves as realists, and most of them did not believe in the utopian Shangri-la world. Their expectations were to find how Tibetan people's real lives would be lived under the force of Han people, i.e. how much freedom do they have? This type of traveler formed their image of Tibet based on western media reports and the Dalai Lama's seminars. In this typical case, Tibetan culture was mystified and romanticized in western society (Bishop, 1993), given that a broad gap might exist between the idealized image of Tibet and Tibet in reality. It was assumed that this type of traveler would be disappointed because of the large gap between ideal and reality. In fact, they were surprised by the authentic Tibetan life in Shangri-la, and they were quite satisfied with their experience of Tibetan culture. It was stated that eighty per cent of residents are Tibetan, and had preserved their culture and lifestyle not just for tourists, but also for their everyday life. The gap between projected image and actual image did not affect their satisfaction. The point raised here is that travelers with high expectations regarding tangible destination attributes, or low expectations for intangible attributes, or high expectations for achievable intangible attributes were likely to have a high level of positive experience.

In this study, phantasmal tourists were totally disappointed with Shangri-la, and regarded the proposed Shangri-la as being far from their ideal Shangri-la. Although they had positive attitudes to the Tibetan lifestyle and appreciated the natural landscape, and even discovered some feeling of fictional Shangri-la in the surrounding areas, the overall experience was negative. They did realize that the proposed Shangri-la would not be the same as the utopian Shangri-la, but they still had high expectations of finding a similar utopian world. When the reality does not match the tourist's expectations of authenticity, they choose to blame the reality for not being authentic rather than questioning their preconception. Utopian attributes are highly difficult to achieve in the fast developing modernized world.

Figure 4.4 Overall experiences
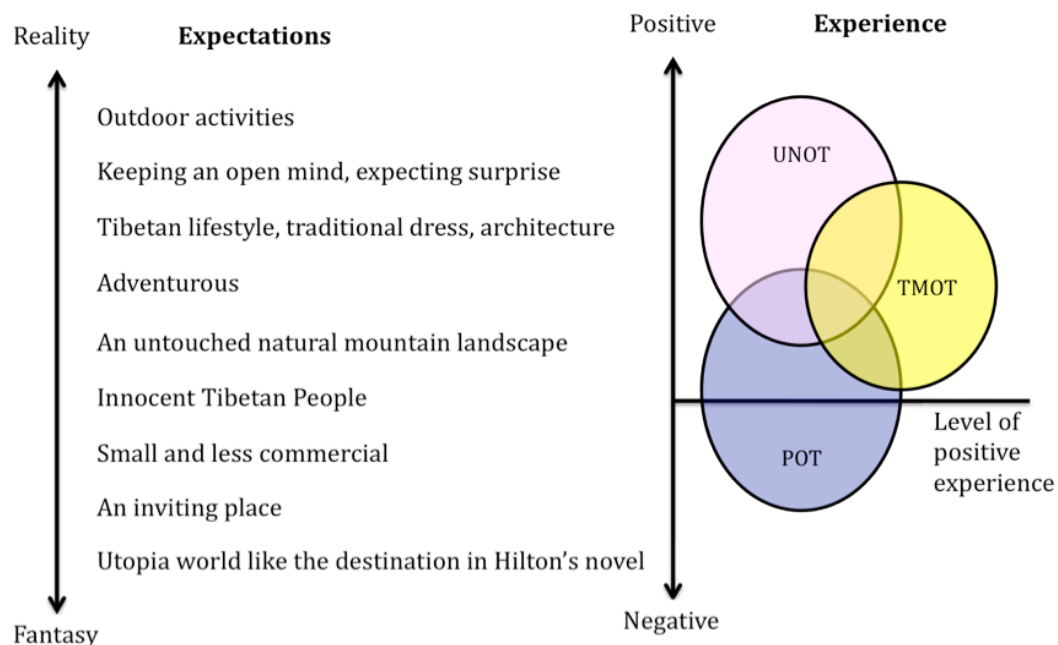
These findings confirmed the previous studies regarding tourist experience. Tourist positive experience correlated with cognitive and emotional expectations, disconfirmation, and destination image (Bigné, Andreu, & Gnoth, 2005; del Bosque & Martín, 2008; Fournier & Mick, 1999; Hui, Wan, & Ho, 2007; Ladhari, 2007; Mano & Oliver, 1993; Oliver, 1993). These previous studies show that positive and negative emotions significantly influence overall tourist experience. Cognitive expectation substantially explains the variation of satisfaction level, however, the overall experience would not be affected by the negative disconfirmation of cognitive expectation if it were compensated for by a positive emotion. Destination image also plays a significant role in overall tourist experience, and positively influenced overall satisfaction. Del Bosque et al (2008) also suggest that emotions may be not only affected by post-experience cognitive disconfirmation, but also by prior beliefs of what the destination could offer. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the role of expectations in the formation of both positive and negative emotions. Chi and Qu (2008) argue that most early research on tourist experience exclusive attribute-level of the antecedents of satisfaction, and it is notable that overall positive experience should distinguish from satisfaction with individual attributes in tourism context. They conducted a survey on tourists' satisfaction through an integrated approach and confirmed that destination image positively influenced both overall satisfaction and attributes satisfaction, while attribute satisfaction positively affected overall satisfaction.

The abovementioned studies focused more on general tourist destinations, and the measurements referred to tangible attributes, such as shopping, activities and events, lodging, accessibility, attractions, environment and dining. The emotions were measured using items of aroused, excited, pleased, contented, sleepy, depressed, miserable, and distressed. Yet no studies discover what type of attributes caused these emotions. Furthermore, people visiting phantasmal destinations constitute a kind of special interest tourism. In this typical case, deeper spiritual attributes were involved. When these spiritual attributes were unachievable, travelers were extremely disappointed with the proposed Shangri-la. Only two recent studies on film tourism discuss similar findings (Carl, Kindon, & Smith, 2007; Connell & Meyer, 2009). Carl et al (2007) examined tourists' experiences in the 'Middle – Earth', film locations of The Lord of the Rings (LOTR) in New Zealand. They found that tourists with low expectations were surprised by the beauty of the landscape and the film set experience, because the natural landscapes were comparable to those shown in the films or imagined by the tourists themselves. Tourists with knowledge about the place before they arrived in New Zealand were reasonably satisfied. Tourists who had expected more to be left of the former film sets or felt that the landscapes did not match the grandeur of those in the films, which were often digitally enhanced, were quite disappointed. Others were also dissatisfied even when there were film set remains because they would have preferred to have a solely natural landscape experience. Similarly, Connell and Meyer (2009) evaluated revisit intention to a film set in Balamory in

Scotland. They identified that the lower the influence of Balamory/Tobermory for the visit, the higher the level of adult satisfaction. Higher level disappointment was expressed by tourists who had higher expectations of Balamory related activities, even though they liked the surrounding scenery/landscape of Tobermory. Unlike the LOTR in New Zealand, this film location had not been organized, and dissatisfaction relating to tangible attributes, such as transport, cost, facilities and activities was high.

As illustrated by previous satisfaction research, attention should be given to what and how types of attributes will influence the disconfirmation of cognitive and emotional expectations, especially in the special interest tourism context. According to the limited previous research and this study, the argument raised here is that in special interest tourism, especially for phantasmal destinations, travelers have great expectations of the intangible attributes of the destination. Certain of these intangible attributes could be achieved, such as peaceful feelings, relaxation, while intangible attributes were difficult to achieve or unachievable, such as the ideal utopian world. Destination planners need to study to what extent the intangible attributes can be made tangible to match travelers' expectations. Tourist spiritual expectations, although highly difficult to satisfy, can be manipulated by carefully listening to the tourist heart.

4.4 INTERVIEWEES' PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND INTERESTS

Tourism is regarded as an 'experience industry' with an increasing number of travelers seeking a more spiritual experience. Study of psychological characteristics will assist in understanding their travel inspiration, expectation, perception, and their travel experience, enabling destination planners to provide a creative tourism space. In this study, travelers' characteristics were examined based upon interviewees' own assessment of their personalities. While this method may likely reveal their ideal personality, it may help to understand their behavior in visiting the phantasmal destination. For the evaluation, five questions were prepared:

> *Q1. What is the importance of myth in your life? Does it have an influence on the way that you live?*
>
> *Q2. Do mythical stories have an influence on your choice of destination? (Do you follow myths when you travel?)*
>
> *Q3. When you face a personal problem, how do you solve it?*
>
> *Q4. When it comes to travel decisions, is the process always the same or different?*
>
> *Q5. How would you describe your personality?*

The following pattern emerged from the participants' responses. Phantasmal oriented tourists (POT) were all interested in mythical stories and were influenced by the same to a certain degree in their life and in destination selection (Table 4.15). For instance, one of participants (*Interview05_British male, 36-45*) said: "*myths offer me an alternative to ordinariness of life… the imagination is fired when you read those stories and it gives me a lift, a new lease in life. I enjoy them but I don't find them*

related to reality. This is the first time I followed myth." Others (*Interview06_American male, 18-25* and *Interview07_ Australian male, 46-55*) thought myths have an important impact on how we live. While Brendan included religion under the category of 'myth', they largely pointed out if a myth is followed by enough people for a long period of time, it could become a religion and for the followers of the religion this becomes reality. "*After all, a fictional myth made me come there.*"

Table 4.15 Phantasmal tourists

	Myth Influence	Traits	Travel Decision
POT	• I don't believe in myths. Sometimes I get interested in a place based on what I read about it. Myth was the main reason that cause me visit Shangri-la • Myths offer me an alternative to ordinariness of life • There are times when I travel following a myth • Myths are more symbolic expressions of human experience • I would include religion under the category of 'myth'	• Adventurous • Funny and fun-loving • Unpredictable • Intellectual, open – minded • Curious • Mainly introverted, but can be outgoing sometimes	• I am methodical but always give some room for intuition. Actually I am more intuitive • Emotion has to play its part, especially in travel decision making, I like following feeling after get necessary information
POT: Phantasmal oriented tourists			

The personal psychological characteristics and interests of this group were identified as adventurous, curious, unpredictable, and open-minded. While two of the phantasmal tourists described themselves as outgoing/extroverted, the other nine interviewees identified themselves as

being mainly introverted but could become extroverted sometimes. They stated that while trying to be methodical and logical when they solved personal problems and made travel decisions, they always gave some room for intuition. Especially when making travel decisions, emotion has to play its part, and feelings take over after finding the necessary information.

Tibetan myth oriented tourists (TMOT) denied any influence by mythical stories. They perceived myth as "*telling a story is a way of understanding a culture. (Interview11_British male, 46-55)*" They were interested in how people actually live. They emphasized taking care of and respecting people, sensitivity, sincerity, pragmatism, action-orientation and adventure, and described themselves as introverted. When dealing with personal problem solving and travel decision-making, they were more logical and liked to plan things, excluding one interviewee who said that she was more intuitive than logical (Table 4.16).

Table 4.16 Tibetan myth oriented tourists

	Myth Influence	Traits	Travel Decision
TMOT	• It is about how people actually live • It's nice in that telling a story is a way of understanding a culture • They have no influence in my travel decision	• Take care of and respect people, sincere • Adventurous • Introverted • Pragmatic • Sensitive	• I'm more a logical person, and like to plan things • I am more intuitive than logical
TMOT: Tibetan myth oriented tourists			

Unspoiled nature oriented tourists (UNOT) had little interest in mythical stories and never selected a destination because of myth (Table 4.17). They traveled more for nature. Their characteristics were reported as:

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being adventurous, intuitive, curious, and sensitive. Most of them thought themselves as extroverted. Only two stated that they were more inclined to be an introvert. They solved personal problems and made travel decisions relying on both intuition and method because "budget is important".

Table 4.17 Nature lover

	Myth Influence	Traits	Travel Decision
UNOT	• Myths influence your culture and indirect influence your morals • No influence • Haven't any influence on travel decision	• Impulsive sometimes • Intellectual • Adventurous • Extroverted • Curious	• I like to use my intuitions, but you have to keep a balance • Budget is important • Travel decision making more depend on your mood and feeling
UNOT: Unspoiled natural oriented tourists			

In summary, all of the 41 interviewees considered themselves as adventurous and curious. While TMOT and UNOT claimed to be more logical, POT reported being emotional and intuitive. TMOT and UNOT identified as being extroverted, while POT, introverted. Although this finding could not be generalized, it did provide some parameters in terms of what type of people are more likely to become phantasmal tourists. This study focused on individual tourists, and as this area has become a starting point for backpackers, UNOT did demonstrate backpackers' characteristics in that they were concerned with budget. They were all independently organized, had flexible travel schedules, and had an emphasis on meeting other people. These characteristics matched the Loker-Murphy and Pearce (1995) study on young budget travelers. Shangri-la is an adventurous place,

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and according to Plog's Allocentrism/Psychocentrism model (Plog, 2001, 1991), these travelers fitted into Allocentric groups and as such share common personality traits, for instance, being adventurous and self-assured.

4.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF PHANTASMAL DESTINATION

The data analysis paradigm proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998) facilitates researchers to develop a theoretical framework from the data. This paradigm underlines the causal conditions, phenomenon, context, intervening conditions, action/interaction, and consequence when analyzing the data. The conditions are the clues that lead researchers to find answers for questions about why, when, where, how, and what happens. Context is a set of conditions that causes individual response through some form of action/ interaction. Consequences are the outcomes of actions/interactions or of emotional responses to events. Guided by this paradigm, an analytical framework was developed and illustrated in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5 Theoretical framework of phantasmal destination
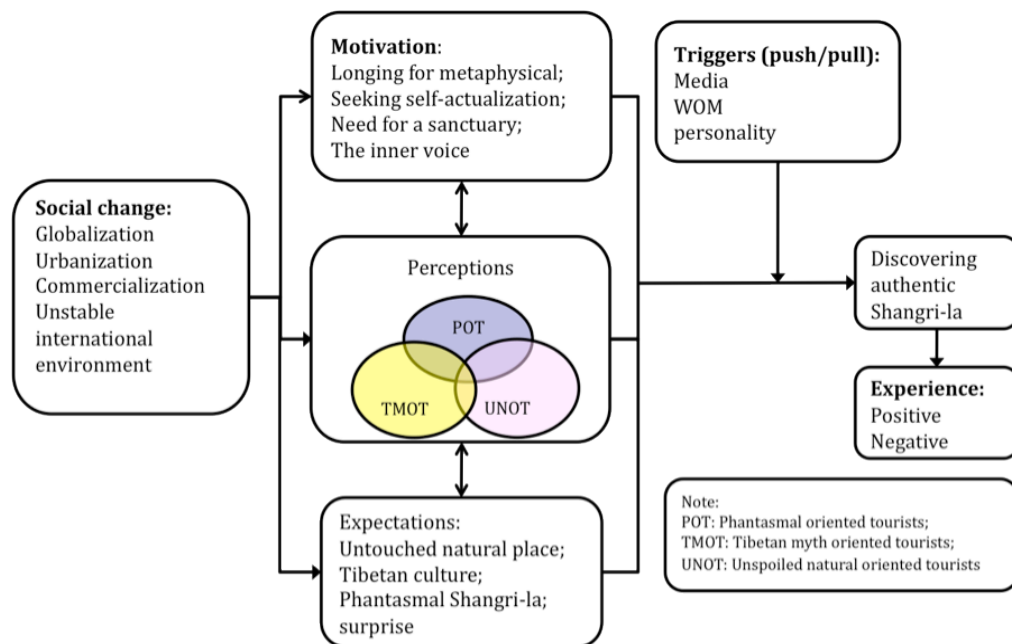
The causal conditions in this study refer to the factors that stimulate tourists' innermost desire for seeking an ideal world, named Shangri-la, a phantasmal destination. According to the participants' responses, the influential factors include social structure change and triggers. Societal changes include globalization, commercialization, urbanization and an unstable international environment. The demographic profile of the interviewees revealed that they came from either developed countries or big cities, and their level of education was college and above, and stated that high levels of technology, skyscrapers, and crowded situations in a big city caused them to feel a loss of meaning and disconnection with nature. Technology, through devices such as GPS and cell phones, can find you anywhere on earth and make people feel as if they have no private lives anymore. They desire to find an ideal paradise for temporary escape. They

hope there is a place that can be preserved in a natural way and not destroyed by the rapid development of the world. This internal desire was aroused by triggers including external media promotion, word of mouth, as well as personal interests and personality. The widespread promotion of discovering Shangri-la, together with travel blogs uploaded by tourists, inspired people that were interested in mythical stories and had a long standing desire to look for a paradise. While most participants did not believe in a Shangri-la that could be discovered on earth, there were still one third willing to seek it and wishing to compare the proposed Shangri-la with their own imagined Shangri-la. This led to the process of discovering the ideal Shangri-la. These respondents were interested in legends and mysterious stories and developed a desire to search for the mythical places described in the stories. The mythical stories had a positive effect on their belief. But they did not see it as being religious. These tourists evaluated themselves as intuitive, unpredictable personalities and more emotion-orientated when making travel decisions.

The phenomenon in the paradigm for this exploratory study is the process of discovering the degree of authenticity in Shangri-la. Motivated by the mysterious and sacred atmosphere and a desire for self-actualization, visitors crave to seek the ideal Shangri-la and feel that the ideal world is calling them. They wish to investigate how similar the proposed the Shangri-la is to their imagined ideal world. They expected to find an untouched natural landscape, a diverse culture, surprise, and the phantasmal Shangri-la. While Shangri-la represents a utopian world, which was created

in the novel of Lost Horizon, an imagined destination, the perception of the phantasmal destination is derived from both popular media and the individual's imagination.

All the participants had heard about the story, some had read the novel before they visited Shangri-la, and others were reading the novel during their travels in Shangri-la. This suggested that the image of Shangri-la was not entirely formed based on the novel. It was rather shaped by the imagination of the meaning of Shangri-la. In this respect, phantasmal tourists were attracted to Shangri-la by the mythical story, however those tourists cannot be categorized as literature tourists. While the interviewees agreed that Shangri-la exists on earth, the image and the interpretations about the paradise are diverse. One participant interpreted the meaning of Shangri-la as a purely natural environment, with blue sky and wild mountains; others argued that human beings are also important elements in the paradise, and believe that harmony between nature and human beings bring the paradise to life. The one point of consensus is that Shangri-la should be a small village situated in a remote area surrounded by a tranquil and mysterious atmosphere.

The phantasmal tourists perceived the place as the Shangri-la of their imagination; they were concerned with the phantasmal attributes of Shangri-la. They were motivated to discover an authentic Shangri-la, and decide how it compared with their phantasmal Shangri-la. As importantly, finding out more about the region had an impact on other tourist types.

Although Tibetan-oriented tourists started with the main motivation to experience Tibet and that motivation compelled them to discover more about the destination, their expectations formed after the initial perception have changed following the change in their perception of the place. For example, some tourists have formed an interest in the destination purely on their desire to experience the Tibetan culture and interact with Tibetans. At this stage their perception of the region was that it was Tibetan and their expectation was to encounter all things that were Tibetan. However, the more they have learned about the Shangri-la myth and/or the natural qualities their perception has altered and caused a change in their expectations. Their initial motive was the same (to experience Tibet) but now there was the mystery of Shangri-la that also aroused curiosity. This two-way interaction between perceptions and expectations was true for nature-oriented tourists, as well. Starting with the sole expectation to discover an unspoiled natural site, they were also seduced by the myth as they found out more about the region and the story behind Shangri-la. The other-worldly atmosphere, the accessible remoteness of the stunning natural beauty led them to wonder whether there was anything behind the myth. These tourists did not become 'phantasmal' as their interpretation of Shangri-la was not the same and their particular interests (Tibet or unspoiled nature) still remained the essential motive, but increased knowledge altered perceptions and, in turn, newly-changed perceptions effected expectations. The overlapped sections in the model depict this phenomenon. At some stage, the majority of participants

expressed a degree of interest in Shangri-la myth and a desire to explore this further.

The action in the paradigm is the encounter between the preconception of Shangri-la and quality of the destination. Influenced by internal desire and external stimuli, the phantasmal tourists expected to find their imaginary Shangri-la. Phantasmal tourists questing for Shangri-la inclined to intangible attributes of the place, such as challenging access, sense of a natural air of mystery, spiritual incitement, unspoiled landscape, peaceful and happy residents. These tourists preferred to stay at a guest house rather than a hotel. Instead of visiting popular attractions, they favored exploring remote villages in the area first. They were disappointed when they saw the concrete buildings surrounding the old town. They observed that commercialization had ruined the area and they feared paradise would be lost, as tourists flock to Shangri-la. While the natural environment of Shangri-la matched phantasmal tourist's imagination of the ideal world, the unthinking, destructive, greedy approach to development disturbed the phantasmal tourists. As one of the interviewees states:*"I was deeply interested in both the fictional story and its possible relation to a real place for a long time. I expected some effort to recreate Hilton's fictional place....If by that you mean which region inspired Hilton's fictional place, then it might very well be here. There are many natural places around that fit the descriptions in the book. However, the developments are dangerously similar to other parts of China."*

All phantasmal tourists in this study confirmed that Shangri-la was far from their ideal. This also has clearly separated them from Tibetan-oriented or unspoiled nature tourists. They were disappointed with the place, even though they had discovered some places around the Shangri-la County closer to their imagination. The positive or negative experience was affected by the disconfirmation of the nature of tourist quests and ability of the destination to match the quests. Based on these research findings, it can be claimed that the natural landscape of Shangri-la has the potential ability to gratify the phantasmal tourists' quests if the destination planners carefully design the area based on the original idea of Shangri-la. However it is impossible to fulfill the phantasmal tourists' spiritual expectation because the Shangri-la is a state of mind for the individual. The search for the ideal Shangri-la is an enduring process. To what extent the quality of a destination could match the phantasmal tourists' expectations needs further investigation.

SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter explored how a phantasmal destination interacts with the realities of a lived world in terms of travel inspiration, expectation, perception and experience of visiting Shangri-la from tourist's perspective. Among the participants and travel bloggers,a minority travel for seeking their ideal Shangri-la. The majority of tourists travel for Tibetan myth and unspoiled natural landscape, three major types of tourists were identified based on their motives and expectations. People travel for collective reasons,

but their primary motive serves as the drive for destination choice. Therefore, it is necessary for the destination planners to understand typology of tourists and what the tourist's primary motive is.

The primary motive of these phantasmal tourists was the belief in the ideal world, and the expectation to discover their phantasmal destination in a lived world. These phantasmal tourists were bored with modernization; they expected at least a temporary escape through experiencing an alternative lifestyle as depicted in the novel Lost Horizon. The intangible idyllic lifestyle and the search for the genuine meaning of life were the core inspirations for visiting Shangri-la for phantasmal tourists. These travel motives may be mentioned in previous studies, but there is scant research investigating why people seek and visit a phantasmal destination. Interestingly, people that travel for Tibetan culture do so mainly for an idealized Tibet rather than the actual Tibet, as is evidenced by the participants' explanations of Tibet. They were influenced by western media and mystified by the real Tibet. This type of tourists can also be classified as phantasmal tourists because of the mythical Tibet in which they believe. People who travel for an unspoiled natural landscape were similar to adventure tourists, but preferred a less commercial and more primitive place.

The perceptions of Shangri-la were different among these three types of tourists. The phantasmal tourists perceive Shangri-la as a mythical and sacred imagined place while other participants perceive it as a Tibetans' living area surrounded by unspoiled mountains, another town in China. The

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different travel inspirations and perceptions lead to different travel experiences. The expectations of phantasmal tourists attracted to the ideal Shangri-la, emphasized the ideal image created in their mind and abstract attributes of the destination. The majority of tourists in this group had negative experiences, except two Chinese female tourists that showed a positive attitude to Shangri-la. Although disappointed with the ideal image of Shangri-la, they were quite satisfied with the local Tibetan culture and natural environment. They also pointed out that some parts surrounding the town of Shangri-la were close to their imagined Shangri-la, but they were concerned that it would be ruined by mass development and become one of the ordinary towns in China. Tibetan culture driven tourists were surprised by the authentic Tibetan lifestyle, and were positive toward the natural environment. They also demonstrated a negative attitude toward concrete buildings outside the old town and the commercialization that impacted the area. The nature lovers expressed a positive attitude towards the place, but they were also concerned that development would destroy the uniqueness of Shangri-la. Also, some mentioned a Shangri-la moment when they travel around the area, even though they did not believe in the Shangri-la myth.

Self-evaluation of personality showed that phantasmal tourists are more likely to evaluate themselves as intuitive and introverted persons, while other types of tourists see themselves as being more logical and extroverted. Furthermore, phantasmal tourists are interested in legends and mythical stories and are influenced in their travel destination choice by those. Other types of tourists claimed they never selected a destination because of

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mythical stories. It should be carefully noted, however, that as the personality traits of tourists were self-evaluated, further study on phantasmal tourists' personality is required. This finding only provides a useful starting point for future research.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This exploratory research aimed to understand the phenomenon of visiting a phantasmal destination and how the destination attributes measured against the expectations of phantasmal tourists. Grounded theory approach was adopted as the method for exploration. This method is characterized by constant comparative data analysis, theoretical sampling and theoretical coding. This study consisted of three stages. At stage one, the secondary data of eight published travelogues and 55 travel blogs on Shangri-la, Yunnan, China, were collected and email interviews with bloggers were conducted. Subsequent to these interviews, on site observation and informal interviews with travelers were carried out. A set of semi-structured in-depth interview questions were prepared following the analysis of data collected during the first stage. For the final stage, 47 individual travelers were interviewed in Shangri-la and places in the Greater Shangri-la zone, including Meili Mountains and Yubeng village, which had been identified by the travelers as being close to the description of fictional Shangri-la. Six of 47 interviews were deleted because of the poor quality of digital voice recording. Finally, 41 interviews were analyzed using the constant comparative process. This is a method suggested by the proponents of grounded theory, which involves ongoing comparison of the data with other sources, including literature. In the following section, first the key findings are summarized and presented. An evaluation of the degree of success with which the research questions are answered is also provided. The contributions of the study are emphasized

from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Finally, limitations of this study are identified and recommendations for future research are suggested. The chapter ends with concluding remarks.

5.1 THE KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

5.1.1 Inspiration for Searching a Phantasmal Destination

5.1.1.1 Motives for visiting Shangri-la

The primary tourist motives for visiting Shangri-la were identified and grouped into three major categories: Search for the fictional Shangri-la; Tibetan culture; and unspoiled natural landscape. The inspirations for searching for Shangri-la were divided into four subcategories: Longing for the metaphysical; seeking self-actualization; need for a sanctuary; and the inner voice. The subcategories of Tibetan culture inspiration comprised authentic Tibetan culture, sociological and Tibet-related issues. Travel for unspoiled natural landscape as an inspiration concerned the extraordinary wild mountain environment and outdoor activities. The inspiration for tourists that travel for Tibetan culture and unspoiled natural landscape were consistent with the culture tourist and nature-loving vacationer typologies (Zins, 1999). The motives for search of the mythical Shangri-la partially fell into previous tourism motivation theories, such as self-actualization and escape, but the motive of seeking a phantasmal destination, such as Shangri-la, has not been found in previous tourism studies. Those tourists were named as 'phantasmal tourist' in this thesis.

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Although the phantasmal tourists' travel motivations were influenced by a literary work, they were not literature tourists because they did not travel to experience their favorite authors' lifestyle or settings described in the book. Rather, they longed for metaphysical feelings and atmosphere. They also differed from culture and religion tourists in as much as they were not searching for a particular culture or a holy land. Instead, they were keen on exploring their own spirituality. They believed that a version of paradise must exist somewhere on earth. In addition, participant responses revealed that tourists travelling to a certain destination are more likely to be pushed by their inner desires. Pull factors cannot attract tourists if they have no interest in the tangible benefits that are offered by the destination. Unless the tourist has plans to travel but has no idea which destination to choose, pull factors do not play an important role in destination selection. For example, some of the participants emphasized that they would not visit Shangri-la solely if it were a so called "paradise". They came to Shangri-la purely for Tibetan culture and its wild natural environment. As Leiper (1990) argues, tourists are not "attracted" or "pulled" towards an attraction, but "are pushed" by their own motivation towards the places that can satisfy their needs and expectations.

5.1.1.2 Factors inspiring people searching a phantasmal destination

The interviewees revealed that media promotion had captured their attention and had stimulated their travel inspiration for searching out Shangri-la. In addition, phantasmal tourists shared an interest in mythical and

legendary stories. Shangri-la is a famous mythical story of a utopian world, which the novel described it as being impossible to locate in any physical place on earth. Despite this, the announcement that Shangri-la had been 'discovered' in Zhongdian, Yunnan by the Chinese government at the end of 2001 resulted in millions of tourists visiting the destination within six years. This finding implied the power of media on influencing people's imagination and affecting their motives when making destination choices. It was also consistent with findings by previous studies on the role of media, such as Berkman and Gilson (1986) and Mercille (2005), that suggested popular cultural media and personal interests have significant impact on tourists' ideas, feelings, and motivations.

Some travelers had been impressed by the Shangri-la myth during their visit to the Yunnan province. Many of them mentioned that other tourists and local travel agents suggested Shangri-la to them when they were in Lijiang. The novel, Lost Horizon, was sold at bookstores and temporary stalls along the streets of Lijiang. This finding suggested en route information is also important in inspiring vacationers who have sufficient available leisure time to be flexible with their plans. This finding confirmed arguments provided by Leiper (1990) and MacCannell (1976) that transit or on-sight markers associate highly with alternative destination selection during traveling.

In addition, phantasmal tourists also emphasized changing social conditions in the context of globalization. They maintained that the rapid

development of urbanization and commercialization had changed the world into a global village and the authentic eco-environment and unsophisticated lifestyles of the past have been destroyed by the expansion of technology, and the unstable international environment threatened people that live in large cities. The concern about the loss of unique natural landscapes and lifestyles compelled them to explore an ideal world. The idea of Shangri-la evoked their interest in primitive lifestyles and a peaceful atmosphere. These statements revealed that societal change also drove phantasmal tourists to search for Shangri-la. Prosser (1994) suggests that social change has resulted in the growth of alternative tourism as tourism is influenced by people's perceptions, expectations, attitudes and values, which are dynamic and constantly change over time. Wang (2000) also suggests this phenomenon is a consequence of the dark side of technological development, which means while technology benefits human beings' quality of life, it isolates them from the natural environment. In summary, the media, personal interests, word of mouth, and social change were major factors in the process of searching out Shangri-la.

5.1.2 Perceptions and Expectations of the Phantasmal Destination

5.1.2.1 Identification of a phantasmal destination

The concept of phantasmal destination is underpinned by the theory of imaginative geography. According to the theory of imaginative geography, people create or reconstruct a space and place based on their imagination (Aitken & Valentine, 2006; Crang, 1999; Driver, 1999) and deliver their

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ideas through the power of language (Dann, 1996), such as in literary works or films. Consequently, the imaginary places are acceptable to people who share a similar physical and psychological profile. The individual's imagination cannot be isolated from one's social environment and is highly rooted in one's cultural value system (Crang, 1998; Driver, 1999), and hence, there must be a group of people that share a common perception and value of the imaginary place. Shangri-la is a typical case of a phantasmal destination. The meaning of Shangri-la was interpreted as a small peaceful village within a sacred and mysterious atmosphere. The phantasmal tourists emphasized comfort, safety, and a good balance between nature and human beings. The location of Shangri-la was expected to be situated in a remote unspoiled natural place with open space, and protected by mountains. It had to be a memorable place and give one a feeling of arriving home. This place could be a state of mind ,which drives one to search one's entire lifetime. This finding demonstrated that a phantasmal destination could be a new type of tourist place, and although it is a product of people's imagination and therefore may be difficult to present in a physical place, it provides an opportunity for destination planners to reconstruct the image of a destination for the target market.

5.1.2.2 Perception of Shangri-la

According to promotional documents, the projected images of Shangri-la are "heaven on earth", "paradise", "the original place of description in the novel of Lost Horizon", "unspoiled natural landscape", and

"innocence". However, these images were not recognized by all the travelers, only phantasmal tourists were attracted by these images of the fictional Shangri-la. Most travelers perceived Shangri-la as either a substitute for Tibet or one of the few untouched natural landscapes left on earth.

The phantasmal tourists' perception of Shangri-la was divided into six categories: Challenging but accessible; a sense of a natural air of mystery; a place that incites spirituality; endearing aspects of remoteness and primitiveness; a landscape unspoiled by development; and a simple peaceful lifestyle present in a small village. These images were formed purely based on literature descriptions and tourists' own imagination. Consequently, the perceptions of Shangri-la were also associated with the travelers' own cultural belief. This finding is supported by imaginative geographers' arguments that space and place around us are the results of individual subjective imagination as well as involvement in a social belief system (Aitken & Valentine, 2006; Crang, 1999; Driver, 1999). Driver (1999) argues that imaginary perceptions could "be regarded as 'real', not because they reproduce the world accurately, but because they reflected and sustained people's imagination of that world; and in turn, helped to influence the worlds we still inhabit" (p. 212). Sack (1992) also proposes that space and place are integrated by physical natural force, social relations force, such as social, economic, and political forces, and by meaning created by human beings.

Moreover, according to the Tibetan culture oriented tourists' responses, Tibet was mythologized as an offshoot of a phantasmal destination. This conclusion was derived from those participants' perceptions and expectations of Tibet as an independent spiritual kingdom, and opposite of the modern world. Tibetans were still living in a primitive community, and their cultural value system was spiritually oriented rather than being material. These perceptions mainly stemmed from Western media and the claims of the exiled government of Tibet. This finding corresponds with Bishop (1989) and Lopez (1998) who argue that Tibet was a land of mystery for the West because it never became a European colony, becoming mythologized in Western dreaming.

Those tourists expected to experience the authentic Tibet in Shangri-la, however, the actuality of modern Tibet disappointed some of these Tibetan culture oriented tourists. They felt that Tibet had been invaded by the material world when they saw the monks using mobile phones and driving sports cars, girls dressed up in traditional Tibetan costumes to pose in tourist photos in exchange for money, and tour guides who lied to tourists for financial gain. In light of those realities, the tourists concluded that Tibet had lost its authenticity. In this respect, the authentic Tibet, which was supposed to have been lost, was purely an imaginary Tibet rather than the actual physical Tibet, and hence the real Tibet became a phantasmal destination.

5.1.2.3 Multiple sides of a destination

According to different tourists' varied perceptions, Shangri-la is perceived as multiple destinations in one place reflecting the participants' primary motives, which were phantasmal destination, mysterious Tibet, or an unspoiled natural landscape. However, the three perceptions of Shangri-la overlapped. While phantasmal tourists appreciated the Tibetan culture and untouched natural environment, some of Tibetan culture oriented tourists and nature lovers also sensed the feeling of a paradise-like atmosphere in the surrounding areas of Shangri-la town, but claimed there were no signs indicating where Shangri-la actually was. This finding provides the valuable insight for destination management organizations that Shangri-la and its surrounding areas have the potential ability to become a tourist imagined paradise.

5.1.2.4 Expectations of Shangri-la

The participants' expectations of Shangri-la essentially stemmed from pictures uploaded online by other travelers, travel guidebooks and word-of-mouth. According to the interviewee's descriptions of their expectations before visiting, expectations fall into four categories: an expectation of exploring a similar atmosphere to described Shangri-la; expecting to experience real Tibetan culture; expecting to experience a remote town with an unspoiled natural landscape; and expecting nothing other than surprise.

The interviewees that were attracted by the mythical Shangri-la, based their expectations on the imagined purity of the world created in the novel, Lost Horizon. These expectations were more related to spiritual enjoyment, feelings of harmony between human beings and nature, and an atmosphere of mystery and sacredness. The interviewees who expected to experience real Tibetan culture, focused on the primitive Tibetan lifestyle, social customs, Tibetan food, dance, and arts. They were also concerned with the political issues related to Tibet, wanting to confirm the perceived facts of Tibetan issues that they had learnt from western media and the Dalai Lama. The participants who expected a remote town with an untouched natural landscape were more concerned with the outdoor activities, photography, attractions, and quiet non-touristy places. Some interviewees stated that they expected nothing because they enjoyed the feeling of surprise. These interviewees wanted to keep an open mind, and were prepared to accept whatever they would see and experience. In addition to their various perceptions and expectations, their motivations were varied.

5.1.2.5 Factors influencing the perceptions of a phantasmal destination

The phantasmal tourists' perceptions of Shangri-la were in contrast to their everyday living environment. This conclusion is derived from the reasons that those tourists offered during the interviews. They lived and worked in large cities, where skyscrapers, the noise and air pollution, together with the pressures from social relationships and work forced them to escape to a remote, tranquil and small place for at least some temporary

respite. The idea of Shangri-la and its projected images matched their innermost desires to move away from their chaotic and complicated reality. For that reason, social change, popular cultural media, personal feelings, and motivations were essential factors influencing the perception of a phantasmal destination. These results were in consensus with previous destination image studies. Baloglu and McCleary (1999b) suggest that the meaning of a destination results from a visitor's reinterpretation of received messages, although the meanings may sometimes have little relation to the reality of the attraction they encounter (Campbell, 1994; Voase, 2002). The images of a destination are affected by one's internal motives, memories, and concerns (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2002; Young, 1999b).

5.1.3 Overall Experience of the Phantasmal Destination

5.1.3.1 Overall experience of Shangri-la

The ways of experiencing and observing Shangri-la differed substantially among the three types of travelers. Phantasmal tourists carefully sought and constantly compared the proposed Shangri-la with their imaginary Shangri-la, which was derived from the description in the novel. They observed residents' daily life, ate western food at cafes, and visited the monastery and well known attractions. Tibetan myth oriented tourists visited the monastery and actively interacted with Tibetan families and acquainted themselves with the local customs, such as joining the local daily dancing in the evening. They ate Tibetan food, such as Yak meat, drank Tibetan butter tea, and enjoyed the Tibetan handicrafts, architecture, costumes and music.

They attempted to ascertain if the Chinese soldiers around the area threatened or attempted to control the Tibetans. They also visited well known attractions. Nature lovers' primary on site activities were biking and hiking in the mountains, and horse-riding at farmlands. Experiencing Tibetan culture was an additional activity provided they had available time. Their onsite activities were quite consistent with their travel motivations and expectations. However, several nature lovers stressed that their interests were altered by the atmosphere of mythical Shangri-la. Their feelings of serendipity were aroused during hiking in the wild, natural landscapes. They were impressed with the authentic houses that were scattered over the mountains and the frugal, natural lifestyles of the locals. Although their primary travel motives did not involve the Shangri-la myth, their connection to both the myth and the place was somewhat altered as a result of these experiences. This finding suggests that destination is not only shaped by the individual traveler, but that the atmosphere of the destination, in turn, also influences that tourist's perception and motivation. Löfgren (1999) suggests that vacationing might be seen as a cultural laboratory where people are able to experiment with new aspects of their identities, their social relations, or their interaction with nature, and also to use important cultural skills of daydreaming and mind travel.

5.1.3.2 Evaluating the experiences

The travel experiences in Shangri-la were evaluated and categorized into four properties: Feeling of the mythical Shangri-la atmosphere; an

authentic feeling of Shangri-la; natural attractions; and social reality. The subcategories for each of these properties were then identified. Feeling of the mythical Shangri-la atmosphere included the experience of fictional Shangri-la and the Shangri-la moment. An authentic feeling of Shangri-la included experiencing an authentic Tibetan town, friendly and pleasant Tibetans, memorable Tibetan dancing, and an unspoiled natural landscape. Natural attractions included natural beauty and diverse outdoor activities, and the sub-category of social reality included cleanliness and hygiene issues, coping with poverty and a concern that the area would be modernized.

The travelers evaluated their experience of Shangri-la in a way that was more concerned with intangible attributes rather than tangible attributes. Primitive lifestyle, sacred feelings, sense of mystery and remoteness, and authenticity were ranked as major experiences for these travelers. The atmosphere of fictional Shangri-la was not expected nor appreciated by the Tibetan myth and nature oriented tourists. However, the concept of Shangri-la seems to have existed in their subconscious, and incited a Shangri-la moment when exploring Shangri-la and its surroundings.

The overall positive tourist experience indicates that tourists would either return to the destination or recommend it to their friends and / or others. This is both a valuable insight for tourism research and a major concern for destination management organizations. This study found that, although some attributes disappointed these travelers, the overall positive experience was high for Tibetan myth oriented tourists and nature lovers.

Conversely, phantasmal tourists were dissatisfied with the proposed Shangri-la, which had been promoted as 'heaven on earth'. The positive attitude to the destination was identified by the travelers as follows:

- *Enjoying outdoor activities*

- *(incite me) Finding my own Shangri La - another place entirely*

- *[SL] Definitely more authentic and an interesting combination of Tibetan and Chinese traditions than, for example, Lijiang.*

- *Leisure, peace, relaxation, and suitable for living, feeling very comfortable*

- *Enjoying the natural, wild, peaceful, outstanding landscape*

- *Enjoying Tibetan culture*

- *We were impressed that in rural parts outside the city communal life appears to remain very authentic.*

- *There are some places outside town close to the description in the book (Lost Horizon)*

The negative attitude to the destination included:

- *It is too oriented towards foreigners*

- *It is a sleepy town*

- *The town is bigger than I expected and was just another Chinese town.*

- *The places that proposed to be Shangri-la are far from it, they are manufactured*

- *Fearing the unthinking, destructive, greedy approach to development will crowd the place and spoil it*

- *Disappointed with the manufactured place*

- *It is definitely not Shangri-la*

● *Not romantic and too commercialized*

Based on the interviewees' evaluation, the negative feeling towards Shangri-la was affected by tangible attributes such as the modern buildings that surrounded the town, and the shops in the old town which made the tourists feel as if they'd walked into a shopping mall. These travelers were seeking a natural, authentic world. Their overall positive experience was more related to non-material spiritual feelings rather than material products, and those travelers preferred to stay in a guesthouse, which was located in the Dukezong Ancient Town, also known as "Old Town". The guesthouse looked like an old fashioned Tibetan house, and although the condition of the accommodation was not as comfortable as the hotels, it gave the appearance of being unspoiled by modernization. To meet travelers' needs of intangible attributes is highly difficult work for destination planners because it is impossible to create intangible attributes which satisfy all travelers. However, intangible attributes can be manipulated to satisfy travelers and this suggests that destination planners need to investigate the achievable intangible elements for maximizing tourists' overall positive experience.

5.1.4 The Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework presented in this study was developed according to the overall findings and guided by the data analysis paradigm. This framework illustrated the process of tourists searching for a phantasmal destination through their travel inspirations, perceptions, expectations, and experiences. The factors that influenced the search process were identified as

social change and triggers of media, word of mouth, and personality. This framework suggests that the phenomenon of phantasmal tourism is affected by both external stimuli, such as urbanization and commercialization, and personal factors, i.e. personality. In addition, travel motives, perception, and expectation interactively affected each other and together influenced the overall travel experience. The relationship between each concept is also consistent with previous tourism studies, such as Ateljevic (2000), Baloglu and McCleary (1999b), Chi and Qu (2008), Graefe and Vaske (1987), Young (1999b). These studies have empirically examined the relationships between constructs of tourist motivation, perception, expectation and experience, respectively.

5.2 ACHIEVEMENT OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study was to investigate, and thereby, understand the processes at play for travelers who visit a phantasmal destination - Shangri-la, Yunnan province in China. Adopting grounded theory with reference to the research questions proposed in chapter one, the final conceptual framework was composed and presented in chapter four. This framework illustrates reasons that inspire a niche market searching for a phantasmal destination, tourists' perceptions and expectations of the imaginary Shangri-la, and how their motivations and expectations influence the overall travel experience when the imagination interacts with the reality. The factors that source the discovery of an authentic Shangri-la were also

explored, such as social change, popular cultures and personality. The findings of this study answered the proposed research questions.

In answer to the first research question of how and why people visited the Proposed Shangri-la: The findings showed that media promotion initiated tourists' inspiration to discover the idealized authentic world. The chaos of the modern world and the rapid development of globalization stimulated people's desire to escape from their overcrowded environment and seek a peaceful, simple lifestyle. They wanted to explore authentic destinations before those locations were changed and modernized.

The second research question was to investigate how travelers perceived the phantasmal destination of Shangri-la. Six major perceptions were identified by the participants: challenging but accessible; sense of a natural air of mystery; a place that incites spirituality; particularly endearing remoteness and primitiveness aspects; a landscape unspoiled by development; and a simple peaceful lifestyle present in a small village. These perceptions were the result of combined individual imagination and projected image, promoted via media. This implies that the projected image plays an important role in destination image formation. However, destination management organizations also need to fully understand the target market's expectations when reconstructing a phantasmal destination. Although different tourists have different perceptions and expectations of a destination, the findings revealed that certain common perceptions for a particular destination are identifiable.

The findings for research question three are likely to provide destination management organizations with advice on destination development and promotion plans. The concerns of the travelers who visited the proposed Shangri-la depended more on intangible attributes than modern facilities. The residents' performance significantly affected these travelers' feeling of authenticity and overall experience. The challenges for destination management organizations include: a) simultaneously balancing local economic development while creating a phantasmal atmosphere for travelers, and b) integrating the attributes of the destination to match the travelers' quests. As it is highly difficult to meet tourists' quests for intangible attributes, destination management organizations should investigate the level of achievable intangible attributes, and promises in promotion plans should be carefully designed. The theoretical framework that has emerged from this study demonstrates the conditions and factors that influence the process of visiting a phantasmal destination.

5.3 CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Within an aggressively competitive business environment, each destination management organization attempts to attract more tourists in order to increase revenue, and the ideas of reconstructing and repositioning destination image have been applied in destination development strategies. The studies on reinvented destinations are so far limited to literature and film tourism or culture and pilgrimage tourism. The study of phantasmal destination focusing on the phenomenon of people seeking an imaginary

place on earth as a new type of tourist place has not attracted researchers'
attention to date. In this paper, the concept of phantasmal destination is
developed. The perceptions of phantasmal destination, in this case Shangri-la,
were investigated. The dimensions of imagined Shangri-la and items for each
dimension were developed on the bases of published travelogues, travel
blogs, email interviews, and in-depth interviews. These findings contribute to
and complement destination-marketing research in general as elaborated
below.

5.3.1 Theoretical Contributions

The most important contribution of this study is the discovery and
identification of a new type of tourist destination, named 'phantasmal
destination'. This type of destination has similarities to other tourist
attractions classified before, such as, film tourism, literature tourism, cultural
tourism, and pilgrimage tourism. However, although it has similarities to
those typologies, it is also significantly different because, regardless of the
myth that it is based on (book, film or folk mythology), it is taken to be real
by its potential visitors. The phantasmal destination is more a creation of its
potential visitors that is based on a seed of modern or historical myth.
Destinations and attractions that are based on myth (stories or fables) are
distinguished by the fact that visitors to those places know that they are
coming to a physical destination that might have served as the location for a
fiction, but they have no illusion about the event having actually occurred. A
good example of this might be the farm near Dyersville, Iowa, where "Field

of Dreams" (1989) was filmed. In that film, an Iowa farmer (Kevin Costner) receives a heavenly message that tells him to turn part of his cornfield into a baseball field. He is mocked for his efforts, but in time, ghostly base ballplayers begin to congregate on his field for games. A field that looked identical to the field portrayed in the movie was constructed in four days by astute destination managers to profit from on the film's success. Dyersville is a remote and inconvenient place to travel to, however the "Field of Dreams" site has become one of Iowa's top tourist attractions in the 20 years since the film opened, attracting approximately 55,000 people annually.

The "Field of Dreams" phenomenon shares characteristics with Shangri-la. Both destinations are based on a place that is utterly fictional, both have their origins in books and films and both destinations are intentionally manipulated by destination managers to attract visitors. The essential difference is that visitors to Dyersville are not under the illusion that the events depicted in the film actually happened or that the field is anything other than a replica of the fictional movie site. Whereas, the minority of visitors to Shangri-la either believe that Hilton was somehow influenced by supernatural forces that led him to imagine the story or that he was actually told about Shangri-la by an unknown source that had visited there. Unlike Dyersville, in the case of phantasmal destination, the myth becomes reality that, in turn, leads to a reimagining of the myth. This is akin to pilgrimage tourism more than other typologies, as Shangri-la, and other destinations, replace a central point (such as Mecca or Jerusalem), that is generally accepted as the pivotal location for the set of beliefs that are shared

by the pilgrims. However, it can be argued that religious pilgrimage is not a journey of self-discovery or completion, rather an attempt at preparation for the life that is presumed to take place after death. Whether also a follower of an established religion or not, the phantasmal tourist is not seeking confirmation of the next life in this quest. He or she is looking for the paradise on earth – not the paradise to come.

This leads to the second contribution of this study - that the findings strongly suggest there are common personality traits that phantasmal tourists share. The scope of the current study does not allow investigation of this possible phenomenon in any detail. The purpose here is to raise foundations for future studies. However, if research in this area continues, and correlations between personality traits and travel motivations are established, the implications of such findings would be significant both for the advancement of knowledge and for managerial purposes.

The third important question that arises is whether it is possible to satisfy the expectations of the phantasmal tourist. The overall tourist experience has been considered as the benchmark for success in marketing operations and has also proven that positive tourist experience significantly affects tourist loyalty. Previous studies on tourist experience have applied quantitative methods by using single or multiple standards of comparison, such as emotion, desire or ideal, beliefs, destination image, expectation, disconfirmation, and attributes versus performance of products. Those studies have been conditioned by the disadvantages of quantitative

methodology. The measurement scales were more applicable to tangible attributes, whereas the phantasmal destination is mostly created in the mind of the traveler and its main feature is non-commercialism, a concept that works against the goals of destination management. Tourism is an economic, as well as social, activity. The degree of commercialism and to what extent the tourist's desire for intangible attributes can be achieved need to enter into the creation and management of any location. This study shows that, whilst it is bound to be difficult, it is possible to satisfy the expectations of the phantasmal tourist. It is worth planning towards this goal for destinations that have the necessary attributes to become phantasmal, because, like pilgrimage tourists, phantasmal tourists are more likely to return over and over once they confirm their expectations to a satisfactory extent.

Tourist motivation is a vital construct in tourism research and has been studied comprehensively for different types of destination. Past motivation studies have revealed that tourists share similar travel motives for different types of destinations as well as specific motives for each unique type of destination. Since studies on phantasmal destinations have not been found in extant research, the specific travel motives to the phantasmal destination of Shangri-la were investigated, and the findings of this research refined travel motivation related dimensions and items. Ultimately, however, the most important contribution is the theoretical framework of phantasmal destination.

Based on the data analytical paradigm proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998), the theoretical framework of phantasmal destination was identified. This framework provides relationships between constructs of travel motivation, perception, expectation and tourist experience in phantasmal tourism, as well as the influential factors of social change and triggers on the process of discovering the phantasmal destination, including urbanization, commercialization, unstable social environment, media promotion, word of mouth and personality.

5.3.2 Managerial Implications

This study investigated the process of visiting a phantasmal destination, the case of Shangri-la in Yunnan, China. Throughout the qualitative data analysis, the findings of this study provided rich and useful information contributing to practical implications, such as reconstruction of the destination and/or rebuilding destination image to extend the destination lifecycle.

This study shows that the phantasmal destination was derived from the tourist's interpretation of received information. The starting point of the process of phantasmal destination image formation was based on both primary and en route markers, i.e. information sources from news reports, travel guidebooks, novels, word-of-mouth and the Internet. Each tourist destination represents a paradise in which tourists' fantasies can be indulged and satisfied. Each belief represents a distortion of reality, where perception of a destination is considered to be more important than the reality. This

suggests that the same destination might be imagined by different people as a different type of destination. Destination managers can take advantage of this phenomenon by carefully designing and marketing the suitable destinations once their phantasmal qualities are confirmed. This can also lead to better designed and managed destinations which neither insists on the confirmation of the myth nor attempts to negate it. The destinations will also attract visitors other than phantasmal, as they often carry a degree of interest for other types of tourists. In the case of Shangri-la, those are identified as nature tourists and Tibetan culture tourists. Although the latter can also be classified as an offshoot of phantasmal tourism - as most of these tourists were found to be less interested in the real lives of Tibetan people than an assumed conviction that Tibetans and their culture are somehow closer to an eternal truth of living than other cultures.

The perceptions of Shangri-la described by the travelers essentially followed the descriptions in the novel Lost Horizon and their imaginings. The small village hides in the mountains and access is not easy. It is isolated from the modern world, people are peaceful, have a simple lifestyle, but rich cultural background, and appear to be in harmony with their natural environment. This perception was also reflected in their expectations on visiting Shangri-la. It is important for destination management organizations to be aware of the perceptions and expectations because these are the elements which the phantasmal tourist is searching for. Their perception also provides destination planners with clues when applying this idea into the

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reconstruction of the site. Unlike theme park tourists, phantasmal tourists intend to visit a natural fantasy place without any traces of artificiality.

The location of Shangri-la was described as a liminal space that could be anywhere in the world, but closely related to the Himalayan mountains and remote places. Consequently these descriptions create the opportunity for different regions to promote their destinations ahead of the competition for this niche market.

Apart from the travel motivation of knowledge, culture, novelty, relaxation, self-discovery and fun, the key motives for the phantasmal tourists were the search for the mysterious atmosphere and ideal authentic Shangri-la world. The tangible attributes, such as accommodation, transportation, shopping, and service quality were not mentioned by the tourists. These tourists were more concerned with the simple lifestyle, unspoiled natural environment, authentic Tibetan culture, sounds of mystery, and the feeling of remoteness. The destination planner needs to ascertain how to maintain the uniqueness of the destination and meet the tourist's desire and expectation, instead of focusing on aggressive development which may result in the site becoming another ordinary city. For this type of destination, the most significant goal is to develop basic infrastructure whilst also adhering to the natural setting described in original sources. Balancing the mythical destination and the development is central, but also challenging.

The overall tourist experience indicated that travelers who were motivated by Tibetan culture and unspoiled natural landscape were more

satisfied than travelers who sought the ideal Shangri-la. The phantasmal tourists were disappointed after traveling even though they had found some places around the proposed Shangri-la close to the description of the Shangri-la, and enjoyed the Tibetan culture and natural sceneries. In contrast, Tibetan myth and unspoiled nature oriented tourists were surprised when they felt the atmosphere of Shangri-la in the area. This result implies that the tourist desire for intangible attributes is difficult to satisfy. However, there are some intangible attributes that can be achieved by cautious design. To increase this type of tourist's positive experience, the promises made in promotion materials need to be carefully adjusted. Tourists will be disappointed if the attributes of the destination do not match these promises, and therefore over-promotion would cause dissatisfaction.

From a positive economic impact viewpoint, although the phantasmal oriented tourists are comparatively smaller, they represent a niche market that might prove to be more lucrative to the destination than their size indicates. These tourists came for the specific purpose of discovering the Shangri-la that was depicted in fiction, film and corresponding myth. From the responses of interviewees, it was clear that they planned to stay in Shangri-la longer than other type of tourists. If the destination planners focused on the expectations of these tourists, they are more likely revisit the place and will also attract more tourists searching phantasmal destination, as people often carry a degree of interest for curiosity and mythical atmosphere.

The findings in this study might not be generalized, as Shangri-la is a too-typical case of phantasmal destination, however, some findings, such as the phantasmal destination formation, the derived ideal authenticity, and the factors that influence the overall tourist experience can be transferred to other phantasmal destination design and marketing plans.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is important to critically evaluate the whole study and its results when considering its contributions. This exploratory study should be evaluated within the limits of its theoretical underpinnings as well as its methodological issues. As previously mentioned, reality is deconstructed in the post-modern context, there are no rigid disciplinary boundaries and reality is defined in different ways in thought and practice. The objects become representations and are commodified, packaged, and consumed. Qualitative methodology is an appropriate approach to employ to better understand how travelers' reconstruct reality, in turn informing their motivation, and to evaluate whether a phantasmal destination successfully meets this reconstruction. Within this chosen approach, however, there are inherent limitations

The first limitation lies with the concept of phantasmal destination and its locations. Phantasmal destination is defined as a mythical place embedded in physical space. The image of the place is created by the individual based on received mythical information such as science fictions,

novels, and legends. The reality of the place is defined by the individual. The questions raised here is how to define a phantasmal destination, and where a phantasmal destination is located. This concept has not been proposed in previous tourism research, but the concept of the imaginary place has been studied in the field of human geography. The imaginative world is a place made, unmade, and remade by human beings before it is realized. The meaning of place is not something to be found in objects but instead must be understood in relation to subjects. Place and self are interactively constructed by each other and influenced by forces of nature, society, and culture. In this ongoing dynamic process, the self controls the power of place-making and, in turn, place facilitates and constrains manpower (Aitken & Valentine, 2006). According to the elaboration of imaginative place, the phantasmal destination could be anywhere. Based on this, the phantasmal destination is a place that does not exist but is created in novels, films and mythical stories. The natural setting of the location relies on the context described in these media. Other phantasmal destinations that could be listed are Atlantis, UFO City in Roswell, New Mexico, USA, Santa Claus Village in Finland, the Peach Blossom Valley, Middle Earth in New Zealand, and the mythical residence of the quintessential vampire, Dracula, in Transylvania.

Shangri-la is a typical case of phantasmal destination as it represents a symbol of a utopian world. It shows an oriental myth in western society which has infiltrated into the eastern world as well. The findings may be unsuitable for transference to another phantasmal destination. The concept, however, could be applied in destination planning.

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The second limitation relates to sampling issues. Initially, the sampling did not differentiate the phantasmal tourists. Tourists were sampled based on a number of attributes that were determined before the survey. Those were a) over 18-years, b) have at least heard of the Shangri-la myth, c) leisure tourists, d) came to this destination for the specific purpose of experiencing Shangri-la. A number of respondents directly match the above requirements, including 'd'. However, it was soon apparent that some of the tourists that had little or no interest in the myth have changed their minds partially or completely after arriving at the destination. As the candidate was conducting the survey to determine the qualities of the phantasmal destination and the phantasmal tourist, all respondents were interviewed and, later, divided according to their main motivations. There was a clear overlap and the indication was that the experience of the destination could transform some non-believers into phantasmal tourists.

Separately, the samples were selected from online travel blogs on Shangri-la trips and travelers to the destination, but the majority of interviewees and blog searches focused on westerners. This sampling technique could cause the following limitations:

A phantasmal destination as mentioned above is created by individual travelers. Their personal background, such as culture, beliefs and education, play important roles in destination image formation. However, this study did not focus on the influence of culture. The perception of phantasmal destination derived from western travelers might not represent travelers from

other cultural backgrounds. In an attempt to solve this problem, some Eastern travelers were included, such as travelers from Thailand, Hong Kong, and Mainland China. The researcher attempted to interview Japanese and Korean tourists, but due to the language problem, they are not represented in the samples.

Moreover, the samples were drawn from travelers that were in the destination as well as those that had been to the destination in the previous two years. This sample selection left out travelers who had not yet visited Shangri-la but had the intention of doing so in the future. Therefore a significant number of relevant populations that are interested in the destination, but have not had any chance to realize their visit are not included in the sample. It is also possible that the samples are skewed towards visitors that are in Shangri-la as part of their tour of China in general or Yunnan province in particular. The research design was based on the main purposes of the study; to investigate reasons behind visiting and evaluating a phantasmal destination. It is difficult to systematically encounter phantasmal travelers outside a phantasmal destination. Interviewing people away from the phantasmal destination necessarily invite different results as responses would relate to the intention to visit. Further studies should consider including samples from outside the phantasmal destination itself.

This study explored the process of visiting Shangri-la, the original pre-visit perceptions and expectations were not able to be obtained as the sample was collected when travelers were in the destination or bloggers had

already uploaded their account of post visit experiences. The perceptions and expectations of travelers described in this study might be unconsciously adjusted versions which diverge from their initial forms. However, the travelers clearly stated their disconfirmations about the place. They detailed the differences between their expectations and perceptions before and after visiting in their blogs and during the in-depth interviews. Although, travel blogs did not provide the major data for this research, they have offered a useful timeline of development in Shangri-la as the blogs were collected from the previous two years. The 41 in-depth interviews gave the researcher rich informative insight into motivations and travel experiences. The comparison between the blogs and interviews provided sound understanding about the effect of modernization on the travel experience to a phantasmal destination.

Lastly, the data were collected during the summer school holiday and before the Beijing Olympic Games of 2008, when the Chinese government restricted foreign visa applications to China for safety and security issues. The school holidays is a favorable travel time for students and teachers, this might be the reason why most interviewees were university students and teachers. Travel blogs provided different travel times and traveler demographics, although there was little difference in travel expectations, motivations and experiences between travel bloggers and interviewees.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This exploratory study investigated the phenomenon of people visiting a locale that does not exist on earth - the phantasmal destination. Limited by a shortage of research funding and time, this study did not apply quantitative method to test the findings. However, it can serve as the basis for further research in several directions.

Firstly, the dimensions of phantasmal destination need to be further investigated. Apart from conducting interviews, focus group discussion could also be included as an appropriate method to obtain insight into the meanings of phantasmal destination. A systematic exploration of the phenomenon of visiting a phantasmal destination is believed to be essential to understanding the needs of the visitors and the development of inventory for destination marketing plans.

Secondly, this study took the single case of Shangri-la as its setting. In future research, the use of multiple case studies is strongly recommended. Shangri-la is a typical case and there are several other places that fit into the concept of phantasmal destination as mentioned before, such as Peach Blossom Valley, Atlantis, and UFO City, Roswell. As tourism is recognized as an experiential industry and the three constructs of motivation, perception, and expectation have been thoroughly studied and revealed as important predictors for destination marketing planning, management and tourist experience, investigation of these constructs as experienced in other destinations is highly relevant.

Thirdly, previous studies have indicated that positive tourist experience significantly influences tourist loyalty. The factors that influence positive experience include personal emotions, beliefs, expectations, ideal/desires, and satisfaction with attributes. In this study, the findings showed that the intangible attributes of the destination were more important factors and effected phantasmal tourists' positive experience. Intangible attributes interact with beliefs, expectations, desires, and tangible attributes, and together they influence personal emotions, affecting the overall experience. Dependent on the ability of a particular destination, not all intangible attributes can be manipulated to match tourists' desire and expectations, but to what extent, and how, these intangible attributes operate is unclear. In future studies, achievable intangible attributes need to be examined by applying quantitative method.

Fourthly, the findings of this study identified dimensions and items of phantasmal destination, and tourists' motives to visit this type of place. Further research is needed to validate these dimensions and items.

Lastly, in the light of human geography, phantasmal destination is created by the individual's perception of their cultural value system. Therefore, personality might be one important factor in phantasmal destination formation. Gountas and Gountas (2001) suggest that personality should be a predictor of tourist preference for destination attributes. In this case, the effect of personality on preference for a phantasmal destination has not been systematically measured. Instead, I asked the participants to

evaluate their own personalities. Although the results of the study show valuable patterns of relationships between travel motivation and perception, they only provide preliminary points for further study. In future research, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) can be adopted to examine which personality traits would influence the preference for searching out a phantasmal destination.

5.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, this research intended to uncover the creation of the phantasmal destination and reasons behind the visit. This is one of special interest tourism phenomena. By applying grounded theory method, the dimensions and items associated with each attribute of phantasmal destination of Shangri-la were identified, and the reasons for travelers visiting this type of destination were investigated. The impacts of overall tourist experience were also examined. Finally, the framework for discovering the process of idealized authenticity and the diagrammatic presentation of overall experience emerged. The findings of this study are supported by previous studies and future study directions are also suggested. As an inherent limitation of qualitative research methodology, the results of this study cannot be generalized and therefore need to be further tested. However, the findings of this study can be considered transferable to similar settings of destinations.

This exploratory research aimed to understand the phenomenon of visiting a phantasmal destination and how the destination attributes measured against the expectations of phantasmal tourists. Grounded theory approach was adopted as the method for exploration. This method is characterized by constant comparative data analysis, theoretical sampling and theoretical coding. This study consisted of three stages. At stage one, the secondary data of eight published travelogues and 55 travel blogs on Shangri-la, Yunnan, China, were collected and email interviews with those bloggers were conducted. Subsequent to these interviews, on site observation and informal interviews with travelers were carried out. A set of semi-structured in-depth interview questions were prepared following the analysis of data collected during the first stage. For the final stage, 47 individual travelers were interviewed in Shangri-la and places in the Greater Shangri-la zone, including Meili Mountains and Yubeng village, which had been identified by the travelers as being close to the description of fictional Shangri-la. Six of 47 interviews were deleted because of the poor quality of digital voice recording. Finally, 41 interviews were analyzed using the constant comparative process. This is a method suggested by the proponents of grounded theory, which involves ongoing comparison of the data with other sources, including the literature. In the following section, first the key findings are summarized and presented. An evaluation of the degree of success with which the research questions are answered is also provided. The contributions of the study are emphasized from both theoretical and practical perspectives. Finally, limitations of this study are identified and

recommendations for future research are suggested. The chapter ends with some concluding remarks.

APPENDICES

1. Where do you get your inspiration to choose your travel destination?

2. Is there any place from novels, stories or movies you have read or seen that has appealed to your travel imagination?

3. Is there a place that you fantasize about travel to? If yes, where is it?

4. How did you learn about this fantasy place?

5. If you were to travel there, what would be your main purpose of traveling there?

6. What do you dream of doing at this place if you were there?

7. What were the major reasons for the trip to Shangri-La, Yunnan of China?

8. How did you get to know about Shangri-La?

9. What do you know about Shangri-La?

10. What does "Shangri-La" as a word and a place mean to you?

11. What did you expect before traveling to Shangri-La?

12. Has the Shangri-La met your expectations?

13. What were the most significant aspects of your Shangri-La trip?

14. Describe in few words your experience of the Shangri-La.

15. Finally, I would like to ask you some basic information.

    Gender: Male _____ Female_____
    Age group:
    18-25_____;   26-35_____
    36-45_____;   46-55_____
    56-65_____;   66 or above_____

    Nationality:_____

APPENDIX II: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWING GUIDE

Interviewee:

Name		Gender	Male Female
Nationality		Occupation	
Age group	18-25--------- 1 26-35--------- 2 36-45--------- 3 46-55--------- 4 56-65--------- 5 66 or above-- 6	Education	a. Less than secondary/high school b. Completed secondary/high school c. Some college or university d. Completed college/university diploma/degree e. Completed postgraduate degree
Phone No.		Email	

Interview setting:

Place	
Date	
Start time	
End time	

Interviewer:

Name	
Position	
Affiliation	

Topic one: General motivation factors for travel decision

Q1. On average, how often do you travel in a year – domestically or abroad?

Q2. Which countries have you visited so far?

Q3. Why do you travel? (What motivates you to leave the safety and comfort

of your normal existence and put yourself in relative discomfort by going to other countries?)

Q4. Where do you get your inspiration to choose your travel destination?

Q5. If you had unlimited money and time, where would you visit first? Where would you place second?

Q6. What are your reasons to choose those places?

Q7. What would you do when you visit those places?

Topic two: Motives for visiting Shangri-La

Q1. What is your main destination in this trip?

Q2. What are the major reasons for visiting Shangri-la?

Q3. Are your motives to visit Shangri-la different from your motives to visit other places in the past?

Topic three: Perceptions of Shangri-la

Q1. How did you find out about Shangri-la?

Q2. What did you know about Shangri-la before you arrived here?

Q3. Shangri-la came to mean in English language something similar to a "paradise on earth". What does "Shangri-la" mean to you?

Q4. What were your expectations about Shangri-la before you travelled here?

Q5. Has your experience of Shangri-la met your expectations?

Q6. Do you think there is a "Shangri-la"? If yes, where is Shangri-la located in your opinion?

Q7. In this area in general, is there a place or places that fit the description of Shangri-la in your opinion?

Q8. Where is your Shangri-la?

Q9. Describe in few words your experience of Shangri-la as a region, including the town?

Topic four: Identify the types of people who are motivated to travel following myths and phantasm more than other reasons.

Q1. What is the importance of myth in your life? Does it have an influence in the way that you live?

Q2. Do the mythical stories have an influence in your choice of destinations? (Do you follow myths when you travel?)

Topic five: Respondent's perception of his/her own personality.

Q3. When you face a personal problem, how do you solve it? (For example, do you act in a methodical manner listing the alternatives and deciding on the best one or do you use intuition and emotion in your decision-making?)

Q4. When it comes to travel decisions, is the process same or different?

Q5. What is your idea of work? (What importance does it play in your life? Are you career-minded or do you work to live?)

Q6. How would you describe your personality? Give me a few adjectives.

APPENDIX III: FIELD OBSERVATIONAL NOTES

Code:

_____

Date:

_____

Time:

_____

Place:

_____

1. Observational notes:
2. Impression:
3. Field notes:
4. Questions to be asked in the next interview
5. Remarks:

APPENDIX IV: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Dear participant:

My name is GAO, Bo (Wendy). I am a PhD student from the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. I am working on a project entitled: An Exploration of Factors Influencing the Desire to Visit a Phantasmal Destination: the Case of Shangri-la of Yunnan province, China.

The purpose of this study is to discover the reasons why people visit an imaginary place and how their perceptions of Shangri-La as a tourist destination. I would like to ask you a few questions about your trip in Shangri-la. This interview will take 20 to 30 minutes and our conversation will be tape recorded. As a participant in this study, please read and understand your rights below:

➢ You are free to refuse to answer any question at any time.

➢ You are free to withdraw from interview at any time and the tape will be deleted.

➢ This interview will be kept strictly confidential. The tape and its transcript will only be read by me and my supervising professors.

Excerpts from the interview may be made part of the dissertation and subsequent publications, but your name or any identifying characteristics will in no way be connected with your comments, unless you agree to mention your name.

If you have any questions about this study after the interview, I can be contacted by email: wendy.gao@

I would be grateful if you would sign this form to show that I have informed you of its contents, and that you agree to them.

Signature: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

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