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The Hong Kong Polytechnic University
School of Hotel and Tourism Management

Why Do People Travel in Luxury?
A Means-End Investigation of Chinese Luxury Travelers

ZHANG Yulan

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

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Zhang Yulan

Abstract

There is increasing volume of hence attention on luxury travel. Many luxury brands have built luxury hotels to extend the experience of their luxury customers, and the number of travel agents who provide dedicated service to luxury travelers in China is increasing. The significant population of high net worth individuals in China and their interest in leisure travel further evince the potential growth of the luxury travel market in China. While various industry reports reveal the trends and preferences of luxury consumers in China, the question why they travel in luxury style remains unanswered.

This study aims to understand the motivations of luxury travelers in an emerging market, China. The motivations of Chinese luxury travelers are explored by looking into their values and beliefs since values guide people's preference and behavior. The means-end theory explains the causal relationship between the customers' values and preferred products, and it is applied as a theoretical background of this study. The preference for luxury travel products reflects the values of luxury travelers; thus understanding their values helps answer the main research question about the motivations for choosing luxury travel products.

This study is exploratory in nature; thus qualitative research approach was adopted. Two phases of semi-structured interviews were conducted. In Phase I, a total of 11 luxury travel agents in China were interviewed. Questions were asked mainly in two aspects: agents' perception of their clients, and how the luxury travel products can satisfy their clients' needs. In Phase II, a total of 30 luxury travelers who have an individual net worth not less than CNY 10 million (USD 1.45 million), annual travel expenditure not less than CNY 100, 000 (USD 14, 500), and at least two flights in business or first class in their past three trips, participated in the study. They shared their travel experience and the reasons why they travel in luxury style.

Luxury travel agents revealed that some travelers prefer luxury travel products because they can make new friends with people of similar social status during the trip, can display their social status by traveling in luxury, can enjoy the superior service and facilities during the trip, can obtain more pleasure from travel, can have more entitlement to travel arrangement, or can better satisfy their needs, e.g. in terms of

relaxation. The travel agents tend to category luxury travelers according to their travel experience and budget.

In the interviews with luxury travelers, laddering technique which is rooted in means-end theory was adopted to explore the reasons behind their travel preference. The study revealed a total of 20 values which make them prefer luxury travel. Happiness, pleasure, freedom, safety, and cleanliness are the most common values travelers would like to embrace by luxury travel. Based on their different motivations when choosing luxury travel products, Chinese luxury travelers are segmented into seven groups: *Always Luxury* travelers who travel in luxury style as a norm, *Aspire to Luxury* travelers who consider luxury travel as novel experience and will travel in a more luxurious way if their financial ability supports, *Family Oriented* travelers who choose luxury travel products for their family especially kids, *Achievers* who consider luxury travel as a way to enjoy their achievement, *Reward Seekers* who travel in luxury to reward themselves for their hard working, *Status Pursuers* who consider luxury travel as a status symbol, and *Adventurers* who enjoy not only comfortable luxury travel but also adventurous trips with minimal comfort. The findings indicate a more diverse profile of luxury travelers compared with what is perceived by luxury travel agents.

The luxury today will be the norm tomorrow. This study contributes to the understanding of Chinese luxury travelers in two ways: answering the question why they travel in luxury and identifying the various types of luxury travelers. Luxury travel agents and industry players who would like to elevate their service level to meet the needs of the more experienced and more well-off travelers will find this study useful.

Publications Arising from The Thesis

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

“Luxury travelers are willing to pay more for a higher quality of service and customized level of unique traveling experience—definitely a small but very important segment for travel sector to pay special attention to,” said Laurens van den Oever, the director of Global Travel (Jing Daily, 2014). In this quote, he highlights the luxury travelers’ willingness to pay, their needs for customized and unique travel experience in high quality, their small population, and their importance to travel industry. One reason for this small segment being so important is the profitability. Luxury travel products have a higher profit margin compared to regular travel products (Page, 2009). In order to achieve higher profits, industry players make efforts to cater to the needs and wants of luxury travelers who are willing to pay more for some special travel experience.

The needs and wants of luxury travelers, however, are difficult to understand and described as “myth” (D'Ambrosio, 2017). Sometimes travelers know what they want but they are not willing to tell, and sometimes they are not able to reveal own needs. When they approach a luxury travel agent for an Antarctic tour and the tour is not available at that moment because the cruise to the Antarctic usually should be booked one or two years before the departure time, what could the travel agent offer as an alternative? Maybe the traveler simply wants to escape from the usual environment, thus safari in Africa can be an alternative although these are two very different travel products. But maybe their friends just visited the Antarctic and they would like to keep up with the Joneses. Then one possible solution is to make a reservation for the most high-end cruise to the Antarctic in the following year because the reservation itself is worth sharing with their friends even before the visit. This example illustrates that luxury travelers may look for different values from the same travel experience and what they really want from undertaking luxury travel is hard to observe.

The above example also shows that luxury travel agents should understand the motivations of luxury travelers before they could offer appealing travel products. Despite the differences among various luxury travel products, some common features of luxury travel products may match the essential values travelers are looking for and

motivates some travelers to go luxury. By understanding the motivations of luxury travelers, industry players will be able to utilize the available resources to offer those features and satisfy luxury travelers.

The present study attempts to understand the motivations of luxury travelers. The context in where the study carries out is Chinese luxury travelers considering that China is an important market for the global luxury travel industry. The International Luxury Travel Market even launches conference specifically for China as a response to the booming Chinese market (Jing Daily, 2017). This study aims to explore the motivations of Chinese luxury travelers.

In the following parts of this chapter, more detailed research background will be introduced. Research questions and objectives will be stated after identifying the research gaps. A research framework guiding this study will be presented. Finally, the significance of this study will be discussed.

1.2 International Luxury Travel Market

The importance of luxury travelers has been recognized in both travel and luxury fields, evidenced by various luxury travel events around the world. Examples of these events include Luxury Travel Mart, International Luxury Travel Market, and Luxury Travel Fair. Luxury Travel Mart is organized by Artyom Polanskiy who is a travel industry expert and Travel Media which is an agent specialize in tourism related marketing. The Luxury Travel Fair is organized by Condé Nast which focuses on elite lifestyle and works closely with luxury industry. The backgrounds of these event organizers exhibit that luxury travelers attract attention from not only travel industry but also luxury industry.

The luxury travel draws attention from both travel industry and luxury industry because it is the intersection of these two industries (Figure 1). A private jet flight which a travel product is also considered as a luxury product (PrivateFly, 2016). Luxury hotels, general luxury tourism, and cruise are listed as sectors of luxury products, together with other luxury goods and services such as ready-to-wear, perfumes, cosmetics, fashion accessories, wine, luxury automobiles, private banking, and home decor (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2012).

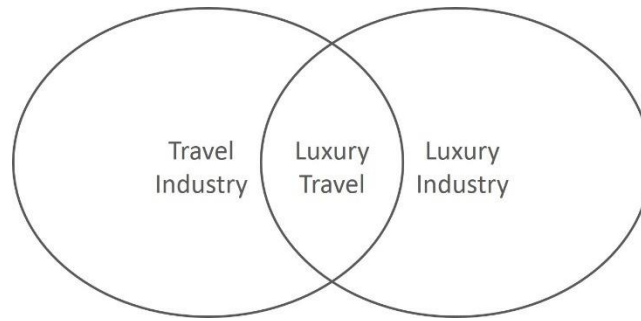


Figure 1. Luxury travel as an intersection

The growth of luxury travel market is faster than either luxury industry or travel industry. According to Bain & Company (2017b), the global luxury market is divided into nine sectors which contain personal luxury goods, cars, luxury hospitality, luxury cruises, designer furniture, fine food, fine wines and spirits, yachts and private jets. Luxury hospitality with a market size of 191 billion Euro is the third largest and fastest growing sector in luxury market in 2017 (Bain & Company, 2017b). It consistently grew 4% yearly from 2014 to 2017 (Bain & Company, 2015, 2016, 2017b). Amadeus (2016) reported that the luxury travel sector had an annual growth rate of 4.5% from 2011 to 2015, which was higher than the overall growth rate (4.2%) of the entire travel market.

The fast growth of luxury travel market is probably due to the rising interest of luxury travel among well-off population. When the old money whose families have been rich for long time (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018) and choose luxury as a norm would like to have experience type of luxury consumption, they may become luxury travelers. Danziger (2005) believes that the luxury customers nowadays are more interested in experiential luxury such as luxury travel than possession of physical objects since they have achieved material wealth already. The way rich people spend their money is shifting from purchasing fancy goods to things to do and see (The Economist, 2015). Other than the traditional words associated with luxury consumption, e.g. rarity and status, words like experiences and authenticity are now also linked to luxury (Swarbrooke, 2018). These customers will not have any difficulties to extend their luxury consumption to luxury travel because luxury travel product is usually the entry level product for a luxury brand. For example, compared with the high-end jewelry of Bulgari, the hotels under the same brand is more affordable and accessible.

Other than old money, there are also new HNWI (High Net Worth Individuals) who refer to rich population in general in this study, while different organizations have different definitions by their investable assets, e.g. one million USD or more (Capgemini, 2018) and ten million CNY (USD 1.45 million) or more (Hurun Report, 2017a). The HNWI who previously enjoyed regular travel would like to upgrade their travel experience when they can afford better service. More customers are trading up for “new luxury” which are expensive but affordable products and services which are better in quality, taste, and aspiration than other products of the same type (Silverstein, Fiske, & Butman, 2008). Many travelers are more willing to pay for luxury travel experience than ever (Gretzel, Fesenmaier, & O’leary, 2006). Some consumers even prepare to upgrade their trips to luxury by economizing in other areas of household spending (Page, 2009). They may not choose luxury as a norm, but they can become luxury travelers if they decide to allocate significant portion of their expenditure on travel. Thus, the fast growth of luxury travel may be contributed by both super rich and new HNWI who spend on travel excessively.

The demand for luxury travel has constantly lead to the increase of investment in luxury travel. During the financial crisis in 2012, luxury travel service and resort was still expanding even the international travel industry was negatively influenced by the crisis (Bianchi & Stephenson, 2014). The expansion may due to the resilient demand of luxury travel. In recent years, travel industry has responded to the demand from luxury travelers by providing more luxury accommodations. Some budget hotels had transformed themselves into luxury boutique hotels, and over 60 new luxury hotels were planned to be built in Australia (eHotelier, 2016a). Hoteliers believe that six-star hotel rating system is needed to facilitate the growth of ultra-luxury hotels (eHotelier, 2016a). Some luxury brands are also expanding their business in the travel industry nowadays. Louis Vuitton Moet Hennessy, the world’s largest luxury goods group, has expanded its business to hospitality industry (Vincek, 2013). The group bought several luxury hotels in order to provide an extraordinary experience for its wealthy customers. Bulgari is operating six luxury hotels in 2018 and will open other four in coming years (Bulgari, 2018). Versace and Armani also have two hotels under each brand (Armani, 2016; Versace, 2016).

More players in this field generate more competition. Simply knowing luxury travelers want a luxury hotel room is not enough to attract and maintain customers.

Why do some super rich start to travel a lot more? Why do some travelers become luxury when they have a higher income? Are there any differences on what they want among different luxury travelers? What they really want may not be simply a luxury hotel room. Understanding the motivations of luxury travelers will generate more knowledge about this group of people and enables the industry to provide excellent luxury travel service.

1.3 Chinese Luxury Travel Market

China has become the world's largest outbound tourism source market since 2012, and the number of Chinese outbound visitors has been growing continuously (People's Daily Online, 2015). The number of outbound trips undertaken by Chinese visitors reached 135 million in 2016; and Chinese travelers spent USD 261 billion overseas, increasing by 12% compared with 2015 (UNWTO, 2017). The growth potential of Chinese outbound market is well recognized. The number of Chinese overseas travelers is expected to reach 200 million in 2020; and the total spending of Chinese travelers may reach USD 429 billion in 2021 (CLSA, 2017). Given its large and growing market size, Chinese travelers deserve a better understanding of their needs, wants, and characteristics.

The well-off population in China who choose luxury as the norm and extend their luxury consumption to luxury travel experience is significant in number. Mainland China is home to 819 billionaires in 2018, compared with 571 in the U.S. (Hurun Report, 2018). And the number of HNWI in China has increased from 180,000 in 2006 to 1.6 million in 2016 (Bain & Company, 2017a). This group of affluent Chinese like travel the most among all leisure activities (Hurun Report, 2015c). The average household expenditure on travel by HNWI was USD 58,000 in 2015 and many Ultra-HNWI own private jets and yachts (Hurun Report, 2015a). Over one-quarter of them indicated their need for high-end business trip service and travel.

Not only among the top-income owners, the demand for luxury travel product in China among the general population may also increase. Chinese are confident about their future income growth and prefer premium products over mass products; more importantly, about a quarter of the consumers indicated their willingness to spend more on travel (McKinsey & Company, 2016). In the future, Chinese travelers are likely to be younger, richer, more educated, more independent in travel, more

connected to Internet information, and more demanding for high quality and attentive service (Nasolomampionona, 2014).

As response to the growing demand, luxury travel agencies in China are providing a wide range of luxury travel products and different types of organizations are targeting Chinese luxury travelers. For example, the luxury travel agency HH Travel, under Ctrip which is the biggest online travel agency in China, offers an 50-days world trip at CNY 880,000 (USD 127,550) (HH Travel, 2018); and Mytour, another luxury travel agency, provides reservation services for hotel, cruise, skiing, and private jet, and real estate service for rental and purchase (Mytour, 2018). Established travel agencies such as China Travel Service are expanding their business to cater for the needs of luxury travelers, and it is providing travel products ranging from budget to luxury. Other organizations leverage their brands among Chinese high-end customers by introducing travel service, for example, Mercedes-Benz cooperated with HH Travel and launched Mercedes-Benz Travel in China (China Daily, 2014).

Chinese luxury travelers attract special attention from industry practitioners. Amadeus, a travel technology company, published a report on luxury travel. In particular, it estimated that the luxury trips taken by Chinese would continue to grow until 2025, enjoying a double-digit annual growth rate around 12.2% (Amadeus, 2016). Dedicated industry reports on Chinese luxury travelers are published by companies in luxury sector. Hurun Report (2016), a luxury publishing group based in China, has been producing the annual report *The Chinese Luxury Traveler White Paper* from 2011.

Despite the interest of industry players on Chinese luxury travelers, the motivations of luxury travel and whether luxury traveler are motivated by different factors are not well investigated. Given the market potential of China and the trend of luxury travel, a research on the motivations of Chinese luxury travelers can benefits the development of luxury travel market in China.

1.4 Luxury Travel and Luxury Traveler

Luxury travel and luxury traveler are two key concepts in the present study. The definitions the concepts determine the scope of the study. The related literature on these two concepts will be reviewed, then the definitions used in this study will be

suggested carefully. To be specific, the definition of luxury travel, the definition of luxury traveler, and measurable criteria of Chinese luxury travelers are proposed.

1.4.1 Defining Luxury Travel

In academic works, there is no commonly agreed definition of luxury travel. Page (2009) defined luxury travel as the consumption of an expensive and high-quality experience, e.g. Grand Tour. He also mentioned that luxury travel experience is associated with exclusive tourist resorts, private jets, comfort, service, relaxation, sumptuous quality, detailed attention, and exacting standards. However, the reason why expensiveness and quality but no other features like comfort and detailed attention are included in the definition is not explained. Scott and Mowen (2007) defined luxury travel as travel to a distant place for new experiences while enjoying high levels of comfort and pampering, e.g. stay in luxury resort or hotels. However, they did not provide the reason why the distance of the destination or newness of the experience is important as part of the definition. Kiessling, Balekjian, and Oehmichen (2009) believed that luxury travel was not defined as the number of stars a hotel has but the tailor-made service provided to every guest. The definition seems to assume that travel experience with tailor-made service is luxury travel, which may not be the truth. These three definitions highlight different characteristics of luxury travel including the high price, high quality, comfort, and personalization. But they neglect other features which may distinguish luxury travel from other travel products, e.g. uniqueness and exclusiveness (Bakker, 2005; Horwath HTL, 2011; Page, 2009).

From the opinions of industry experts, luxury travel carries different meanings while some features are commonly recognized. As shown in Table 1, the features of luxury travel mentioned most frequently by industry experts are personalization, followed by the authentic and novel experience in the destination, and the high standard service or product. The distinctiveness of the travel experience and the recreation from the trip is also often mentioned. Other two features mentioned by industry experts are social and environmental responsibility and social status shown via travel. Some features revealed can also be found in mass or budget travel product. They are comfort, authentic and novel experience in the destination, social and environmental responsibility, and recreation.

Some revealed features can be used to distinguish luxury travel from other types of travel, including high standard service or product, personalization,

distinctiveness, and social status. High standard service or product is usually expensive and can meet the needs of luxury travelers who would like to pay more for better service or product. Personalization can be achieved in mass or budget travel to some extent. Budget travelers can also personalize their itineraries by themselves. In the context of luxury travel, personalization could be service provided by industry experts. Thus, whether personalization is achieved by a professional service provider is one criterion of luxury travel. If the level of exclusiveness of travel is high and this exclusive experience is provided by travel service provider, this travel experience may be luxury. The high standard service itself already make luxury travel exclusive, for example, a first class flight is exclusive. The three items under social status are all associated with other aspects (Table 1). The “recognition” from the service provider is associated with high-quality service. The “feeling of belonging to their own community” can be created by exclusiveness. And the “boast experience” which will make travelers feel proud is related to the whole travel experience.

Table 1. The opinions collected by key words “luxury travel definitions”

Features of luxury travel (number of informants)	
Personalization (31)	<p><i>Well attended</i> Customized/personalized (15) Needs and wants satisfied / surpass expectation (7) Needs for family trip (2) Needs for education (2) Needs for privacy (2) Convenience (1)</p> <p><i>Making own choice</i> Flexibility (1) Independence (1)</p>
Experience the destination (18)	<p><i>Authenticity</i> Local culture (8) Authenticity (7)</p> <p><i>Novelty</i> New experience (1) Wonder (1) Discovery (1)</p>
High standard of service/product (18)	<p><i>Quality</i> Food & wine (6) Accommodation (3) Excellent service (4)</p> <p><i>Perfection</i> Best everywhere (2) Seamless (1)</p> <p><i>Trustworthy</i> Brand promise (1)</p>

	Reliable (1)
Distinctiveness (15)	Exclusivity (9) Differentiation (1) Uniqueness(5)
Recreation (12)	Enjoyment (3) Comfort (4) Pampering (1) Relax (1) Treasure (1) Wellness (1) Design (bring pleasure) (1)
Responsibility (8)	Sustainable (4) Social responsibility (4)
Social status (3)	Recognition (1) Belonging to community (1) Boast (1)

The definition of luxury travel in this study takes an industry perspective, thus, will be more meaningful for the development of luxury travel sector and be less subjective. For busy people living in metropolis, watching the starry sky and lying on the grass at any destination could be already “luxury travel”. However, these “luxury travel” experience is subjective, neither intentionally created by travel service providers, nor the luxury travel experience discussed as the “more profitable” and more resilient sector of the travel industry. Hence, they will not be categorized into luxury travel in this study.

In this study, luxury travel is defined as a trip:

- 1. which involves top standard, personalized, and exclusive travel experience (e.g. fine dining, five-star hotel, business or first class flights);*
- 2. which is designed to well-attend travelers’ needs and wants;*
- 3. which is provided or supported by professionals in the travel industry; and*
- 4. which is charged with a higher price than the price of the majority of travel products with the same departure city, the same destination and the same number of days.*

1.4.2 Defining Luxury Traveler

Luxury traveler is another difficult to define concept and the available definitions in literature may not be suitable to be applied in the present study. Popescu

and Olteanu (2014) defined luxury travelers according to monetary ability: those travelers who have more than enough income and will not limit their tourism practice by income. This definition may be a stereotype that rich people will travel in a luxury way and luxury travelers must be rich.

In fact, super-rich travelers could travel with a limited budget, and travelers with less financial ability could save money and spend a lot in one single trip. If this definition is applied to the present study, several issues may occur. First, rich people do not necessarily travel with first class flights. Their monetary ability does not limit their choice of travel and they are potential luxury travelers, but they also have the choice to be not involved in any luxury travel products. Second, some travelers may have an average income and have minimum requirements on travel, thus they do not feel the limitation of income on their travel choices. They could be mistakenly identified as luxury travelers by this definition even if they will not consume any luxury travel products. Third, some travelers may have limited income, but they would like to spend a lot on travel. They may consume a lot of luxury travel products within what their financial ability can support. Because their income is not more than enough, they will be excluded from luxury travelers by this definition even if they undertake many luxury trips. Thus, only considering financial ability in defining luxury travelers is not appropriate.

According to Bakker (2005), there are four types of “luxury travelers”: wealthy travelers, corporate travelers, lifestyle travelers, and once in a lifetime travelers. Wealthy travelers are those who choose luxury as a norm and they may be typical luxury travelers. The other three types all have luxury traveler experience, but not all are suitable to be included in this study as luxury travelers. Corporate travelers fly with business or first-class and stay in luxury hotels, but may not have strong motivation to undertake luxury trips because their trips are paid and arranged by their company. The lifestyle travelers are those seeking uniqueness which does not necessarily imply luxury. The once-in-a-lifetime travelers may not be the appropriate study subjects because they do not regularly join luxury travel and their way of travel will be more similar to regular tourists other than luxury travelers. In Bakker’s description, the definition of luxury travelers is very broad and thus applying this definition may lose focus of the present study.

Considering the shortcomings of only considering financial ability and broadly including all users of luxury travel products, this present study defines luxury traveler by their travel behavior:

Luxury travelers refer to the group of people who believe in the value of luxury travel, regularly undertake luxury travel, and pay for these luxury travel by themselves.

1.4.3 Defining Chinese Luxury Traveler

The concepts of luxury travel and luxury traveler discussed above clarify the scope of this study. Furthermore, measurable criteria which identify who are specifically counted as luxury travelers in China are needed to execute the study.

In different industry reports on luxury travel or luxury travelers, the definitions or the selection criteria are different (Table 2). Luxury travel was defined by the business and first class flights (Amadeus, 2016), or expenditure on travel per night (Bakker, 2005; ITB, 2016). Luxury travelers were defined by financial ability (American Express, 2014; Hurun Report, 2013, 2016; Luxury Society, 2016; Luxury Travel Advisor, 2013; Resonance Consultancy Ltd., 2016), particular travel experience (Hurun Report, 2014; ILTM, 2013, 2014), whether he is a customer of luxury travel service provider (Four Seasons, 2012; Hurun Report, 2016), or expenditure on travel (Hurun Report, 2015c). The most popular criteria used in these reports is financial ability. However, if the financial ability is the only criterion used to identify the target group, it is more appropriate to name the study as a study on affluent travelers, like two reports listed in Table 2 did (Google, 2013; Unity Marketing, 2015).

Table 2. The definitions of luxury travel and luxury traveler in industry reports

Studies	Definition
Studies defining luxury travel	
Amadeus (2016)	Trips taking business and first class flights
ITB (2016)	Short trips (EUR 750+ per night) and long trips (EUR 500+ per night)
Bakker (2005)	Trip costing more than conventional trips or holidays.
Studies defining affluent traveler	
Google (2013)	People with USD 250,000+ household income in the US

Unity Marketing (2015) Luxury consumers with USD 100,000+ income

Studies defining luxury travelers

Hurun Report (2013)	HNWIs (CNY 10 million/USD 1.45 million +)
Hurun Report (2014)	Travelers who have visited the Antarctic and the Arctic
Hurun Report (2015c)	Travelers who spend USD 30,000+ on travel in the past 12 months
Hurun Report (2016)	HNWIs (CNY 10 million/USD 1.45 million +) or luxury travel agents' clients
Luxury Society (2016)	Top 20% of household income owners (e.g. CNY 200,000/USD29,000+)
Resonance Consultancy Ltd. (2016)	Top 1% of household income owners (USD 400k+ or net worth of USD 8 million+) and top 5% household income owners (USD 200k+ or net worth of USD 2 million+)
American Express (2014)	People with USD 100,000+ household discretionary income
Four Seasons (2012)	Members from Four Seasons' Guest Advisory Panel
ILTM (2013, 2014)	People who visited luxury hotels
Luxury Travel Advisor (2013)	Top 1% of household income owners (USD 250K) or people with net worth of USD 2 million+ (excluding the value of their primary residence)

Financial ability will be included in the criteria for this study because it ensures that the travelers have the ability to pay and consistently pay for luxury travel. The criteria for HNWI's used by Hurun Report will be adopted, which is individual with a net worth not less than CNY 10 million (USD 1.45 million). The number of HNWI's in China is more than one million and is about one-thousandth of the whole population in China. It is a niche segment while the population of this segment is sufficient to make the market size considerably large. Furthermore, using the same criteria will enable the researcher to link the results of the reports by Hurun Report and this present study for further discussion.

The expenditure on travel will be used as criterion because it shows if a traveler regularly joins luxury travel and make payment by themselves. Hurun Report (2015c) only selected the travelers with more than USD 30,000 travel expenditure per year and the average expenditure is USD 58,000 in 2015. Then the average household travel expenditure will be around CNY 400,000 (USD 58,000). In 2016, it is found that the household travel expenditure is CNY 420,000 (USD 60,877) on average (Hurun Report, 2016). The amount is slightly larger than CNY 400,000 (USD 58,000). Thus, CNY 200,000 (USD 29,000), as a household travel expenditure, which is slightly

larger than USD 30,000 would be a suitable threshold for selecting participants. For practical reason, CNY 100,000 (USD 14,500) per year as individual travel expenditure is used as the second criterion.

Travelers who spend a lot on travel activities may not necessarily engage a lot luxury travel experience, thus, the third important criterion on travel experience is needed. Chinese spend a lot on luxury shopping during the trip, but some of them do not have luxury travel experience. Some travelers may travel a lot thus spend a lot on travel, but may not travel in luxury. To exclude the individuals who spend only on luxury goods during the trip and who travel frequently but humbly, one criterion on the travel product choice is added. Flights and hotel accommodation will be two essential elements of any travel experience. Amadeus (2016) considered the trips with business and first class as “luxury outbound trips”, thus, flight experience is used as part of the criteria. Since the tickets for first or business class are sometimes sold out and the luxury traveler may not mind taking the economy class for a short haul trip, the criterion is set as at least two round trips of business/first class flights in the past three trips.

In this study, Chinese luxury travelers are defined as those whose:

- 1. individual net worth is not less than CNY 10 million (USD 1.45 million);*
- 2. individual travel expenditure per year is not less than CNY 100, 000 (USD 14, 500); and*
- 3. number of business/first class/private jet flight of the past three trips is not less than two round trips.*

1.5 Statement of The Problem

Only a few studies have investigated Chinese luxury travelers although Chinese outbound tourism is a popular research topic. Tse (2015) reviewed 80 articles on the topic of Chinese outbound tourism published between 1995 and 2013. The articles are categorized into three themes: (1) destination related, (2) tourist related, and (3) source-market related. Research on Chinese luxury travelers can hardly be found in this period of time. More recently, two luxury related studies are conducted in a Chinese context. However, Nasolomampionona (2014) focused on travelers’ high expenditure on luxury goods but not on the travel experience. And Chen and Peng (2014) were interested in the purchase intention of luxury hotels which is only part of

the travel experience. Both studies did not analyze the motivation of Chinese luxury travelers.

There is not only a lack of Chinese luxury traveler related literature but also a lack of luxury traveler related literature in any contexts. The discussion related to the luxury travelers can hardly contribute to understanding luxury travelers because the data collected are either lack of empirical evidence or from travelers who have little luxury travel experience. Popescu and Olteanu (2014) discussed luxury travelers based on available industry reports and literature review only. Stankova and Kaleichev (2013) investigated attitude towards luxury travel among students, who have limited travel experience and can hardly be qualified as luxury travelers.

In studies about the luxury industry, travel is sometimes mentioned as one category of luxury products, however, little discussion has been devoted to this category. Luxury travel is seldom discussed among luxury studies because the operation of hospitality and tourism business is very different from other luxury product businesses (Lu, 2008). In fact, not only the business operation, travel experience is also very different from other tangible goods. Although there might be many luxury travelers among luxury consumers, their motivations as luxury travelers might be different from their role as luxury goods consumer. The differences between luxury travel and other luxury goods warrants a dedicated study on motivations of luxury travelers.

In both luxury and travel industries, sporadic reports focusing on luxury travelers and luxury travel consumption discuss market trends and even attempt to reveal travel motivation. However, the trends are only valid for a short period of time and the travel motivations fail to explain the reason why people travel in luxury style. The information in such reports provide insights on the trend and travelers' behavior by listing the facts like popular destinations and popular booking channels, which are changing from time to time. Virtuoso (2016), an organization of luxury travel agents, found the top five travel motivations for "luxury travelers" to be: (1) exploring new destinations, (2) seeking authentic experience, (3) rest and relaxation, (4) personal enrichment and (5) spending time and reconnecting with loved ones. These motivations are their reasons to travel but not the reasons to travel in luxury.

The literatures in either tourism field or luxury field provide little insights on the motivations of luxury travelers. Industry reports on luxury travelers are informative, timely, but fact-based without in-depth discussion. Thus, a study focusing on the underlying reasons behind the choices of luxury traveler is needed to explain the growing demand of luxury travel in China.

1.6 Research Questions and Objectives

To date, limited studies have been conducted on luxury travelers in either China or other contexts and in either academia or industry. In particular, little attention has been paid to understand the motivations of Chinese luxury travelers. Considering the need to understand this fundamental question about motivations, this study addresses this research gap by the following main research question:

What are the motivations of Chinese luxury travelers?

There are two sub-questions:

1. What are the values of Chinese luxury travelers motivating their preference for luxury travel?

2. Are there any different types of luxury travelers based on motivations? If yes, what are the types?

The second sub-question lies on the findings of the first sub-questions, which highlights the importance of the first sub-question. Considering the difficulty in accessing luxury travelers, this study also includes luxury travel agents as one additional channel to understand luxury travelers.

The first reason for luxury travel agents to be an appropriate media to understand Chinese luxury travelers is the significant number of people who use luxury travel agents. Luxury travel agents are getting more and more popular among Chinese luxury travelers. According to Hurun Report (2017b), a significant percentage (72%) of their annual survey participants have used luxury travel agents to plan their trip, increased by 7.5%.

The intensive communication between luxury travelers and travel agents is the second reason for the agents being an effective channel to understand the travelers. When these travelers enjoy the service provided by luxury travel agents, they will also need to indicate their travel preference via sufficient communication with the agents. Unlike other service providers such as hotels, who only take care of travelers at certain

occasions, luxury travel agents help travelers to arrange the whole trips thus need to know traveler's preference at different aspects. The study of Buckley and Mossaz (2016) shows that luxury travel agents developed their skill to "project themselves into the client's perspective" and can only maintain luxury travelers as loyal customers by ensuring their needs all met. Their perception of clients is a picture of the large number of luxury travelers they have communicated with. Thus, objective 1a involves luxury travel agents to better achieve the first sub-question.

According to the two sub-questions, the following objectives are proposed:

1a. To explore luxury traveler agents' perception of Chinese luxury travelers in terms of travelers' motivations;

1b. To discover the motivations of luxury travelers by considering the relationship between product attributes and values of travelers;

2. To segment luxury travelers based on their motivations.

Based on the research questions, main concepts in this study and their connections are presented in Figure 2. In this study, the motivations of Chinese luxury travelers are considered to be associated with how luxury travelers perceive luxury travel and how the perceived luxury travel is linked to their value system. The means-end theory, which connects products with values, will be further discussed in Chapter 5. Since luxury travelers may perceive luxury travel in different ways and they may have various value systems, their motivations may be diverse. According to the different motivations, Chinese luxury travelers can be segmented into groups. The literature on Chinese cultural influence will be reviewed in Chapter 4, and how the Chinese cultural background shapes their motivations will also be explored.

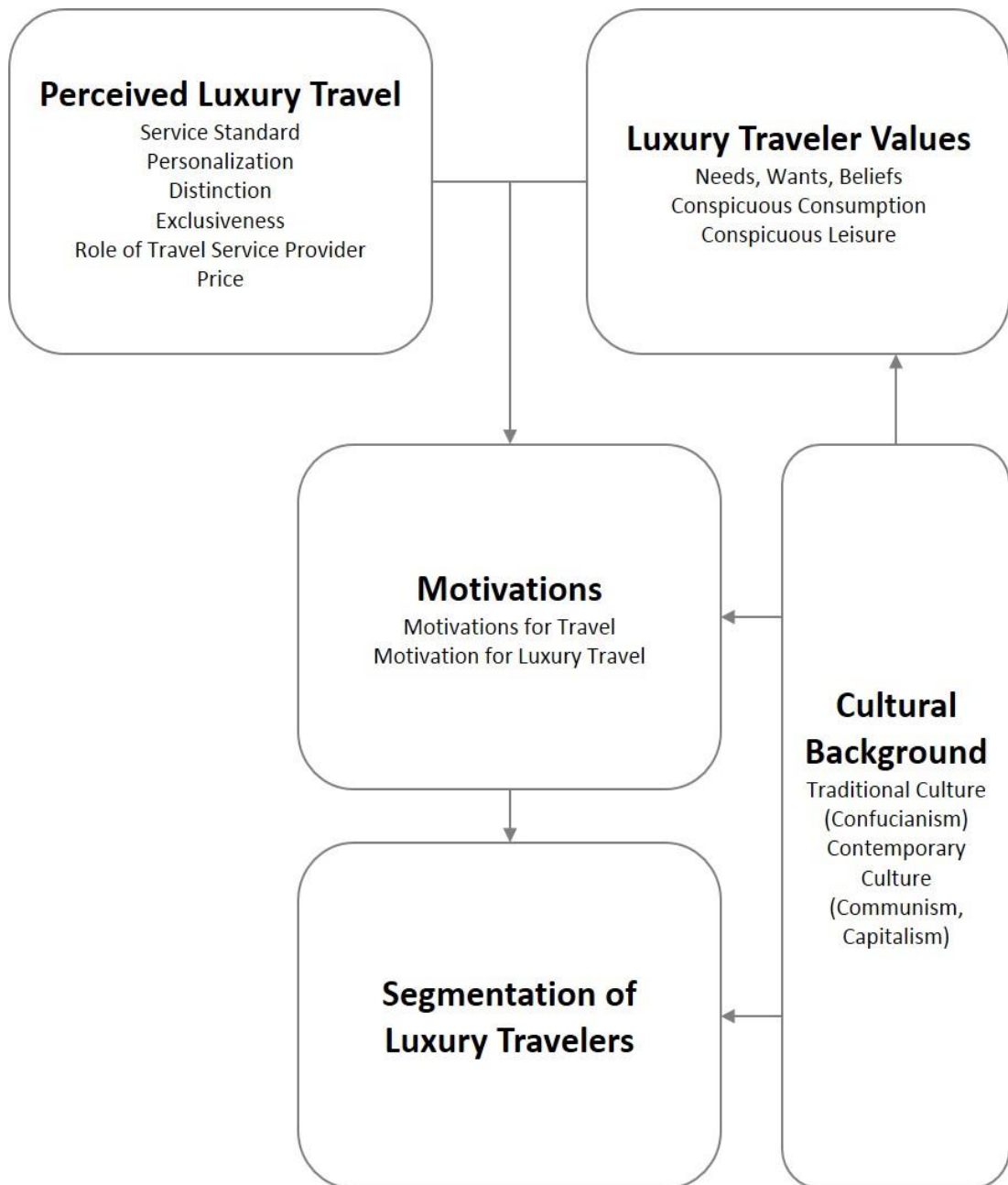


Figure 2. Main concepts in this research and their connections

1.7 Significance of the Study

The most significant contribution of this study is to fill the gaps in luxury travel research, particularly the motivations of luxury travelers. The findings of the present study map out the characteristics of luxury travel products and their relationship with luxury travelers' underlying values, and in this way, to reveal the motivations of luxury traveler. In addition, the study findings suggest practical implications to industry stakeholders, especially luxury travel agents.

Luxury travelers have their unique characteristics and values to be understood. They have drawn attention from both luxury and tourism fields, however, neither of the two fields have put much effort to involve luxury travelers in their research. One possible reason is that luxury travelers are difficult to identify and access. The present study attempts to identify luxury travelers, to understand their motivations and how cultural values influence on their motivations, and contribute to the knowledge about luxury travelers.

This study will also make contribution by exploring tourists' preference for products when the price is not a critical and influential factor. Luxury travelers are able and willing to pay a higher price for higher quality and unique travel product (Cao, 2015). Their travel choice is less likely to be influenced by price. This very special characteristic of luxury travelers warrants a study to explore the underlying reasons of their behavior and product preference.

Another contribution of this study is that motivations of traveling in specific style will be explored. The general travel motivations cannot explain the reasons why some people travel in luxury. The existing studies on motivations of specific types of travelers are focusing on the activities travelers take, e.g. motivations of culture travelers, motivations of adventure travelers. This study could fill the gap of motivations of travel in particular style.

Other than the above academic contributions, recommendations to industry practitioners based on the findings of this study will help the industry practitioners have a more in-depth understanding of their target market and know what luxury travelers are looking for in travel products. The findings may enable industry players to answer the questions, such as, would the 80-days world trip still be attractive if the product is offered to more travelers? With a better understanding on the values associated with luxury travelers, industry players may be able to improve their businesses. For example, if travelers are seeking high service quality rather than exclusivity, service providers can increase the supply of luxury travel. On the other hand, if rarity is important to luxury travelers, increasing supply may negatively affect the demand. The providers of general travel products could also gain benefits from the findings of this study in the long term, because luxury today can become standard tomorrow (Koch, 2011).

1.8 Chapter Outline

There are ten chapters in this thesis. Chapter 1 is Introduction, which presents the background and scope of this study, research questions, objectives, and contribution. Chapter 2 is about Luxury Traveler, which reviews literatures related to luxury travel and luxury travelers. The definition of luxury travel and luxury travelers will be further discussed in this chapter. Chapter 3 is about Conspicuous Consumption in Travel, which is the literature review on conspicuous consumption related studies. The chapter discusses status display as a possible motivation of luxury travelers. Chapter 4, Cultural Influence, discusses Confucianism and contemporary Chinese values and their possible influence on motivations of luxury travelers. Chapter 5 is Means-End Theory, which is the theory adopted in the research design. Chapter 6 is Research Methodology, covering the research design from the research stand to detailed research plan, data collection and analysis. Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 present the findings of interviewing luxury travel agents and luxury travelers. Chapter 9 is the further Discussion based these findings. Conclusions and Recommendations will be provided in the final chapter, Chapter 10.

Chapter 2 Luxury Traveler

2.1 Introduction

Luxury travelers distinguish from other travelers by the word “luxury”, thus the discussion starts with the meaning of “luxury”. After explaining how the meanings of luxury influence the current research design, the literatures about luxury travelers are reviewed. A total of 22 studies about the luxury traveler and luxury travel demand were published from 1993 to 2018 (Table 4). These studies revealed some characteristics and motivations of luxury travelers and also have limitations. A total of 12 studies about luxury travel supply were published from 1977 to 2017 (Table 5). These studies described the effort of industry players on developing luxury travel. The effort reflects some needs of luxury travelers, which can help to understand the motivations of luxury travelers.

2.2 Meanings of Luxury

“Luxury” is a word originally from Latin word “luxuria” meaning excess or “luxus” meaning extravagance (Collins, 2018). The definition of luxury is not universally agreed because it changes over time. The word “luxury” today are quite different from the past in terms of the users of luxury objects, the types of luxury objects and the linguistic meanings.

The users of luxury objects are shifting from the minority to the mass. Originally, luxury is used only by important individuals like Pharaoh or High Priest for religious elevation (Kapferer, 2012). They used luxury items to signal their high status. Today, luxury is no longer only for a small number of persons. It has become a large market with a volume of USD 253 billion in 2015 serving the general population (Statista, 2015).

The types of luxury objects also change over time. For example, soap is a luxury object in the Middle Ages but is a common household product now (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2012). Travel was luxury when most people cannot afford it, and becomes the common leisure activities nowadays.

From a linguistic perspective, the word luxury carries different meanings in different time periods. Historical definitions include lavish lifestyle, costly, superfluous, useless, excessive, quantity, refinement, and elegance; the modern definitions consist of splendor, ostentation, wealth, sumptuous, quality, precious, rare,

pleasure, exception, and boldness; postmodern definitions comprise power, status, seduction, elitism, design, creativity, excellence, and hedonism (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2012). The meanings of luxury in language are transforming from negative (e.g. being useless) to positive (e.g. being excellence). Today, the explanations of luxury in the dictionary only include positive meanings, for instance, comfort, pleasure, and enjoyment (Collins, 2018; Longman, 2018).

Since luxury is defined differently in different time periods, the definition of luxury travel may also change over time. It is important to note the research conducting time of some studies on the topic of luxury travel. The ever-changing definition of luxury should be considered when interpreting the research findings of previous studies and the current study.

The definition of luxury also varies from one perspective to another. Kapferer's (2012) listed six different approaches to define luxury: (1) democratic approach is from the perspective of potential clients; (2) elitist approach concerns the view of luxury classes; (3) experts approach values the judgement of experts; (4) corporatist approach is based on the assessment of luxury business organization (e.g. Colbert Committee, a French-based association of luxury brands); (5) creator approach suggests to consult the creator of luxury; (6) brand approach considers luxury as brands. Within each of the six approaches, different perspectives still exist. For example, the democratic approach uses the opinion of potential clients to define luxury. Different groups of clients may have different understanding and define luxury from different perspectives, e.g. Chinese customers and French customers may bring two perspectives.

When defining luxury travel and luxury travelers, this study takes an industrial perspective because it aims to provide insights into the development of luxury travel service. The definition of luxury travel in the current study is associated with high-end travel service provided by professionals. As mentioned in section 1.4, watching the starry sky and lying on the grass at any destinations will not be counted as luxury travel, although that experience could be perceived as "luxury travel" by the travelers themselves. The definition of luxury traveler in the current takes profitability of travelers into consideration. As a result, one-time luxury travelers, who consume few luxury travel products, will be excluded from the current study.

2.3 Luxury Dimensions

The lack of a clear-cut definition of luxury has prompted various studies on the measurement of luxury. The level of luxury can be measured over a number of dimensions. These dimensions are conspicuousness, hedonism, self-identity, quality, uniqueness, scarcity, price, aesthetic value, materialistic value, experiential value, and usability value. They will be discussed in details in this section.

Conspicuousness is an essential dimension of luxury (Choo, Moon, Kim, & Yoon, 2012; Nwankwo, Hamelin, & Khaled, 2014; Vickers & Renand, 2003; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Wiedmann, Hennigs, & Siebels, 2009). The meaning of conspicuousness is associated with easy recognition (Vickers & Renand, 2003), prestige (Choo et al., 2012; Vickers & Renand, 2003; Wiedmann et al., 2009), and status (Choo et al., 2012). Conspicuousness and status carry similar meaning when they are used to describe the motivation of luxury consumption. However, conspicuousness and status have slightly different meaning when describing a luxury brand. A brand of higher status may not necessarily be conspicuous, and a conspicuous brand may not necessarily be associated with high status (Truong, Simmons, McColl, & Kitchen, 2008). For example, Levi's is conspicuous brand with low status.

Hedonism is another dimension to measure luxury (Choo et al., 2012; Nwankwo et al., 2014; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Wiedmann et al., 2009). Hedonic dimension refers to the fulfillment and pleasure expected from consumption (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). It is named as pleasure value by Choo et al. (2012) and it is grouped under individual value by Wiedmann et al. (2009). Hedonism is the emotional benefit of purchasing and owning luxury brands, e.g. the pleasure brought by the stunning appearance of the products to consumers.

Self-identity is also an important luxury dimension. This dimension means the integration of symbolic value of the luxury products with consumers' own identity (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). For example, luxury consumers may use a luxury brand to confirm their affluent lifestyle. This dimension is also referred as extended self (Nwankwo et al., 2014; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004), or self-expressive value (Choo et al., 2012).

Quality is an important dimension of luxury (Choo et al., 2012; Nwankwo et al., 2014; Vickers & Renand, 2003; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Wiedmann et al.,

2009), which refers to the superior product quality associated with a luxury product (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). It is named differently in some studies as functionalism (Vickers & Renand, 2003), functional value (Choo et al., 2012; Wiedmann et al., 2009) or excellence (Choo et al., 2012). Luxury products must have a reason to be expensive (Kapferer, 2012), and excellent product quality is the most important reason among those quality oriented luxury consumers (Wiedmann et al., 2009).

Uniqueness is also a critical dimension of luxury (Nwankwo et al., 2014; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Wiedmann et al., 2009). This dimension shows the desire for rarity (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). McKinsey & Company (2011) identified four segments of Chinese luxury consumers. One segment, namely “luxury role models”, are young and fashionable consumers who seek uniqueness rather than wealth display.

Scarcity is another important luxury dimension (Dubois & Laurent, 1996, cited by Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2012; Lu, 2008; Page, 2009; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Wiedmann et al., 2009). It measures how rare the luxury product is and how difficult to own the product. This dimension has similar meaning with the exclusiveness dimension (Choo et al., 2012) or accessibility dimension (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2012). Accessibility dimension can be used to categorize luxury products. Inaccessible luxury refers to exclusive models, e.g. limited edition of Rolls Royce; intermediary luxury refers to expensive replicas of an individual model, e.g. popular Porsche 911; accessible luxury refers to factory made and large series of products, e.g. Dior ready-to-wear (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2012).

Price or investment is another luxury dimension (Vickers & Renand, 2003). It is also expressed as the economic value (Choo et al., 2012), or financial value (Wiedmann et al., 2009). This dimension is closely related to other dimensions. For example, the price is perceived as an indicator of good quality and exclusivity (Wiedmann et al., 2009), and “extremely expensive” product has a strong conspicuousness dimension (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004).

Four less discussed dimensions are materialistic value, aesthetic value, experiential value and usability value. Materialistic value measures the perceived importance of possession and ownership of a luxury product (Wiedmann et al., 2009). Aesthetic value measures whether a product is aesthetic superior, well designed and special (Choo et al., 2012). Experiential value refers to the value of experiencing the

luxury goods shopping activity (Choo et al., 2012). Usability value measures whether and in which level customers consider a luxury product as a useful item (Wiedmann et al., 2009). These dimensions of luxury are less studied, probably because they are not distinguishing luxury from non-luxury. For instance, luxury and non-luxury products can both be well designed, thus have similar aesthetic value.

Luxury consumers evaluate luxury goods at these dimensions, and these dimensions are often the underlying motivations of luxury consumption. Conspicuousness, uniqueness, self-identity, hedonism, and quality were found to be the motivations of luxury consumers in Morocco (Nwankwo et al., 2014). Among all different dimensions, conspicuousness is the major motivation of luxury consumption among nouveaux riches in Yemen (Vombruck, 2005).

These dimensions can be motivations of luxury consumers and different consumers are mainly motivated by different dimensions. In the study of Nunes, Drèze, and Han (2011), some rich and status-seeking consumers are motivated by conspicuousness. They tend to purchase luxury items with big logo and are more willing to be associated with the rich than the less-rich. However, some luxury consumers are rich and do not seek status from luxury consumption (Nunes et al., 2011). They often purchase luxury items without big logos. In the study of Wiedmann et al. (2009) study, one luxury consumer segment, namely extravagant prestige-seekers, consider conspicuousness and prestige as the most important luxury consumption motivation. The segment called materialists appreciate materialistic and usability value most, the consumers titled as rational functionalists rates quality value highest, and the segment called introvert hedonists find hedonic value most important (Wiedmann et al., 2009). Similar to luxury consumers, there may be luxury travelers who mainly look for status, quality, or hedonism. Thus, luxury travelers can also be segmented according to their motivations. And the segmentation may help industry practitioners to understand luxury travelers comprehensively.

Among all dimensions discussed above, some dimensions are more related to the product itself or the customers' perception. For example, the price is closely related to the product itself; whereas hedonism is an abstract concept related to customers' feeling. These dimensions can become the motivations of luxury consumers, which means that some motivations are more associated with a luxury product and some motivations are more related to customers' perception. Linkage exists between the

product or customer related motivations. For instance, the uniqueness of the product can be the motivation of luxury consumer, at the same time, self-identity can also be a motivation. The uniqueness may convince the consumer that the product can enhance self-identity. In this case, is uniqueness or self-identity the motivation? Are both motivations? Is the good match between the uniqueness and self-identity the motivation? The same confusion could exist when researchers investigate the motivations of luxury travelers. Different “motivations” could be identified and the motivations are either more related to the product or the customer’s perception. The confusion can be solved by the means-end theory. The theory suggests that the product related motivations can be connected to the customer related motivations. Instead of looking at each concept as an independent reason for preferring luxury travel, the concepts can be understood in chains. In the above example, a chain contains two concepts, the uniqueness and self-identity. The means-end theory will be introduced in more details in Chapter 5.

2.4 Characteristics of Luxury Travelers

The existing knowledge on the characteristics of luxury travelers show that luxury travelers are well-off, and include both senior and young people. They tend to choose luxury product or service in every aspect, and their perceived importance of each aspect is influenced by culture background.

An important characteristic of luxury travelers is that they are well-off. In Plog’s (2002) believed that luxury travel providers were targeting customers with income higher than USD 85,000 or even USD 100,000. The target population may become larger nowadays because luxury hotels and even private jet is more and more affordable (Kiessling et al., 2009), and middle class can afford luxury destinations as well (Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2006). Luxury travelers, even if middle class is included, are still the well-off population.

The wealth of luxury travelers supports their travel activities, but wealthy people are not necessarily luxury travelers. High income enable them to travel in long distance. According to Pyo, Uysal, and McLellan (1991) that higher the income, farther the travelers go. However, high income does not make them travel often. Compared with income, Plog (2002) found that the psychographic characteristics have a stronger influence on the number of trips made. Since high income does not ensure

a person to be a luxury traveler, it is appropriate to include both wealth and travel experience as selection criteria for a luxury traveler.

Senior is an important segment of luxury travelers. An early study showed that majority of the luxury travel was done by seniors (Yesawich, 1989; cited by Lieux, Weaver, & McCleary, 1994), and one-fifth of seniors had stayed in luxury hotels (Lieux et al., 1994). A more recent study found that travelers older than 60 are more likely to travel in luxury style (Bühler, Rüegg, Steffen, Hatz, & Jaeger, 2014).

Luxury travelers also include significant number of young generations, especially in China. Those who book luxury trips via HH Travel are mostly around 40 years old (HH Travel, 2016). Generation Y in China, who are now at their 30s, spend CNY 420,000 (USD 60,877) on average every year on luxury tours (Hurun Report, 2016).

Chinese luxury travelers may include both seniors and Generation Y, who may have different needs and wants during the trip. For example, some senior travelers may have illnesses during the trip (Lieux et al., 1994), and they probably prefer medical service during the trip. To explore the different needs and motivations of travelers in different age groups, young and old travelers at different life stages are invited to participate in the study.

Luxury travelers tend to demand everything luxury. Barrère, Bonnard, and Chossat (2009) believe that rich consumers want “quality and sophisticated goods and services” in all aspects. Thus, luxury hotels not only provide luxury accommodation but also tend to have fine dining restaurant (Kiessling et al., 2009), because those who stay in luxury hotels would like to have luxury gastronomy. People who purchase luxury goods are more likely to consume luxury travel product. Luxury travel is perceived more important among frequent luxury shopper than infrequent shoppers of luxury goods (Park, Reisinger, & Noh, 2010). Since luxury travelers desire an overall luxury experience, those who fly with business class will stay in luxury hotel as well. It is appropriate to use one screening criteria (whether they use first class/business class/private jet often) to filter the travelers.

Although luxury travelers tend to choose luxury product at every aspect, the perceived importance of each type of travel product is different by culture background. Asian travelers, Hispanic travelers, and Western travelers perceive the importance of

different luxury travel products differently (Park & Reisinger, 2009). Fine dining is most important for Western travelers; shopping gift for other, golf equipment, health spa/wellness treatment, luxury cruises, and luxury yachts/rentals are all perceived most important among Asian. Korean travelers may prefer luxury travel products with less impression of conspicuousness. King and Choi (1997) found conspicuousness is disapproved by Korean Prime Minister thus luxury travel agents are careful about their marketing message. Since the perceived importance of luxury travel products and preferred marketing message are different among travelers from different cultural backgrounds, cultural influence should be considered in analyzing the traveler's motivations. The Chinese culture influence will be discussed in details in Chapter 4.

2.5 Motivations of Travelers and Luxury Travelers

Travel motivation is an important topic of tourism study. In Table 3, the 82 studies with “travel” and “motivation” in the title are collected via Scopus. The topics, methods, and findings will be briefly reviewed in this section. No study on the motivations of luxury travelers is found among these studies. Thus, the latter part of this section discusses the potential motivations of luxury travelers according to those studies including any discussion about luxury travelers.

The number of studies on general travel motivations is more than studies on motivations of specific type of travel or travelers, the finding of categorizing the 82 studies into eight categories. The largest category is named as “why travel” and include 29 studies. Studies in this category concern the general reasons why people travel and some of them try to segment travelers by motivations. The second largest category is “why certain group travel”. These 26 studies focus on the travel motivations of certain groups, such as senior travelers, disabled travelers, female traveler, medical travelers, Japanese travelers, and ecotourists. The third largest category is “why travel to a destination”, studying the reason why travelers visit a particular destination, e.g. Korea. The fourth category is “why travel in this way”, explaining why some travelers choose a particular style or product, such as backpacker, bicycle, package tour, self-drive. The other four categories only consist of one or two studies: “why not travel”, “why travel during certain time period” (e.g. during financial crisis), “how other factors influence travel motivations”, and “why certain group travel in this way/travel to a destination” (e.g. the motivations of

undergraduate students to join work and travel program). This current study falls into the last category, studying the reasons why some Chinese travel in a luxury way.

Table 3. Studies about travel motivations

Motivations (Number of Studies)	Authors
<p><i>Why travel (29)</i></p> <p>Escape (14), friendship (14), relaxation (13), family (12), culture and history (10), knowledge and intelligent (10), novelty (10), nature (9), sports (6), challenge and adventure (5), environment and safety (4), inexperience/budget (4), pleasure (4), self-realization and accomplishment (4), shopping (4), sun and beach (4), activities/physical (3), romance (3), self-actualization (3), status and travel bragging (3), tourist attractions (3), social and interaction (2), drama (2), excitement (2), excitement and fun (2), food (2), nostalgia (2), prestigious and luxury experience (2), recreation (2), self-development (2), self-development (2), a world of beauty (1), accessibility (1), attitude and quality of service (1), autonomy (1), being different and new (1), being well respected (1), body (1), children travel (1), comfort (1), convenience and value (1), ease of access-communication (1), ego enhancement (1), emotional (1), enjoyment (1), enlightenment and reputation (1), entertainment (1), familiarity seeking (1), fitness and education (1), freedom (1), good recreation (1), hedonism (1), interpersonal communication and sharing (1), liberty (1), lodging and transportation (1), love and belongingness (1), nightlife (1), party reputation (1), personal (1), physiological (1), recognition (1), relationship (1), seeing the country (1), self-esteem (1), self-respect (1), sightseeing (1), similar people (1), spending time with special person (1), stimulation (1), to be an experienced person (1), tourism facilities (1), unusual and affection (1), vacation (1), wildlife and events (1)</p>	<p>(Andreu, Kozak, Avci, & Cifter, 2006; Boo & Jones, 2009; Cha, McCleary, & Uysal, 1995; Chang, 2015; Huang & Hsu, 2009; Jensen & Hjalager, 2013; Jiang, Scott, & Ding, 2015; Jönsson & Devonish, 2008; Josiam, Smeaton, & Clements, 1999; Kasim et al., 2013; Kim, 2008; Kinley, Forney, & Kim, 2012; Kong & Chang, 2016; Leong, Yeh, Hsiao, & Huan, 2015; Li & Cai, 2012; Lin, Lee, & Wang, 2012; Loker-Murphy, 1997; Meng & Uysal, 2008; Oh, Uysal, & Weaver, 1995; Pan, Lee, & Tsai, 2014; Pearce, 2011; Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983; Pearce & Lee, 2005; Pesonen, 2015; Sung, Chang, & Sung, 2016; Swanson & Horridge, 2006; Wang & Walker, 2010; Whang, Yong, & Ko, 2016; Yousefi & Marzuki, 2012)</p>
<p><i>Why certain group travel (24)</i></p> <p>Socialization and friends (15), relaxation (13), escape (11), learning and knowledge (9), culture & history (7), Nature (7), novelty (6), adventure and excitement (5), safety and cleanness (5), ego-enhancement (4), entertainment and sports activities (4), family (5), travel arrangements & facilities (4), self-esteem (3), accomplishment (2), be themselves (2), being physically active and fit (2), children's intellectual competence (2), cost (2), enjoyment (2), event (2), happiness and pleasure (2), perceived quality (2), self-actualization (2), self-image (2), shopping & leisure activities (2), motivation (1), boosting self-confidence (1), business (1), climate (1), commercial areas (1), create new alliances (1), curiosity (1), destination experience (1), distance (1), exploring (1), familiar destination (1), great family environment and superior value for the traveler (1), health (1), holiday (1), increase revenue (1), indoor sports (1), internal matters (1), kinship (1), landscape/wildlife photography (1), media (1), medical coverage (1), no kids (1), official source (1), parks (1), physical competence of disabled children (1), pre-arranged tour (1), prestige (1), professional source (1), recreational benefit (1), security (1), self-awarding (1), sensation seeking (1), sense of wonder (1), stimulation (1), transportation facilities (1), trophy (1), unspoiled romantic beauty (1), weather/food (1), well-being (1)</p>	<p>(Adams, Snyder, Crooks, & Johnston, 2015; Ahn & Janke, 2011; Alén, Losada, & de Carlos, 2017; Allan, 2015; Aziz, Musa, & Sulaiman, 2010; Boksberger & Laesser, 2009; Chen & Wu, 2009; Chen, Bao, & Huang, 2014; Cheung, 2016; Cosnard, 2015; Gu et al., 2015; Jang & Wu, 2006; Jang, Bai, Hu, & Wu, 2009; Johanson, 2008; Kim & Lehto, 2013; Kim, Weaver, & McCleary, 1996; Li, Wen, & Leung, 2011a; Lu, Hung, Wang, Schuett, & Hu, 2016; Lucena, Jarvis, & Weeden, 2015; Patuelli & Nijkamp, 2016; Ray & Ryder, 2003; Sangpikul, 2008; Tani, 2005; Wang, 2007; Ward, 2014; Xiao, So, & Wang, 2015)</p>

Why travel to a certain destination (12)

Escape (7), novelty (6), relaxation (6), knowledge (4), adventure and excitement (3), family (3), nature (3), safety and security (3), socialization (3), culture (2), festival (2), friends and relatives (2), go shopping (2), ideal climate and clean environment (2), self-development (2), social status (2), wine (2), international exposure (1), a general interest in travel (1), achievement (1), advertising promotions (1), business (1), casual life style (1), communication opportunities (1), destination stimuli (1), education and my children (1), ego enhancement (1), enjoying various tourist resources (1), event features (1), film (1), financial incentives (1), food (1), interested in the giant panda (1), modern atmosphere (1), personal attachment (e.g. own a holiday home at the destination), (1), personal motivation and perceived prestige of visit (1), physical activity (1), popular place (1), self-esteem (1), share my travel experiences after returning home (1), social status (1), sports (1), time usage (e.g. spend time with friends) (1), wide space and activities (1)

(Battour, Ismail, Battor, & Awais, 2014; Chen, Mak, & McKercher, 2011; Hua & Yoo, 2011; Iglesias et al., 2011; Kim & Prideaux, 2005; Lepp, Gibson, & Lane, 2014; Moscardo, Morrison, Pearce, Lang, & O'Leary, 1996; Peter & Anandkumar, 2016; Rittichainuwat & Rattanaphinanchai, 2015; Tang, 2014; Van der Merwe, Slabbert, & Saayman, 2011; Yuan, Cai, Morrison, & Linton, 2005; Zhang & Peng, 2014)

Why travel in this way (10)

Socialization (6), relaxation (5), escape (4), knowledge (4), friendship (3), attractions (2), family (2), freedom (2), novelty (2), skill development (2), adventure experiences (1), best sites (1), budget travel (1), comfort (1), community (1), contentment (1), convenient way to travel (1), do not be tied to a schedule (1), experiential (1), familiar surroundings of their own vehicle (1), good itinerary (1), good performance of travel leader (1), good reputation (1), having their own bed at night (1), health benefits and healthier lifestyle (1), independence (1), leisure entertainment (1), nature (1), personal challenge (1), price (1), recommendation (1), right timing (1), safety (1), self-actualization (1), self-enhancement (1), self-enjoyment (1), self-sufficiency (1), shopping (1), spontaneity and flexibility (1), sports and health (1)

(Ben-Elia & Shifan, 2013; Chang, 2007; Fu, Huang, & Pan, 2013; Hardy & Gretzel, 2011; Kluin & Lehto, 2012; Paris & Teye, 2010; Ritchie, Tkaczynski, & Faulks, 2010; Wong & Tang, 2016; Zhou, 2011; Zhou & Huang, 2016)

Why not travel (1)

Certainty (e.g. risk), culturality, functionality (e.g. need to work), habitually, identity

(George, Inbakaran, & Poyyamoli, 2010)

Why travel during a certain time (1)

Discount, history and culture, holidays, novelty, resort recreation, safe and short distance, summer

(Rittichainuwat, Chakraborty, & Rattanaphinanchai, 2014)

How do other factor affect travel motivation (1)

Achievement, benevolence, conformity, security, self-direction, tradition, universalism

(Plangmarn, Mujtaba, & Pirani, 2012)

Why certain group travel in this way/to a destination (2)

Culture & heritage, ego-enhancement, escape & relaxation, experience of foreign culture, grow up and endurance, knowledge, learn and experience, leisure, novelty, practice and salary, shopping and food, shopping and safety, travel arrangements and facilities, variety and cost

(Assiouras, Skourtis, Koniordos, & Giannopoulos, 2015; Lin et al., 2012)

Among the studies on general travel motivations, two studies proposed influential models of travel motivation which are The Travel Career Pattern (TCP) model, and the push and pull model. The TCP model identifies different tourists' motivations: relaxation needs, safety/security need, relationship needs, self-esteem and development needs, and self-actualization/fulfillment needs (Pearce, 2011). The model was later modified to Travel Career Pattern. The motives are categorized into core motives (novelty, escape/relax, relationship), middle layer motives (self-development through host-site, nature, kinship, self-actualization, self-enhancement), and outer layer motives (isolation, stimulation, social status, romance, nostalgia, and autonomy) (Pearce & Lee, 2005). Travelers with less travel experience generally consider all motivations more important compared with the higher-travel-experience traveler (Pearce & Lee, 2005), meaning that travel motivations may change along the increase of travel experience. This is a significant contribution to the understanding of travel motivation.

Another often adopted model of travel motivations is the push and pull (Crompton, 1979). The push factors refer to socio-psychological motivations and explain the desire to have a vacation. Seven push factors are identified: escape from a perceived mundane environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationship, and facilitation of social interaction. The pull factors refer to motivations aroused by the destination and explain the destination choice. They are novelty and education. The contribution of this model is that it takes the destinations' characteristics into consideration, which enables the model to explain why some travelers are motivated to visit a particular destination.

Since travel motivation is a well-studied research topic, it is easier for studies focusing on more specific travel style to generate new findings, compare with studies on general travel motivations. Although many studies have explored the general travel motivations, the results show much similarities with the two model mentioned above. For example, novelty or escape is widely found in different studies (Kim & Lehto, 2013). Interestingly, studies focusing on more specific travel style or travelers discovered motivations new to the existing knowledge. For instance, one travel motivation of gay and lesbian parented families is the need to be themselves (Lucena

et al., 2015). Thus, new knowledge on understanding of travel motivations is expected from the current study which is very specific to Chinese luxury travelers.

In terms of research method, the majority of the studies are quantitative by questionnaire surveys, ten studies are qualitative and one study uses the mixed approach. The number of studies using quantitative approaches shows that travel motivation is a well-studied topic and researchers are able to adopt previously developed scales to measure different motivations. The ten qualitative studies were exploring the motivations of a specific group of people or a particular way of travel, e.g. the travel motivation of gay and lesbian parented family. It is possible that the particular group of people is significantly different from the general public, thus, qualitative approaches which enable researchers to discover new motivation items are more appropriate. Different methods were adopted to explore the motivations, including literature review, interview, focus group, observation, and laddering technique. The focus of the current study is Chinese luxury travelers, who are the top thousandth wealthy population in China and may be different from the general population. Thus, a qualitative approach might be more appropriate.

With different topics of “why travel” and “why travel this way”, studies conducted among the same population have different results. There are two studies both conducted among backpackers about their motivations. Paris and Teye (2010) explored “why travel this way” and found that budget travel is one motivation of backpacker. The study of Chen et al. (2014) aims to understand the travel motivations among backpackers, and identified social interaction, self-actualization, destination experience, escape, and relaxation as motivations. Budget is not one travel motivation of backpackers but it is the reason they choose backpacking as the travel style.

In order to effectively answer the research question, it is necessary to clarify that this study aims to explore why some people travel in luxury way, instead of why luxury travelers undertake trips. The existing studies on “motivations of luxury travelers” concern why they travel. For example, the top five travel motivations of luxury travelers revealed by Virtuoso (2017) are all general motivations for travel, e.g. exploring new destinations. In the study of Prayag and Hosany (2014) study about young UAE travelers taking a luxury trip to Paris, the three most important motivations were enjoying time with family and friends, socializing with people from

Europe, and being able to share travel experience after returning home. In both studies, the identified motivations cannot explain the preference for traveling in luxury style.

In the current study, the motivations of luxury travelers refer to motivations for choosing luxury travel instead of ordinary travel. Few studies have investigated on this topic. Some possible reasons for choosing luxury travel will be discussed in the following, although empirical evidence is still needed.

Status is motivation of travel, mentioned in TCP theory and the push and pull theory, and it is also a potential motivation of luxury travel. Luxury travelers spend money on travel experience for display purpose (eHotelier, 2016a). In fact, travel style was considered as a loose attribute to define social classes (Adler, 1989), and “both indicator of and resources for social status” (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2012). Luxury travel can contribute to elite status, distinction and privilege (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2012). In the 17th and 18th century, Grand Tour was a badge of elite standing and an important part of the upper-class education (Jenkins, 2002). Nowadays, space tourism is a status symbol (Billings, 2006). Prestige image is the motivation of luxury cruise travelers (Hung & Petrick, 2011), choosing cruising destinations (Douglas & Douglas, 2012), or staying in luxury hotel (Chen & Peng, 2014). Luxury travel environment is often prepared by a large amount of labor to show high recognition from the service providers (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2012). The environment is prepared in this way to satisfy luxury travelers’ care for prestige. It is worth noting that the motivation of showing off is diminished when the travel experience increases and the familiarity of luxury goods increases (Tsang, Lee, & Liu, 2014). It is, therefore, possible that experienced travelers are less likely to be motivated by status.

Status motivation may be strong among Chinese since worth sharing is a reason for preferring luxury travel in China. During the ILTM event, Mr. Guo, the COO of HH Travel stated that luxury travelers in China preferred rare and unique experiences because these trips are worth sharing among friends (Cao, 2015). The motivation of sharing could also be demonstrated by the fact that most popular subject for photography of Chinese luxury travelers is people (Hurun Report, 2015b). The possible status concern may also be the reason why designing post travel memory book as physical evidence of the previous trip is important for Chinese luxury travelers (Cao, 2015).

Cohen (1972) proposed tourists' needs for familiarity and novelty in a destination. Both novelty and familiarity can be the reasons for choosing luxury travel. When tourists are not ready to fully engage with the destination society, they need something familiar around them, e.g. familiar hotel brand. This familiar microenvironment is the "environmental bubble". Tourist also needs novelty in the destination to attract them to visit there. For travelers who are not living a luxury lifestyle at home, luxury travel experience can be the novelty. The travelers who live in luxury lifestyle may prefer familiar environment when travel. Some of them even travel with their own bed or own home IT infrastructure (The Economist, 2015). Either because of novelty or familiarity, a luxury traveler may rarely give up this travel style once they have tried it due to "non-return effect" or "ratchet effect", which means that people cannot turn away from luxury once they have tasted it (Kapferer, 2012). In the study by Manthiou, Kang, and Hyun (2017), it is found that both certainty and novelty has influence on the luxury cruise passengers' emotion. Luxury travelers probably need the quality insurance to avoid unpleasant surprise while positive novel experience is still desirable.

Park and Reisinger (2009) categorized luxury travel goods into two dimensions by principal components analysis: "privacy", and "health and recreation". These two dimensions are potential motivations of luxury traveler. The privacy dimension includes luxury travel products such as private villas, private islands, private jet tours, and tailor-made tours. By consuming these luxury travel products, travelers can enjoy higher level of privacy during the trip. The need for privacy is also evidenced by the setting in the business lounge of an airline. The interior design of the lounge intentionally prepared the unoccupied space and allows each customer to seat alone with a coffee table, in order to create discretion, isolation and civil inattention by allowing (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2012). The other dimension, health and recreation, includes health spa, golf equipment, luxury adventure travel and fine dining. Although ordinary travel products may also contribute to health and recreation, luxury travelers may require higher quality of service to achieve the same motivations. As revealed by travel agents of high-end wildlife tourism, customers always have high expectation on the quality of these trips (Buckley & Mossaz, 2016).

Personalization is probably a motivation of luxury travelers, especially in terms of choosing luxury travel agents. Majority of luxury travel guests (73%) of HH

Travel have used their Personal Travel Service (PTS) (HH Travel, 2016). On a global stand, the portion of travelers who use PTS among all luxury travelers remains the similar percentage. Around two-thirds of the luxury travelers use specialist advisors and travel agents for travel plan (eHotelier, 2016b). PTS provides convenience, personalized itinerary, personalized package, experienced consultants and better trustworthy (Bhati, Chang, Kaur, & Cheong, 2013).

Comfort and reputation may also motivate travelers to choose luxury travel products. The top ten percent of Chinese travelers spent CNY 13,800 (USD 2,225) per day on average during the trip and they consider comfort and reputation more important than price when they make booking decisions (Hotels.com., 2015).

Material need and fashion leadership may be reasons for luxury travel. Scott and Mowen (2007) found these two reasons in their study about students' intention to take luxury trips. However, students may not be the travelers who have undertook luxury trips. Thus, solid evidence is needed by conducting a study among the existing luxury travelers.

The above potential motivations may not occur on the same traveler every time. A traveler may have different reasons for luxury travel on different trips and have different expectations. Luxury travelers generally seek exclusive experience or destination, recognition from service providers, and innovative and new experience (Mann, 1993). However, when they travel with their guests, they want safe choice and no surprise. This study aims to understand their motivations for preferring luxury travel generally and also include any specific motivations in special trips.

Many of the above motivations are found to be the reasons why luxury travelers are willing to pay the premium in a recent study about first-class passengers (Hwang & Lyu, 2018). By adopting the luxury dimensions in luxury goods studies in airline service, it is found that the functional, individual and social values positively related to first class passengers' willingness to pay. The functional value includes comfort, service quality, and the exclusive service only available for first-class guests. The individual value includes the self-satisfaction, feeling good, and self-gifting. The social value includes social status and exclusiveness. Probably deriving from the same data set, Hwang and Hyun (2017) found that passengers' attitude towards first-class

flight are positively influence by the perceived quality, hedonism, conspicuousness, exclusivity, and extended self.

A study conducted among luxury cruise travelers measured the motivations of undertaking luxury cruise trip which are revealed in tourism researches including “self-esteem and social recognition”, “escape and relaxation”, “learning, discovery, and thrill”, and “bonding” (developing closer relationship with travel partners) (Han & Hyun, 2018). Among these four motivations, the first dimension is most relevant to the luxury aspect of the cruise trip: travelers may take luxury cruise to impress other. The study found that the strongest motivation is “learning, discovery, and thrill”, followed by “escape and relaxation”.

Similar to luxury dimensions, the above motivations are either more related to product feature (e.g. personalization) or more related to customer value (e.g. status). Connection may exist between these two types of motivations; e.g. personalized service may create the feeling of prestige. Some studies do not consider product feature as motivations, but the connections between the motivations and product features are identified. Pyo et al. (1991) found that the travel motivations are correlated with attraction attributes in the destination. For example, the outdoor, night-life activities, and amusement parks can match the social and stimulation motives, while museum and galleries can meet the intellectual needs. Thus, the features of luxury travel products may be associated with values of luxury travelers, and that is the reason why luxury travel products are preferred. The means-end theory, which links product features and human values, will be adopted. The benefits of adopting this theory to answer the research questions are explained in Chapter 5.

The above discussion about potential motivations is limited by the number of existing studies about luxury travel. A total of 22 studies mentioned “luxury travel” or “luxury traveler” in any part of their discussion are listed in Table 4. As shown in the table, only a few studies consider “luxury travelers” as their study subject. Motivation of luxury travelers is not the primary research objective of any of these studies. While they bring some insights on understanding luxury travelers, the contribution to the knowledge of luxury travelers, especially the motivations of luxury travelers, is limited. The following discussion focuses on how the current study is better designed based on these available studies

Table 4. Studies including luxury traveler (1993 to 2018)

Method (s)	Study Subject	Context	Author(s)
Diagnosis	Senior travelers in premium tour	Visitors to Viet Nam and Cambodia	(Shaw & Leggat, 2009)
Interview	Korean travelers to Australia	Korean, Australia	(King & Choi, 1997)
Interview	Well-to-do people	Germany, Austria and Switzerland	(Koch, 2011)
Literature and industry observation	Affluent travelers	U.S.	(Mann, 1993)
Literature and industry observation	General Consumers	NA	(Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2006)
Literature and industry observation	NA	NA	(Veríssimo & Loureiro, 2013)
Literature and secondary data review	Luxury gastronomy	NA	(Barrère et al., 2009)
Literature and secondary data review	HNWIs and luxury hotels	Global	(Kiessling et al., 2009)
Literature review and secondary data analysis	Luxury shopper tourists	China	(Yang, 2016)
Secondary data from two surveys	Spaceflight participants and “millionaires” with a household income of at least USD 250,000 annually, or a minimum net worth of USD 1 million	U.S.	(Ziliotto, 2010)
Survey	High-income segment of travelers with annual households income not less than \$100,000	Singapore	(Bhati et al., 2013)
Survey	Travelers not younger than 55	U.S.	(Lieux et al., 1994)
Survey	Travelers	Global	(Plog, 2002)
Survey	University students	U.S.	(Scott & Mowen, 2007)

Survey	Travelers who purchase luxury goods	Visitors to South Florida	(Park & Reisinger, 2009)
Survey	Tourists shopping at luxury malls	Visitors to Miami	(Park et al., 2010)
Survey	Students	Japanese and Bulgarian	(Stankova & Kaleichev, 2013)
Survey	Clients of Swiss Travel and Vaccination Clinic	Switzerland	(Bühler et al., 2014)
Survey	Travelers who have luxury hotel stay experience	China	(Chen & Peng, 2014)
Survey	Luxury cruise passengers	NA	(Hwang & Han, 2014)
Survey	Young tourist not older than 34 who had intention to have a luxury tour in Paris within three years	Middle East	(Prayag & Hosany, 2014)
Survey	First-class passengers	US	(Hwang & Lyu, 2018)
Survey	First-class passengers	US	(Hwang & Hyun, 2017)
Survey	Luxury cruise passengers	US	(Han & Hyun, 2018)
Survey			(Hung, Song, Chao, & Guan, 2017)
Survey	Luxury cruise passengers	Different ethnic groups	(Manthiou et al., 2017)
Visual data	Environment of luxury travelers and marketing materials of luxury travel	NA	(Thurlow & Jaworski, 2012)

Two studies discussed luxury travelers with “hidden” definitions. The study of Yang (2016) aims to understand luxury travelers and a lot of discussions are based on data about luxury shoppers during travel. The study probably refers luxury travelers to tourists who purchase luxury goods, which was not clearly stated in the study. Barrère et al. (2009) discussed luxury travelers’ needs for luxury gastronomy, and information about HNWI’s were included as support data. The study probably defines HNWI’s as luxury travelers. The word “luxury” is commented as one of the most abused words used in the hospitality industry (MeetingsNet, 2006). To avoid the

confusion about study subject, in this study, a definition of luxury traveler is presented in section 1.4.

Four studies cover both luxury travelers defined in the current study and other types of travelers. In the study by Kiessling et al. (2009), the research subjects are travelers who purchase luxury hotels. Park and Reisinger (2009) investigated the perceived importance of luxury travel consumption among “luxury travelers”. The “luxury travelers” refer to travelers who purchase luxury goods. Hwang and Han (2014) focused on luxury cruise travelers. Thurlow and Jaworski (2012) attempted to understand luxury travelers from semiology perspective, and “luxury travelers” in their study are those who appear at a luxury hotel, airline VIP lounge, luxury train dining cart. “Luxury travelers” in these studies may include luxury travelers defined in the current, but may also include other types of travelers. For example, travelers who stay in luxury hotel may be one-time luxury travelers who can be very different from luxury travelers but more similar to average travelers. In this study, only those travelers who consistently consume luxury travel products will be considered as luxury travelers.

Two studies have focused on one specific type of luxury travelers, i.e. space travelers (Billings, 2006; Ziliotto, 2010). Considering the price, space tourism’s first group of potential customers is from the luxury market, although Virgin Galactic, a space tourism company, claimed that space tourism was for everyone (Billings, 2006). The whole population of actual space travelers is, in fact, very small. Space travelers may also be luxury travelers, but at the same time, they may have special characteristics. For example, Ziliotto (2010) discussed the profiles of ten space travelers and found that seven of them are from technology entrepreneurial world. It is not clear if the findings of these studies can be generalized to luxury travelers. The current study does not limit the study subjects to luxury travelers who attend a special type of travel but include luxury travelers who consume general luxury travel products.

The definition of luxury travel is changing. Young (1977) found there were three dimensions of the Caribbean tourism: comprehensive, luxury and plantation, and the items under luxury dimension were water-sports availability, shopping, nightlife, official tourism information availability, gems and gold, imports from many countries and number of available hotel rooms. These items, once were associated with luxury

travel, are related to mass travel now. Thus, the current study mainly contributes to the understanding of current luxury travelers in China.

The distinctive characteristics of luxury travelers are not understood in the existing literature. In the context of luxury travel, Hwang and Han (2014) found that cruise brand prestige and brand loyalty is influenced by food quality, service quality, staff/crew attractiveness, entertainment, ship facilities, ports of call, programs/places for children, cabin quality. However, even it is not luxury cruise brand, attributes like service quality can still influence the brand image and loyalty of the customer. Shaw and Leggat (2009) conducted a study among senior travelers who joined a premium tour and explored their illness and injury during the trip. However, these “luxury travelers” may be very similar to senior travelers who join a regular tour in terms of their physical conditions. The distinctive characteristics of luxury travelers were not discovered. This study aims to explore the motivations of luxury travelers which demonstrates the distinctive characteristics.

A study has focused on how the different information presentation of luxury tour package influences on participants’ attitude towards the same product (Hung et al., 2017). It is found that a narrative way of presentation will generate more positive attitude than listing the package information.

The discussion about motivations in this section is based on the previous researches. They provide some insights for understanding luxury travelers at a certain extent, but the understanding was limited. The motivations discussed such as status and familiarity can only be considered as potential motivations of luxury travelers due to the lack of solid evidence. Empirical study is required to investigate whether these possible motivations can be found among Chinese luxury travelers, and to explore whether there are more motivations which are not found in the above discussion.

2.6 Luxury Travel Supply and Needs of Luxury Traveler

The luxury travel suppliers include service providers of luxury resorts/hotels, private villas, luxury cruises, private islands, adventure travel, luxury special-interest travel, private jet holidays, tailor-made tours, yacht rentals including crew (Bakker, 2005). Twelve studies about the suppliers are listed in Table 5. A number of studies have criticized luxury travel development in the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, and Mexico (Brenner & Aguilar, 2002; Richter, 1980; Richter, 1999; Routledge,

2001; Saldanha, 2002; Sandbrook, 2010; Scheyvens, 2002; Young, 1973). Three concerns on transforming developing countries into luxury travel destination are raised: the fluctuant demand, the conflict between tourists and locals, and the unsecured financial benefits. While whether the development of luxury tourism can really benefit third world destinations is questioned (Scheyvens, 2002), successful cases can also be found. To succeed the development of luxury travel, understanding of luxury travelers is the prerequisite.

Table 5. Studies about luxury travel supply (1977 to 2017)

Method	Participants	Context	Author(s)
Literature and secondary data review	NA	Caribbean	(Young, 1977)
Literature and secondary data review	NA	Philippine	(Richter, 1980)
Literature and secondary data review	NA	Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan	(Richter, 1999)
Literature and secondary data review	NA	Goa, India	(Routledge, 2001)
Literature and secondary data review	NA	Mexican	(Brenner & Aguilar, 2002)
Literature and secondary data review	NA	Goa, India	(Saldanha, 2002)
Literature and secondary data review	NA	NA	(Billings, 2006)
Literature and secondary data review	HNWIs and luxury hotels	Global	(Kiessling et al., 2009)
Literature and secondary data review	NA	Dubai	(Ryan & Stewart, 2009)
Literature and secondary data review	NA	Spain, France	(Masson & Petiot, 2009)
Interview and Survey	Tourists and locals	Six villages near Buhoma	(Sandbrook, 2010)
Interview	Luxury travel agents	Geneva	(Buckley & Mossaz, 2016)
Interview	Travel agents	French-speaking Swiss agents	(Mossaz & Coghlan, 2017)

The fluctuant demand of luxury travel at a destination is a concern for developing countries with unstable political condition. In developing countries, the demand of luxury travel is highly dependent on inbound tourism and tourist flow can

easily be depressed by political turmoil or war (Richter, 1999). In the case of Sri Lanka, luxury travel business declined due to safety issue in the country, and those luxury infrastructures built for luxury travelers could hardly be transformed into the venue for other usages. Luxury travelers need safety, although whether the need is stronger than other travelers is not clear.

The conflict between the tourists and local communities sometimes happens at some destinations in developing countries. A striking example is the case of Goa, India. The water usage of luxury hotels has priority over the local communities, which causes the resistance of local communities (Routledge, 2001). Even when the destination is lack of clean water, luxury hotels have excessive use of water probably because luxury travelers have strong need of comfort.

Some developing countries for luxury travel may not gain the financial benefits as expected. Although luxury travelers are profitable, the revenue of luxury travel sometimes benefit the source market rather than the destination, e.g. Japanese tourists prefer to fly with Japanese airline and stay in Japanese hotel groups and the revenue will benefit the Japanese companies (Richter, 1980). This is often happening because luxury travelers need familiarity and trust the familiar brands. Furthermore, if the luxury resorts are not well linked to the urban area of the destination, e.g. in Mexico, only a few visitors will travel outside foreign-invested resorts and benefit the local economy (Brenner & Aguilar, 2002). Luxury travelers expect convenience in visiting an attraction.

There is also concern about conflict between hedonism aspect of luxury safari and the sustainable development of the destination (Mossaz & Coghlan, 2017). Travel agents who are selling luxury safari revealed that they found that travelers have rare consideration on choosing conservation-oriented travel products. However, the agents believed that choosing the conservation oriented suppliers is their responsibility.

Despite the above concerns, developing luxury travel products can be a way to differentiate tourism product for certain cities (Masson & Petiot, 2009), and some luxury travel destinations succeed. In Al Maha, Dubai, the desert conservation zone is developed as a luxury resort and generates values for both customers and the destination (Ryan & Stewart, 2009). The strategy to develop luxury destination in conservation zone may be related to the exclusiveness need of luxury travelers. As an

exclusive experience, luxury travel enables the conservation zone to keep the profit high for financial benefits and keep the number of travelers small for protection of environment.

Luxury travel itself does not ensure profitability, but can potentially benefit a destination if the development is strategically planned with the understanding of both luxury travelers and the destination. Whether the conditions in a destination can meet the needs of luxury travelers should be examined carefully. In some third world countries, local community do not have adequate ability to serve luxury travelers and backpackers may be an alternative segment to cater (Scheyvens, 2002). Developing travel products for backpackers could also differentiate a destination and benefit a destination.

If a destination decides to develop luxury travel, a careful development plan should be made based on the understanding of the luxury travelers. Since luxury travelers tend to stick to the international brand and do not interact with the local community (Brenner & Aguilar, 2002; Richter, 1980; Sandbrook, 2010; Young, 1973), the local government may avoid excessive financial support from the local government to the luxury travel project by inviting the overseas investment. So that the destination will be at least benefited by the consumption of the international workers.

Regarding the benefits and concerns of developing luxury travel destinations, the results of this study may help the decision making of developers. Luxury travelers' needs of safety, comfort, familiarity, convenience, and exclusiveness are reflected in the discussion about successful and worrying luxury travel destinations. More in-depth understanding of Chinese luxury travelers may benefit the luxury travel destinations where would like to attract more Chinese.

2.7 Chapter Summary

To successfully develop a luxury travel destination, a better understanding of luxury travelers is needed. The literatures suggest that luxury travelers tend to “luxury everything”. They are well-off, can vary in age, and differ by cultural background. Although previous studies have provided some insights on what may motive luxury traveler, there is no comprehensive understanding on this topic. The existing studies imply that seeking status, familiarity, novelty, quality, sharing worthy, comfort,

reputation, personalization, privacy, safety, convenience, exclusiveness, material need and fashion leadership may be the reasons for choosing luxury travel products. In particular, seeking status or prestige is found to be important for luxury consumers who are likely to be luxury travelers, thus, it is possible that luxury travel is a form of conspicuous consumption. In the following chapter, the literature review focuses on conspicuous consumption.

Chapter 3 Conspicuous Consumption in Travel

3.1 Introduction

Almost all the studies about the luxury values indicate conspicuousness as one important dimension (Choo et al., 2012; Nwankwo et al., 2014; Vickers & Renand, 2003; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Wiedmann et al., 2009). Conspicuousness is sometimes referred as status need (Choo et al., 2012). When luxury consumers are shifting their preference from physical goods to experience (McKinsey & Company, 2011), the status driven luxury consumption is more associated with luxury experience than physical luxury goods. As a result, travel, leisure, and health have replaced car, house and jewellery/watches as the luxury status symbols (Koch, 2011). The discussion about luxury travel among bloggers is more than physical goods such as luxury cars and art objects (Broillet & Dubosson, 2008). To have an in-depth understanding about whether status-seeking or conspicuousness promotes luxury travel consumption, two classical concepts describing the status-seeking behaviors are discussed: conspicuous consumption regarding spending money, and conspicuous leisure regarding spending time. This chapter reviews the fundamentals of the two concepts and discusses their influence on travel.

3.2 The Theory of the Leisure Class

In the late 19th century, a small wealthy population emerged in the US. Veblen (1899) found that the wealth of this group of people would exempt them from work, and he labeled this group of people as the “leisure class”. The leisure class was consistently relieved from economic burdens for generations.

The leisure class cared about status, reputation, and honor, and their behavior was usually not driven by utility. They wanted to signal their wealth by showing their ability to waste time. They spent time excessively on non-work related activities, such as training for good manners and etiquettes, hunting, keeping pets, sports, and learning dead languages. Veblen refers to such behavior as “conspicuous leisure”.

As leisure class accumulated more wealth, their pecuniary ability did not only allow them to enjoy leisure time but also enable them to purchase unnecessary goods. The goods they consumed as status symbol range from food, drink, narcotics, shelter, services, ornaments, apparel, weapons and accoutrements, amusements, to amulets. With the display of goods consumption, leisure class was able to signal status easily

to more people who could not observe their leisure time. They are moving from displaying “conspicuous leisure” to “conspicuous consumption”.

According to Veblen (1899), conspicuous consumption occurs latter than conspicuous leisure. When a community grew larger, conspicuous consumption would become more preferred and more often practiced because goods were easier to exhibit than leisure time. In fact, conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption often happened at the same time when people would like to signal wealth and status. For example, purchasing and wearing a pair of expensive high heel shoes demonstrates conspicuous consumption because of the expensiveness of the shoes, and at the same time, conspicuous leisure because wearing high heel shoes means the exemption from production work.

Although relatively small in size, the leisure class had a significant influence on others’ daily life at many aspects by showing off their dress, taste, belief, religion, charity, and higher learning. The rest of the population followed the taste and behavior of the leisure class and even people lack monetary ability would consider status more important than physical comfort. This phenomenon brought Veblen’s attention because he found the phenomenon has a negative influence on the development of society. In Veblen’s opinion, the leisure class preferred conservatism over innovation because they were satisfied with the status quo and they resisted change. Time and effort were wasted through conspicuous leisure; money and goods were wasted via conspicuous consumption. For leisure class, such “waste” might be meaningful as a symbol of their financial ability and status. The waste of time and money, however, does not serve the well-being of mankind as a whole. From the perspective of mankind, conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption hinder the development of a society.

The word “leisure” in Veblen’s term “leisure class” carries negative meaning and is not the same as the “leisure” often used in tourism. Leisure tourist is not a modern expression of leisure class (Korstanje, 2009). But is luxury traveler an expression of leisure class? Travel could be both conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption because a traveler may have excessive use of time and money during trips. The rest of the chapter reviews the studies on conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption, followed by the discussion about conspicuous travel.

3.3 Conspicuous Leisure

Conspicuous leisure refers to signaling status by the waste of time (Veblen, 1899). In this section, whether the luxury trips undertaken by Chinese luxury travelers are modern forms of conspicuous leisure is discussed based on the existing literatures on conspicuous leisure.

Conspicuous leisure is easier to display now than before. Veblen (1899) believed that conspicuous consumption was more advanced and preferred over conspicuous leisure because conspicuous leisure was harder to display. At that time, how people spent time at home could only be partially observed by neighbors. With the advanced technology nowadays, conspicuous leisure becomes more visible and can convey status signal (Huang & Shi, 2015). Via social medias, friends all over the world or even strangers can observe others' daily life. Travelers can display their travel related information before, during and after the trip on social media to show their pecuniary strength and the ability of being away from work.

On social media platforms, conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption are often displayed at the same time. People may state the ownership of luxury brand or showing the knowledge of luxury through their social media accounts, and this behavior is referred as "conspicuous display" (Sekhon, Bickart, Trudel, & Fournier, 2015). This new phenomenon can be explained by classic concepts of conspicuous consumption and conspicuous leisure. Claiming the ownership of luxury goods is conspicuous consumption. Spending time on acquiring and showing unnecessary knowledge on luxury brands is conspicuous leisure.

Other than displaying the knowledge on luxury, people can also practice conspicuous leisure by vacation trips. As found in a study analyzing travel blog content, a blogger wrote "*I was on vacation, and you had to work*" to show off (Hsieh, 2014). This is a typical example of conspicuous leisure, although Hsieh (2014) did not identify this item as conspicuous leisure and address it as conspicuous consumption. Scott (2010) believed that majority of the population needs to spend time on working to make a living, which makes conspicuous leisure more difficult to practice. However, taking a vacation becomes an even effective way to display the status when most people need to work for living. Conspicuous leisure should not be overlooked because conspicuous consumption is a concept better known (Huang & Shi, 2015).

The preference on conspicuous leisure or conspicuous consumption can be observed by people's way of allocating time. People who prefer conspicuous leisure may spend more time on vacation, and people who prefer conspicuous consumption may work for longer time to increase the income. In some countries, e.g. the US, conspicuous consumption is preferred over conspicuous leisure (Alpizar, Carlsson, & Johansson-Stenman, 2005; Solnick & Hemenway, 2005). The less well-off people are willing to work more, earn more, and engage in conspicuous consumption more. In the US, some regions with higher mobility generate even higher preference of conspicuous consumption (Frijters & Leigh, 2008; Scott, 2010). To be specific, one percent of the increase in mobility would increase the average working hour of the remaining residents for seven minutes. The remaining residents would like to display status by conspicuous consumption, thus work more to earn more money for consumption use. Unlike Americans, Australians do not work more for wealth and they prefer conspicuous leisure over conspicuous consumption (Huang & Shi, 2015).

The preference on conspicuous leisure or conspicuous consumption can also be observed by the demand of luxury goods. For example, in Australia, people overwhelmingly desire a simple life and are less interested in luxury brands (Huang & Shi, 2015). There are only three luxury brands among top 20 desired brands in Australia, and people there prefer conspicuous leisure over conspicuous consumption. China, with over CNY 500 billion (USD 72.5 billion) annual luxury expense, accounts for one-third of the global luxury market in 2016 (McKinsey & Company, 2017). This may suggest that the Chinese are engaging in conspicuous consumption.

Conspicuous leisure may enhance the status, thus increase happiness. DeLeire and Kalil (2010) found that \$10,000 increase in spending on leisure goods including trips and vacations is associated with a 0.17-point increase in life satisfaction happiness. As China ranks 86th in World Happiness Report 2018, after most Asian regions (Singapore 34th, Taiwan 26th) (Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2018), it is likely that Chinese will make effort to increase happiness level. Chinese luxury travelers increase their outbound travel time from 18 days to 20 days in 2014 (Cao, 2015). They are probably travel more to increase the happiness. Given that two-thirds of the Chinese luxury consumption were purchased during overseas trips (McKinsey & Company, 2017), Chinese may enjoy conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption at the same time.

Conspicuous leisure may become popular nowadays among luxury travelers because of two reasons. First, luxury travelers are sometimes time-poor, thus conspicuous leisure may be an easier way to signal status for them since their peers may have the similar financial ability but are lack of leisure time. Second, conspicuous leisure is easy to display with the help of technology, thus travelers can signal status by conspicuous leisure easily, e.g. posting online.

Studies show that conspicuous leisure is generally more preferred in countries where luxury consumption is less popular. In China, the length of vacations is increasing, the luxury goods are popular, and travelers often purchase luxury goods during travel. Thus, it is possible that Chinese luxury travelers enjoy both conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption, and both behaviors serve the same purpose of displaying status. This study explores the motivations of Chinese luxury travel and investigates if status display is a motivation for undertaking luxury trips.

3.4 Conspicuous Consumption

Conspicuous consumption is the behavior of displaying status by wasting money on consuming unnecessary goods (Veblen, 1899). As an old phenomenon, conspicuous consumption is still happening even under financial crisis (Kapferer, 2010). Luxury brands like Louis Vuitton introduce the conspicuous products with larger logo during a recession to boost sales (Kapferer, 2010; Nunes et al., 2011). This enduring nature of conspicuous consumption makes it a popular research topic.

Various types of conspicuous consumption have been identified and studied. The traditional purpose of conspicuous consumption is to display the social and pecuniary status. Leibenstein (1950) outlined three different phenomena of this traditional type of conspicuous consumption: (1) bandwagon effect, (2) snob effect, and (3) Veblen effect. The purposes of conspicuous consumption in recent year are more diverse, including displaying the status of having a devoted partner (Wang & Griskevicius, 2014), being competent (Bellezza & Keinan, 2014), being conservative (Vladas, Tybur, & Bram, 2010), having extrinsic aspiration (Truong, McColl, & Kitchen, 2010), and having accomplishment (Yu, 2014). The different types of conspicuous consumption will be explained as follows.

Bandwagon effect refers to the situation that the demand for products increases when many other people are consuming the same products (Leibenstein, 1950). This

effect, firstly noted by Veblen (1899), reveals the relationship between mass and the class, meaning that the consumers may follow the choices of the higher class in consumption (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012). The practice of following others' behavior is attributed to status-seeking and consumers' tendency to conform. Consumers who are concerned with the opinion of others are more likely to conform and display bandwagon consumption (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014). In the study by Kastanakis and Balabanis (2014), bandwagon effect is measured by the consumption intention when a product is popular, e.g. whether the goods are popular, fashionable, the choices of most people, or the choices of celebrities. Using celebrities as spokesman is one implication of this effect in luxury industry. For example, Shanghai Tang introduced The Mandarin Collar Society with many celebrity members who act as spokesmen for the brand to inform the regular consumers whom they are following (Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2012).

Snob effect, an opposite effect of the bandwagon effect, refers to the situation that the demand for products decreases when many other people are consuming the same products (Leibenstein, 1950). For example, a Chinese lady purchases handbag which is only available in Paris because she does not want to carry the same bag which many people do. This type of consumer behavior is caused by status-seeking and need for uniqueness (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014). In the study by Kastanakis and Balabanis (2014), snob effect is measured by the consumption intention when a product is not popular, e.g. whether a product is own or recognized by minority. The customers who would like to have choices different from the majority to avoid similarity tend to display snob consumption. It is possible that the snob effect had not appeared in the time of Veblen (1899), because he described conspicuous consumption as a top-down process: the taste of upper class influences the taste of middle class and further influences the taste of working class. However, the choice of upper class might have been influenced by what working class preferred since they would like to be differentiated (Trigg, 2000). One illustration is that wealthy people with high status will prefer luxury brands only known by their peers (Kapferer, 2010).

Veblen effect describe rising demand of a product due to its increasing price (Leibenstein, 1950). Since one purpose of conspicuous consumption is to display pecuniary ability (Veblen, 1899), higher the price, more effective the display of pecuniary ability. Thus, products enjoy higher demand when it is priced higher.

Luxury brand management professionals understand Veblen effect and apply it to pricing strategies (Kapferer, 2012). As a result, the average price of a luxury brand increases continuously in general.

The above discussion on three forms of conspicuous consumption recaps the motivations of conspicuous consumption mentioned by Veblen (1899), which are social and pecuniary status display. Both bandwagon and snob effects are due to social status seeking. Veblen effect is the illustration of displaying pecuniary ability as a purpose of consumption. The motivation for displaying social and pecuniary status is stronger among consumers who have the concern for their image (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014; Souiden, M'Saad, & Pons, 2011), e.g. people who feel powerless, and people who are associated with lower social status.

Customers who feel powerless are more likely to have the purpose of social status display and perform more conspicuous consumption. Power means the capacity to control resources and outcomes of one own and others (Rucker & Galinsky, 2009). Consumers feeling powerful will concern more on the quality and performance of the product, while consumers feeling powerless are more sensitive to soft-sell advertising with an emphasize on status and have a greater preference for products with visible logos.

Similarly, customers who are associated with lower social status have a higher desire for high-status products (Mazzocco, Rucker, Galinsky, & Anderson, 2012). For example, blacks who are associated with low social status are more likely to purchase a product for status display compared with blacks who are not associated with low status and whites who are associated with higher status. This different level of status seeking motivation can also be illustrated by the comparison of developed markets (the US and the UK) and eastern emerging markets (India and Malaysia). The consumers in eastern emerging markets feel price/quality ratio less important (Shukla, 2012), probably because they look for status but not the utility by consuming the product.

Luxury consumers' purpose of displaying social and pecuniary status can be achieved via conspicuous consumption. Persons using luxury brand products are perceived as wealthier and with higher status (Nelissen & Meijers, 2011). Achieving the purpose of the status display may bring pleasure and increase the tendency of

repurchase (Chan, To, & Chu, 2015). Other than the social and pecuniary status, conspicuous consumption may be performed with motivations of displaying other types of statuses.

Some people would like to show the devotion of their partner via conspicuous consumption. Women prefer their partners to purchase luxury items for them and they can show off the devotion of partners by displaying those products (Wang & Griskevicius, 2014). The display was considered as an effective way to prevent other women from persuading their partners. This phenomenon that men perform conspicuous consumption and women display the purchased items is a new form of conspicuous consumption.

Consumers may also perform conspicuous consumption is to show that they are competent and can afford to make own choice. This behavior of disconformity was introduced with a term “red sneaker effect” (Bellezza & Keinan, 2014). “Red sneaker effect” describes the disconformity behaviors that wearing red sneaker in a professional setting to signal owner’s competence. Similar to snob consumption, the person with disconformity behavior has a higher desire for uniqueness. When the disconformity is more noticeable, the red sneaker effect is stronger, for example, in a professional environment or in an environment that the observer is familiar with. Students perceive the T-shirt wearing professor to have higher professional status than tie wearing professor. The staff of a luxury store will perceive a client to be at higher status when the client is wearing gym clothes than wearing an elegant dress.

The desire of showing oneself as a conservative person can also be a reason for conspicuous consumption. The term “conspicuous conservation” was introduced to describe how consumers prefer “green” products to signal their participation in environment conservation (Vladas et al., 2010). They tend to choose a non-luxurious green product over luxurious non-green products even the green product is more expensive, especially when the purchase is completed in public. This phenomenon is considered as positive influence on promoting green products. The similar motivation of choosing green products can be found in other studies on the choice of green hotel (Wan & Poon, 2014), and green electricity consumption (Zhang & Wu, 2012). Green electricity is energy generated from wind power, solar photovoltaic, biomass or other green energy resources. People are more willing to pay CNY 25 (USD 3.6) than CNY (USD 2.9) 20 for one unit for green electricity, demonstrating the Veblen effect.

Another reason to perform conspicuous consumption is to show extrinsic aspiration. The extrinsic aspirations are long-term goals to accomplish on wealth, image and popularity influence, and they can motivate conspicuous consumption (Truong et al., 2010). For example, a consumer could have conspicuous consumption because the consumer finds it important to be a wealthy person.

The last reason identified, uniquely found in China, is to show “conspicuous accomplishment”. This term is used to describe a special phenomenon in China where new riches show off their personal achievement rather than effortless wealthy (Yu, 2014). The fundamental motivation is, again, to show off their current status.

Customers involved in conspicuous consumption seek values other than the utility of the products. As a result, the price of luxury goods consists of two parts: the part representing the functional value, and the part representing the symbolic value. Luxury brands have the practice of setting the price according to both functional and symbolic values (Kapferer, 2012). They could start to price the product relatively low and slowly increase the price until a stable sale is reached. Using this approach, the symbolic value of a luxury product can be discovered.

As discussed above, there are three popular types of conspicuous consumption: bandwagon effect, snob effect, and Veblen effect. Bandwagon and snob consumers differ in term of the popularity of the preferred product. The former one follows popular choice and the latter prefer unique choice. However, the purpose of both behaviors is to display social and pecuniary status. The concept of conspicuous consumption is broadened by recent studies. Different motivations of conspicuous consumption are discussed, including displaying statuses of having a devoted partner, being competent, being conservative, having extrinsic aspiration, and having accomplishment. In this study, it is worth noting that even luxury travelers are motivated by status, there may be different types of “status” they wish to display.

3.5 Conspicuous Travel and Destination

Chinese luxury travelers may enjoy both conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption. One example is that luxury shopping in Hong Kong satisfied Chinese travelers’ desire of status (Correia, Kozak, & Kim, 2017, 2018) Travel with status display purpose is referred as “conspicuous travel”, and destinations visited conspicuous purpose are called “conspicuous destinations”. Whether luxury travel is

a form of conspicuous leisure or conspicuous consumption is discussed based on the literature about conspicuous travel and destinations.

Conspicuous consumption is shifting from physical goods to experience. Veblen (1899) did not mention travel as a form of either conspicuous leisure or conspicuous consumption because travel was not so popular as it is today. The conspicuous consumption during industrial phase involves more physical goods collection, e.g. rare stone. The post-industrial phase of conspicuous consumption involves more experience collection. Shipman (2004) has provided an example of this shift: elites travel the world to watch the whales rather than carry them back home.

When travel was not a popular leisure activity, being able to travel itself is either conspicuous consumption or conspicuous leisure. When most people cannot afford travel, e.g. before the 1980s, travel is conspicuous consumption and a marker of social differentiation (Williams & Shaw, 1992). After the universalization of tourism product happened in the 1980s, tourism became "normal" or expected behavior in developed countries (Williams & Shaw, 1992). But latter, when most people have to work and do not have time to travel, travel is conspicuous leisure. For example, travel becomes conspicuous for yuppies because of high work pressure (Williams & Shaw, 1992), and the new riches in Brazil appreciated waste of time on the cruise and enjoy conspicuous leisure during the trip (Rocha, Rocha, & Rocha, 2016).

Nowadays, travel has embedded in many people's life, conspicuous travel happens under two situations. First, travelers may display their status by acquiring less accessible experience. Second, travelers seek experience which can match and express travelers' self-image.

The first situation of acquiring less accessible experience is often achieved by visiting less accessible destinations. Having been to places others have not been to is a popular reason of visiting a destination (Phillips & Back, 2011), and the minimal accessibility of a destination helps to present prestige (Riley, 1995). Overseas destinations are less accessible, thus international travel was considered as a status symbol in Brazil (Gunter & Netto, 2015), and in China (Guo, Kim, & Timothy, 2007). Space is a destination even harder to access, and space travel is a status symbol (Billings, 2006). Visiting a large number of destination is also difficult to achieve, thus

many travelers in the US visit many destinations listed on travel books to emulate with other travelers (Scott, 2010).

Less accessible experience also means the special activities during the trips, e.g. bird watching, overseas shopping, and dangerous travel experience. “Birders”, the serious birdwatchers in the US, would travel to a distant destination to watch a rare bird because being the only person who have seen the bird is an honor in the birder community (Scott, 2010). Oversea shopping behavior found is sometimes motivated by status and prestige seeking in Canada (Di Matteo & Di Matteo, 1996). Some Canadian may show the products to the guests and explicitly introduces this product as what they bought in the US. The risky and dangerous travel experience in Australia makes travelers feel that they have achieved high status and feel honored (Hillman & Radel, 2012).

The less accessible experience can also be achieved by the type of travel, e.g. incentive trip. Incentive travel for salesperson elevates their status by recognition of being a top salesperson, and also the experience of an unique incentive trip (Ricci & Holland, 1992).

The second situation of expressing self-image via travel is achieved by the choice of destinations. Whether perceived destination image matches tourist ideal social self-concept may influence destination choice (Sirgy & Su, 2000). The ideal social self-concept is the ideal self-image perceived by others. Some travelers expect that the image will be enhanced by visiting certain destinations, e.g. they will be perceived more attractive and wealthier (Phillips & Back, 2011). When travelers choose destinations based on whether the destination image can match their ideal social self-concept (Sirgy & Su, 2000), the travel is more likely to be conspicuous. During these conspicuous travel, their self-image is good, successful, important, and powerful (Todd, 2001), and they tend to repeat visiting the destinations where they had the conspicuous travel experience (Ekinci, Sirakaya Turk, & Preciado, 2013).

Conspicuous travel and destination, are two subjective concepts, highly depending on how travelers perceive a destination. Different groups of people have their different definitions of conspicuous travel and conspicuous destination, as revealed in the study of Correia, Kozak, and Reis (2014). For musicians, visiting a unique destination that people cannot recognize them was conspicuous. In contrast,

for socialites, visiting a destination where the local residents could recognize them would be conspicuous. Reporters, who emphasized learning and social knowledge, believed that visiting new destinations was conspicuous. Ordinary people considered that visiting fashionable destinations was conspicuous. The researchers have highlighted the role of conspicuousness in segmenting travelers into the four types in their recent study (Correia, Kozak, & Reis, 2016). With the same status motivation, different travelers may need more conspicuous or subtle display. Conspicuous travel is not limited by visiting specific destinations: travelers can have conspicuous travel even at a low-key destination (Kerr, Lewis, & Burgess, 2012).

Conspicuous travel may exist among Chinese luxury travelers. In a survey among Chinese luxury travelers, five percent of respondents revealed that showing status was a motivation of luxury travel (Hurun Report, 2015c). Since some people might reveal the socially acceptable motivations only, the actual rate of status-seeking motivation might be higher than five percent.

In the first situation discussed above, conspicuous travel results in choosing less accessible travel products, which is happening among Chinese luxury travelers. Those luxury destinations such as Maldives and less rarely visited destinations like the Antarctic and Arctic are popular (Hurun Report, 2015c). Chinese luxury travelers approach luxury travel agents because of their rare travel products (Cao, 2015; Hurun Report, 2015c).

In the second situation, conspicuous travel is demonstrated when travelers would like to achieve a better perceived self-image via travel activities. In China, the luxury hotels are perceived as conspicuous, expensive and something for the wealthy. Such image positively influences Chinese travelers' attitude towards luxury hotels and increases the tendency of staying in luxury hotels (Chen & Peng, 2014).

In order to display the status more easily, some Chinese luxury travelers would like to have iconic and easily recognized products. When luxury travel agents design their tour products, hotels used by Chinese luxury travelers should always be either the landmarks of the destination or international branded hotels (Cao, 2015). The conspicuous travel among Chinese tourists is probably due to their strong concern about face or status when they choose travel product (Wan & Poon, 2014). Since face

concept is important in Chinese culture, the cultural influence will be discussed in next chapter.

3.6 Chapter Summary

The two concepts conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption were discussed in 1899 by Veblen and are still widely used to explain consumer behaviors and traveler behaviors. The concept of conspicuous consumption has been extended from a social and wealth status display behavior to displays of status in various types e.g. status of being a world traveler who visited many places. Previous studies have shown that people may travel to show status by spending time and money, thus travel can be both conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption. There might be an intersection between luxury travelers and conspicuous travelers, meaning that some luxury travelers may undertake trips to signal their status. Chinese luxury travelers may enjoy both conspicuous leisure and conspicuous consumption. In this study, whether some travelers consider status as a motivation of luxury travel is used as one factor to segment Chinese luxury travelers. The summary of potential motivations of choosing luxury travel and relevant behaviors are presented in Table 6. Some of the potential motivations, including uniqueness, face, and self-identity of Chinese luxury travelers perhaps can be explained by their cultural background. In the following chapter, Chinese cultural influence will be examined.

Table 6. Summary of potential motivations based on the discussion in Chapter 3

Motivations and relevant behaviors	References
<i>Status: Conspicuous consumption</i>	(Veblen, 1899)
-Bandwagon effect, e.g. follow elites	(Chevalier & Mazzalovo, 2012; Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012, 2014; Leibenstein, 1950)
-Snob, e.g. prefer less popular luxury brands	(Kapferer, 2010; Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012, 2014; Leibenstein, 1950)
-Veblen effect, e.g. prefer expensive product	(Leibenstein, 1950)
-People feeling powerless and with lower social status desire high-status products	(Mazzocco et al., 2012; Rucker & Galinsky, 2009)
<i>Status: Conspicuous travel</i>	(Williams & Shaw, 1992)
-International travel	(Gunter & Netto, 2015; Guo et al., 2007)
-Less accessible/conspicuous destination	(Billings, 2006; Phillips & Back, 2011; Riley, 1995)
-Overseas shopping	(Guo et al., 2007; Tsang et al., 2014)
-Seasonal lifestyle travel	(Salazar & Zhang, 2013)
<i>Status: Conspicuous leisure</i>	(Veblen, 1899)
-Use social media to show the leisure time	(Hsieh, 2014; Huang & Shi, 2015; Sekhon et al., 2015)
<i>Accomplishment</i>	(Yu, 2014)
<i>Competency</i>	(Bellezza & Keinan, 2014)
<i>Devotion of partner</i>	(Wang & Griskevicius, 2014)
<i>Extrinsic aspiration</i>	(Truong et al., 2010)
<i>Face</i>	(Wan & Poon, 2014)
<i>Happiness</i>	(DeLeire & Kalil, 2010)
<i>Self-identity</i>	(Sirgy & Su, 2000; Todd, 2001)
<i>Uniqueness</i>	(Butcher, 2008; Phillips & Back, 2011)

Chapter 4 Cultural Influence

4.1 Introduction

Culture has a significant influence on luxury consumption. A study conducted in 20 different countries shows that the attitude towards luxury is different among people from different countries (Dubois, Czellar, & Laurent, 2005). For instance, in Denmark, the majority believe that luxury should be open for the population at large; in Poland, people's attitude is that luxury is only for a small number of elites; and in Portugal, the general opinion is that luxury belongs to a different world. The perception towards luxury travel consumption, as part of luxury consumption, may also be influenced by culture. Hofstede's cultural dimensions including power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity capture the differences among dominant value systems which shape human behaviors (Hofstede & McCrae, 2004). Confucianism, as a cultural factor influencing luxury consumption and travel style, will be reviewed in the following section. This chapter explains key concepts in Confucianism and discusses the relationships between Confucian values and luxury consumption or travel.

4.2 Confucianism

Confucianism, literally "The School of the Scholars" (Weber, 2009), is one of the most influential philosophical tradition in the world (Nivison & Van Norden, 1996). Originating from the teachings of Confucius or *Kung Fu Tzu* (孔夫子), it is a complex system of moral, social, political, philosophical and religious thoughts (Weber, 2009). It influences the societies including China, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore Chinese, Peninsular Malaysia Chinese, and Japan (Goodkind, 1996).

The Confucian philosophy has great influence on Chinese outbound tourism (Tse & Hobson, 2008), and may also have a strong influence on luxury consumption because it is the mainstream ideology of the elite class, who were "luxury consumers" in ancient China. The elite class developed a lifestyle with luxury consumption since Spring and Autumn period (770-476 B.C) and the Warring States (475-221 B.C.), same as what French refer to "l'Art de vivre" (the art of living) (Lu, 2008). The elite class, namely scholar-bureaucrat, are selected from national examination system called *Ke Ju* (科舉), which is dominated by Confucian philosophy.

Self-cultivation is one fundamental principle in Confucianism (Fu, Cai, & Lehto, 2015; Jacobs, Guopei, & Herbig, 1995). People are encouraged to become *ren* (仁) and *junzi* (君子), where *ren* refers to a lifelong process of becoming the most “genuine, sincere, and humane person” and *junzi* refers to the person who has committed to this process (Li, 2003). In Confucianism, people are not born with *ren* or as *junzi*, thus should commit themselves to this never-ending process of learning.

The concept of *ren* is extended to sets of values. The most popular set of values is “five virtues”: benevolence (*ren*), integrity and rightness (*yi* 義), rite and propriety (*li* 禮), moral understanding (*zhi* 智), and trust (*xin* 信) (Park & Chesla, 2007). Another extended set of values includes the above five virtues plus gentleness (*wen* 溫), modesty (*liang* 良), courteousness (*gong* 恭), frugality (*jian* 儉), and humility (*rang* 讓) (Guo & Guo, 2015). These values are all developed from the concept of *ren*.

These values are to be applied in relationships. Five principal relationships in Confucianism are ruler and subject (government and citizen), parent and child, husband and wife, older sibling and younger sibling, and friend and friend (Park & Chesla, 2007b). Five virtues are related to five principle relationships, thus, *ren* is relationship based. *Ren* can only be demonstrated when persons are in relationships with each other starting from home and family, specifically, filiality, meaning love of one’s parents (Park & Chesla, 2007b). The family orientation and group orientation features of Confucian societies are rooted in *ren*.

In Confucianism, the respect for authority is strongly emphasized (Slote & De Vos, 1998), and it is based on five relationships. The five relationships are meant to be the order of the family and society. In some of the relationships mentioned previously, the authority is clearly identified. For example, the husband has the authority to make the family decision, and the older have authority over the younger (Park & Chesla, 2007b). Whether this value will influence luxury travelers is not clear since some rich luxury travelers may be authority themselves.

Peace and harmony are also important values of Confucians, and it can only be achieved when people place themselves in the right place of a relationship (Park & Chesla, 2007b). Five relationships provide a guideline of identity, duty, and responsibility in each relationship, thus, help to maintain peace and harmony. Harmony in Confucianism have extended beyond the human relationship.

Harmonizing with nature and accepting the limitation of nature is also emphasized by Confucians (Weiming, 2004).

Face, another important value in Chinese culture, is grounded in Confucianism and penetrates the daily life of Chinese (Jacobs et al., 1995). It is the display of the accomplishment and/or desired accomplishment of a person's self-cultivation. Face is also connected to five relationships because face can solve conflicts and harmonize human relationships.

According to Jacobs et al. (1995), face has two meanings: “*lien* (臉)” referring to the personal honor and “*mien-tzu* (面子)” referring to the power to gather and command people. Face carries the meaning of “*lien*” in the term “losing face” which describes the loss of honor. The meaning of “*mien-tzu*” is found in the term “giving face” which is the gratification of appreciation of others. “*Lien*” is at the personal level, thus, everyone has it. “*Mien-tzu*” measures the social power, therefore, not everyone has it or has it equally. Many studies discussing the face concept only focused on “*mien-tzu*” which is the status related (Kim, Wan, & Pan, 2015; Salazar & Zhang, 2013; Wan & Poon, 2014).

Frugality is preferred in Confucianism (Lau, 1979). It is worth noting that extreme frugality is criticized by Confucians because of the concept *Mean*. *Chung Yung* (中庸), one important document in Confucianism, stated that *Mean* means avoiding extremes, excess or extravagance (Peng & Chang, 2012). During a conversation, the self-effacing and humble expression is appreciated in Chinese culture (Bond, Leung, & Wan, 1982). Being boastful is not encouraged in any situation (Gao, 1998).

To summarize, Confucianism, as one influential value system in China, brings many values including self-cultivation, five virtues, five relationships, peace and harmony, face, frugality, family oriented, respect for authority and filiality. These values may influence the way Chinese consume luxury products and the way they travel, and affect the motivations of Chinese luxury travelers. Thus, how Confucianism influences luxury consumption will be reviewed in section 4.3, Chinese luxury consumers and their behavior in relationship with Confucianism will be discussed in section 4.4, the influence of Confucianism on the way Chinese travel will

be reviewed in section 4.5. Confucianism may not be the only influential value system in China, thus, the contemporary Chinese values will be discussed in section 4.6.

4.3 Confucianism and Luxury Consumption

Confucianism advocates frugality, which seems to discourage luxury or extravagance. Actually, Confucianism views luxury consumption more positively and appreciate its contribution to wealth equalization (Peng & Chang, 2012). The rich bring job opportunities to the poor because of luxury consumption. This opinion is similar to Adam Smith's idea. Smith (1759) also believes that the need for luxury has public benefits since it generates employment. This is different from Veblen's (1899) idea that conspicuous consumption makes people conservative and will be a drag on social development.

In fact, adequate evidences have shown that frugality does not bring significant inhibition to luxury consumption. Frugality suggests money saving and emphasis price/quality ratio (Li et al., 2011a). Thus, frugality may lead to preference on discounted price. However, selling a luxury product at discounted price negatively affects Chinese consumers' loyalty toward luxury brand (Xiao & Zhu, 2010). Chinese are willing to pay higher prices for famous brands and expect to enhance the owners' social image by using luxury brand items (Zhang, Fang, Zhang, Cui, & Fan, 2010), suggesting the conspicuous intention of the purchase. These facts show that luxury consumers in China may be less influenced by frugality than other values, e.g. face, and group orientation.

Face, a concept introduced in section 4.2, could be a value which boosts the demand of luxury (Chan, Wan, & Sin, 2009; Le Monkhouse, Barnes, & Stephan, 2012). In Confucian society, the publicly visible possessions of goods and using symbolic goods as position indicator are very important (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). The luxury consumption becomes more conspicuous and brand-conscious because of the face concern (Mo & Roux, 2009).

Group orientation, from the concept of *ren*, is the motivation of luxury consumption in China and other Asian countries (Wang, Sun, & Song, 2011). The group orientation could be illustrated by the violation of rarity principle in Asia. According to the rarity principle, the demand of certain luxury brand may decrease when it gets too popular (Phau & Prendergast, 2000). However, this principle is not

valid in Hong Kong and Singapore because the popularity of brand increases the purchase intention of that brand (Phau & Prendergast, 2000). A popular brand would be a safe choice because it conforms the social norm which is one purpose of luxury consumption in Confucian society (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). Luxury consumption in Confucian society is, therefore, more socially oriented than seeking rarity (Mo & Roux, 2009).

The long-term orientation could prompt quality focused shopping style rather than conspicuous consumption. Chinese are found to have a utilitarian shopping style, which values the usage and quality of the product (Zhou, Arnold, Pereira, & Yu, 2010). Some segments of luxury consumers in China are looking for high quality from luxury products (Lu, 2008; Ngai & Cho, 2012).

To summarize, frugality has limited influence on Chinese luxury consumers. It only influences some Chinese luxury consumers who are long-term oriented and quality focused, in the way of encouraging to use a luxury product for a long time. Frugality may have a limited influence on luxury travel because it is perhaps impossible for luxury travelers to perform frugality by long-term usage of a product. The other two values face and group orientation may influence more on luxury travelers, given that face makes some Chinese luxury consumers more conspicuous and group orientation encourage them to consume luxury because of social norm.

4.4 Chinese Luxury Consumers

Chinese contributes to the growth of luxury spending worldwide, accounting for 31% of the world luxury consumption (Bain & Company, 2015). Even government officers choose international luxury brands, e.g. Ermenegildo Zegna. The influential power of the government in China brings a huge potential market to these brands, despite the fact that Chinese translation of “luxury” conveys both extravagant and wasteful meaning which contains criticism (Lu, 2008).

Chinese luxury consumers are younger and are looking for experiential products. Firstly, they are younger than luxury consumers in some other countries. The average age of Chinese luxury consumer is 33 (Buchwald, 2015). In the UK, about one-third of luxury consumers are over 55 and another one-third of luxury consumers are in the range of 45-54 years old (Deloitte, 2015). Secondly, their interest in luxury goods is shifting from physical goods to experiences (McKinsey & Company, 2011).

The expenditures on luxury experience products including luxury hotels or resorts, luxury spa, luxury trips or retreats, luxury cruise and private charter service all increase for one to eight percent from 2014 to 2015 (Bain & Company, 2016).

Chinese luxury consumers are not homogenous, thus, segmentation studies provide more insights on understanding these consumers compared with studies considering all luxury consumers as one type. For example, in segmentation studies, conspicuous consumption was found popular among the segment of Chinese middle-class consumers (McKinsey & Company, 2011; Zhan & He, 2012). This means that status is the most significant concern of some Chinese. In MasterCard's (2007, cited by Chevalier & Lu, 2009) study which considering all luxury consumers as a homogeneous group, status is only the number three concern of Chinese luxury consumers. The distinctive characteristics of each type of luxury consumers can be shown in segmentation studies, but are averaged in non-segmentation studies.

The characteristics of Chinese luxury consumers are discussed in this section based on the four segmentations studies listed in Table 7. These studies used (1) motivations of luxury consumption, (2) the demographic characteristics, (3) the cultural dimension and (4) the decision making to segment the Chinese luxury consumers.

Table 7. Segmentation studies of Chinese luxury consumers

Researcher(s)	Segments	Dimensions Used
(Lu, 2008)	Luxury lover, luxury follower, luxury intellectuals, luxury laggards	-Collective or individualistic -Status focused or quality focused -Analytical or impulsive -Income and education level
(McKinsey & Company, 2011)	Core luxury buyer, luxury role models, fashion fanatics, middle-class aspirants,	-Status focused or quality focused -Fashion seeking or not -Uniqueness seeking or not -Income level
(Ngai & Cho, 2012)	Overseas pack, self-established cool, luxury followers, the spirituals	-Collective or Individualistic -Status focused or quality focused -Uniqueness seeking or not -Income and education level
(Gao, Norton, Zhang, & To, 2009)	Achievers, conservatives, experiencers, followers, idealists	-Status focused or quality focused -Income and education level

One of the motivation dimensions used to segment customers is whether the consumer is more status focused or quality focused, in other words, whether the motivation of consumption is more conspicuous or functional. The findings of these segmentation studies show that both type of customers can be found in China, while whether one type of motivation is dominating in China is not clear.

The status focused segment is found in each study (Gao et al., 2009; Lu, 2008; McKinsey & Company, 2011; Ngai & Cho, 2012) while quality focused segment is only found in two studies (Lu, 2008; Ngai & Cho, 2012). It seems that the customer focusing on status is more than those focusing on quality. However, one study found that consumers focusing on status is slightly less than consumers focusing on quality (Lu, 2008).

The highly quality conscious group of customers were identified in two studies (Lu, 2008; Ngai & Cho, 2012). This demonstrated that the long-term orientation in Confucianism may have its significant influence. And the missing quality focused customer in the other two studies is probably due to a general assumption of status-seeking luxury consumption. With this consumption, the group of consumers with high-status needs will be easily recognized.

Although all studies segment customers into either status focused or quality focused, status and quality are actually not contradicting. They can actually be achieved at the same time. If luxury consumers can afford the products which carry status and good in quality, they do not need to prioritize quality or status need.

Uniqueness seeking and fashion are also motivations of luxury consumers and are used as dimensions to segment customer in two studies (McKinsey & Company, 2011; Ngai & Cho, 2012). One segment identified is individualistic and uniqueness seeking. They are young students who tend to purchase the products which can fit their own identity and enable them to establish their own trend (Ngai & Cho, 2012). Two segments focusing on fashion are identified in one study (McKinsey & Company, 2011). One of the segments also look for both uniqueness and fashion, but the other segment only focuses on fashion. The group of consumers with only fashion focus was less wealthy and shopping luxury goods on credit (McKinsey & Company, 2011).

Demographic characteristics such as income and educational level are also dimensions to segment luxury consumers. Luxury customers are mostly from the high-

income group (Gao et al., 2009; Lu, 2008; McKinsey & Company, 2011; Ngai & Cho, 2012). This could be understood because luxury consumers need to have adequate amount of income for luxury consumption. For example, the “core luxury buyers” identified by McKinsey & Company (2011) have high income and spend USD 3,000-9,000 a year on luxury goods.

The high-income customers vary in their status display motivation. Some riches do seek status display (Gao et al., 2009), but some do not (Ngai & Cho, 2012). The diverse motivations also exist among lower income groups: some of them seek status and buy luxury fashion brands, but some of them do not concern about the brand names (Gao et al., 2009). The findings of these studies suggest that the income level does not associate with the status-seeking motivation of luxury consumption.

Whether a consumer has a high education level is used as one dimension to segment customers and majority of the luxury consumers are well educated (Gao et al., 2009; Lu, 2008; McKinsey & Company, 2011; Ngai & Cho, 2012). Only one segment is associated with a low educational level (Gao et al., 2009). The customers with high educational level have various income level. If the group is rich and well-educated as well, it is usually the frequent luxury buyers group. This group of well-educated and well-off consumers are also different among themselves in term of motivation: “achievers” who would like to signal status (Gao et al., 2009) or “overseas pack” seeking quality (Ngai & Cho, 2012). Interestingly, the overseas pack who had some overseas study or work experience prefer Chinese tradition and look forward to Chinese luxury goods with high quality.

The cultural dimension collectivism or individualism is adopted in two segmentation studies (Lu, 2008; Ngai & Cho, 2012), and Chinese luxury consumers comprise balanced number of people belonging to either collectivism or individualism. Collective consumers may be all conspicuous and individualistic consumers may be all function seeking (Lu, 2008; Ngai & Cho, 2012). Chinese is considered to as a collective society because of Confucian culture, however, the biggest segment in the study of Lu (2008) is the group of consumers who are individualistic and looking to functional value. The popularity of individualism is probably due to other cultural influence in China. The contemporary Chinese culture which will be discussed in section 4.6.

The purchase decision marking is also used as a dimension to segment customers in one study (Lu, 2008). The analytical consumers who make their decision rationally are slightly more than the impulsive consumers who make their decision emotionally. It is also found that the analytical consumers will have less guilty feeling after purchasing luxury goods.

The above discussion has shown that Chinese luxury consumers have a diverse profile. Some characteristics of them can be explained by traditional Confucian values, e.g. some of them may seek for status by luxury consumption because of face concern, long-term orientation may encourage some Chinese luxury consumers to look for quality. Some of their characteristics, however, are not related to the values rooting in Confucianism.

In the new China, especially after 1979 when the opening economic policy was making the transformation of China, new values raise and influence the Chinese consumers (Lu, 2008). The influence of these new values are demonstrated by three new trends. First, more individualistic consumers are found in China. Individualism is used to be associated with western culture, and it is neither suggested by traditional Chinese culture nor supported by communist theory (Lu, 2008). However, young Chinese are willing to express themselves and will be attracted by individualism related advertisement. Second, only one segment shows their interest in traditional Chinese culture because consumers are looking for the value of modernity associated with western brands. “Modernization means a better life and the hope of prosperity” for Chinese (Lu, 2008). Modern western brands match the Chinese consumers’ desire for modernity (Lu, 2008). Third, display of income does not conform the value of humbleness in Confucianism, but demonstrate the belief of “to be wealthy is a glorious thing”, a statement made by Deng Xiaoping.

Generally, Chinese luxury consumers have high-income and high educational level. The consumers who are quality focused, individualistic, analytical are slight more than those who are status driven, collectivistic and impulsive in purchase decision. The characters of Chinese luxury consumers have shown the influence of not only the Confucian values but also the western culture.

While the luxury consumers are shifting their preference from physical goods to experience, many of them may become luxury travelers. The different types of

luxury consumers may demonstrate different motivations of luxury travel. In this study, different types of luxury travelers are identified according to their motivation for preferring luxury travel over other travel style.

4.5 Confucianism and Travel

The influence of some Confucian values on travel behaviors is often discussed in literature. These values are face, group orientation, family orientation, relationship, self-cultivation, harmony, and respect for authority. The origins of these values are explained in section 4.2, and how these values guide travelers' behavior are reviewed in this section.

The importance of face not only raises the popularity of luxury consumption, but also influences the way people travel. This association between face and travel is found in many studies (Kim et al., 2015; Mok & DeFranco, 2000; Salazar & Zhang, 2013; Wan & Poon, 2014). For example, face is the reason for Chinese travelers to be more brand conscious (Mok & DeFranco, 2000), to prefer green hotel (Wan & Poon, 2014), to choose certain destination (e.g. Korea) (Kim et al., 2015), to purchase a luxury property for seasonal travel (Salazar & Zhang, 2013), to purchase luxury goods during travel (Yang, 2016). Chinese may travel to improve self-image (Fu et al., 2015). It is suggested that luxury hotels and fine dining restaurants should provide some physical evidence of the visitation and to attract Chinese outbound tourists (Yang, 2016). Customers can use the physical evidence to better signal their status.

The emphasis on face may encourage luxury travel. Salazar and Zhang (2013) found that seasonal lifestyle tourism is considered as a symbol of high status in China. For example, travelers purchase a second house as a seasonal home, not for investment or convenience, but mainly for face. The interviewee mentioned that he spent a lot on purchasing and decorating the house because staying in small apartment with local people would make them lose face. Travelers purchased a second house because they would like to show their status.

Group orientation or conformity, which is found as a factor encouraging luxury consumption, also influences the travel behavior of Chinese. Before the trip, the travel decision is usually the results of group decision (Mok & DeFranco, 2000); during the trip, travelers may visit those most popular sites in a destination because of conformity (Hsu & Huang, 2016). In a tour group, the members generally concern a lot about

other members. If one person did not conform the group decision, he or she would be considered as selfish (Kwek & Lee, 2010).

Family orientation is also influential in travel behavior, and it is a major consideration in making travel decisions (Hsu & Huang, 2016). Family obligation, parenting responsibility, and piety are all due to family orientation. The family obligation could lead to relative visit trips (Feng & Page, 2000). The parenting responsibility will motivate a trip with kid education purpose (Fu et al., 2015). And piety may encourage people to reduce unnecessary risk and lower the tendency of going to adventurous activities (Sun, Ryan, & Pan, 2014). Piety may also encourage people to organize family trip for parents and grandparents as good as possible. Luxury travel is often good in quality and it may be popular as a gift for older parents. In China, family orientation may motivate luxury travelers. The Chinese luxury travelers mostly travel in couple and with family (HH Travel, 2016), and the trip in spring festival is mainly motivated by family members (Hurun Report, 2015c).

Frugality is found to influence Chinese travelers (Li, Lai, Harrill, Kline, & Wang, 2011b). Chinese travelers are price/quality ratio conscious. They would like to pay USD 50 to USD 100 for a room night and expect a three star or better hotel. Frugality encourages travelers to carefully assess the monetary value of different travel products (Hsu & Huang, 2016). Interestingly, Chinese also have the belief of “*Qiong Jia Fu Lu* (窮家富路)”, meaning that it does not matter if you live a life with limited finance support at home, but you need to make sure that you bring enough money when you travel in case there is anything unexpected. Thus the sufficient budget of travel is usually prepared. Whether frugality will have any influence on luxury travel is not clear.

The emphasis on relationship may encourage travel. “All within four seas are his friends” (Lau, 1979) would encourage reaching out. “Do not make friends with someone who is not as good as you” (Lau, 1979) suggests that a good social surrounding is good for one’s self-development. Luxury travel provides chances to make new friends with people of similar social status. Thus, the Confucianism may provide a positive environment for the development of luxury travel sector. A quarter (26%) of the surveyed Chinese luxury travelers indicated “Compatible Fellow Travelers” as a reason for preferring to use a travel agent (Hurun Report, 2015c). The

emphasis on relationship also encourage gift purchasing during travel. Nearly half of luxury travelers in China purchase gifts when traveling (Hurun Report, 2015c).

Self-cultivation is another value contributing to the travel motivation. One illustration is that learning about culture and history during travel is considered more important than having fun or challenges by Chinese students (Xu, Morgan, & Song, 2009). Self-cultivation also motivates Chinese travelers to travel for improving their current status at various aspects and achieving a better self, e.g. intellectual fulfilment, self-development, recreation and work-life balance (Fu et al., 2015). A famous luxury traveler in China paid high guiding fee to an art professor for three-hour introduction service in a museum, and sincerely learned from this professor for five hours. This professor was impressed and did not charge for the extra two hours (Cao, 2015). Self-cultivation may be the motivation of this luxury traveler.

Harmony between nature and people may motivate Chinese travelers to take a trip. People living in cities would like to get close to nature during the vacation to close the gap between the expected nature environment and the current environment (Fu et al., 2015). The value of harmony should be considered in practicing ecotourism (Xu & Cui, 2014). The harmony between people makes Chinese less likely to complain to service providers (Mok & DeFranco, 2000). Thus, luxury travel service providers need a better understanding of travelers' needs and wants which may not be stated clearly by travelers.

Respect for authority also plays a role in affecting tourism behavior. The value of respect for authority could be found when different interests occur in one tour group. For instance, a male tourist agreed to visit theme parks because the leader made the decision although this tourist was not interested in theme parks (Kwek & Lee, 2010). Mok and DeFranco (2000) also believe that Chinese travelers are more likely to appreciate the gift purchasing recommendation from tour guide because of respect for authority. The influence of respect for authority among luxury travelers may be not as strong as it is among other travelers since luxury travelers are likely to be the elites and "authority" in the society.

Confucianism influence the travel behaviors not only in China, but also in Korean, Japan, and Singapore. In Korea, the opinion of peers and family becomes the seniors' travel constraint due to the Confucian values which are conformity and family

orientation (Lee & Tideswell, 2005). In Japan, the destination choice, tourist activities, and travel style are related to the values of harmony, nature, and cultivation in Confucianism (Watkins & Gnoth, 2011b). Among Chinese Singaporeans, the interaction between the travel bloggers and viewers demonstrates the respect for authority which is also a Confucian value (Ng & Lee, 2014).

Confucianism values including face, group orientation, family orientation, frugality, relationship, self-cultivation, harmony, and respect for authority influence Chinese travelers greatly at various aspects including travel motivations, travel decision making, the expectation of travel product, and behaviors during the trip. These values may also influence Chinese luxury traveler while some values may have less influence, i.e. frugality and respect for authority.

4.6 Contemporary Chinese Values

4.6.1 Confucianism adapted in the modern Chinese Values

In contemporary China, the values from Confucianism have been altered or adapted to fit the new environment (Matthews, 2000), and Confucianism is preserved by modern Chinese. In order to develop a Chinese value measurement, Chinese Culture Connection (1987) asked Chinese social scientist to list at least 10 fundamental and basic values for Chinese and prepared the list of 40 value items. The items in the list were used in a survey latter for factor analysis.

Four factors are identified. The first factor, named as “integration”, includes tolerance of other, harmony with others, solidarity with others, non-competitiveness, trustworthiness, contentedness, being conservative, a close intimate and friend, filial piety, patriotism, chastity in women. The second factor, namely “Confucian work dynamism”, includes ordering relationships, thrift, persistence, having a sense of shame, reciprocation, personal steadiness, protecting your face, and respect for tradition. The third factor including kindness, patience, courtesy, sense of righteousness, and patriotism is named as “human-heartedness”. The fourth factor is called “moral discipline” and it includes moderation, keeping oneself disinterested and pure, having few desires, adaptability, and prudence (carefulness). The researcher further tested the importance of these four factors in different countries and found that the “integration” factor is most important in Germany, Netherland, and Japan, “Confucian work dynamism” factor is strongest in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Japan, “human-heartedness” is most important in Japan, Philippines, and Canada, and “moral

discipline” is significant in Philippines, South Korea, and Poland. Since mainland China was not included in the survey, the importance of Confucian values was significant in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea.

The Confucian values are unique since the “Confucian work dynamism” is not correlated to any dimension of Hofstede’s culture dimensions. Since the Confucian dynamism is one unique dimension comparing with Hofstede dimensions, latter Hofstede and Bond (1988) combined the Confucian Dynamism with other four culture dimensions. They found Confucian Dynamism was the only dimension associated with economic growth. Researchers interpreted the result as that some of the values including thrift and persistence may have a positive influence on achieving economic goals. These values guiding how people work may also guide how people enjoy leisure time.

A more recent study conducted by Hsu and Huang (2016) covering young and old groups of people living in Guangzhou and Beijing reveal more up to date information on the values in contemporary China. Chinese traditional values still play important roles in the value system. In the study, a total of 40 values were discovered during the focus group study. Among these value, 15 of them are modern values: confidence, competitiveness and competence, respect for legal practices, convenience, easy and comfortable, fame and fortune, fashion, indulgence, leisure, liberation, live in the moment, ostentation, quality of life, self-interest, and worship foreign cultures. Traditional values are being considerate of others, complacency, courtesy and morality, down-to-earth, honesty, industry (working hard), kindness, moderation, planning, respect for history, self-discipline, sense of obligation, thrift, health, horizon-broadening/novelty, knowledge and education, stability and security, collectivism, compromise, conformity, devotion to children, family orientation/kinship, filial piety, friendship, and harmony. More traditional values than modern values were revealed in their study.

4.6.2 The Rapid Change of China and Chinese Values

When the traditional values are adapting to the modern Chinese society, the importance of the modern values cannot be ignored. The traditional Chinese cultural values have undergone rapid changes (Lin & Wang, 2010), and the Chinese value system today does not only consist of values from Confucianism but also values resulted of political forces and values from other cultures.

The value of harmony is re-emphasized by the political forces in China. In 1949, Mao Zedong led the communist party and founded the People's Republic of China (BBC, 2016). Communist Party of China leads the people in developing the socialist market economy, promoting socialist democracy, developing an advanced socialist culture, building a harmonious socialist society, and promoting socialist ecological progress (News of the Communist Party of China, 2013). The introduction of “harmonious society”, as a vision of future development, however, shows that the government has acknowledged the problems and conflicts due to inequalities happened during the rapid growth of China (Chan, 2009).

Modern Chinese also adopt the values from West (Bond & King, 1985). For example, a managerial study shows that the Taiwanese management style can represent the mixture of Western rationalism and Confucian humanism (Jou & Sung, 1990). Another example is the saving rate and luxury consumption amount of Chinese. There is a world highest saving rate in China, revealing the thrift value from Confucianism; and at the same time, the luxury consumption in China is growing rapidly, demonstrating hedonism value from western culture (CNTV, 2012; Lin & Wang, 2010).

The extremely fast change of values across the generations in China in recent 50 years accompanies the defining events and revolutions China has undergone in a short period of time. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, events like Great Leap Forward, Culture Revolution, Reform and Reopen have significant influence on Chinese values. According to historic generation cohort theory, the changes of values are gradually happening among the younger generation; and events like war and revolution will strangle the chance for the existing generation to pass the values to the next generation and have strong influence on the formation of values of the people who experience the events during their coming-of-age year (Hung, Gu, & Yim, 2007). Different generations have different values and consumption behavior, showing that the life experience they have when they grow up plays an important role in shaping their values which remain persist and guide their behavior (Hung et al., 2007).

The change of values among different generations is getting even faster nowadays because of the rapid development in China. As a result, the term of “post-XX” (e.g. Post-80s) is getting more popular than the term “generation” which may

represent a time span for more than 10 years, and some people even make jokes like a gap of three years make people fall into two different generations (Feng, 2011).

4.6.3 Value Changes Across the Generations

Generations can be defined by the age as natural attributes and time and environment a person is in as social attributes (Feng, 2011), and 10-15 years will define a generation cohort in terms of time (O'Hara-Devereaux, 2013). The coming-of-age year can be used to segment consumers in different generational cohort since their values are developed during the time when they grow up and remain persist latter in their life (Hung et al., 2007). The dramatic changes happened in China in the recent 50 years may shape the values of the persons who experience different events in their coming-of-age year. The values difference among generations due to these major changes may even create conflicts between parents and children (Hung et al., 2007).

The studies about values changes among different generations in China either use the year of birth or coming-of-age year to define a generation. The ways to cut the lines between generations vary in different studies. The study conducted by Feng (2011) identified five generations in China according to the time they grow up: people who grow up before 1949, between 1949 and 1966, between 1966 and 1978, between 1979 and 1989, and between 1989 to now. Hung et al. (2007) studied the last three generations with slightly different cutting year: Red Guards who grow up during Culture Revolution (1966-1979), Modern Realists who have their coming-of-year during economic reform (1980-1991), and Global Materialists who grow up after 1992. Sun and Wang (2010) conducted value comparison among the last four generations and named them as the Great Leap Forward generation, the Culture Revolution generation, the economic reform generation, and the transition period generation. When researchers identify the generations in China, some defining events are commonly considered: the establishment of "New China", the Great Leap Forward generation, the Culture Revolution generation, the economic reform, and China's integration into the world.

The five generations living in China show different values and beliefs. Some of the values held in different generations are even contradicting: the war and PRC generation (pre-1945) seek harmony because of collectivism and the Me generation (1980-2000) are me first, believes in materialism, and would like to see the world (O'Hara-Devereaux, 2013).

Among the five generations, the two old generations were less discussed as consumer segments. The generation who were born in about 1928 to 1945 grew up during the time when the foreign investment all ended (Erickson, 2009). They and the generation before them are less discussed probably because their age makes them less active in consumption. The three young generations attract more attention.

The generation who were born from 1946 to 1964 had little education opportunities when they were young; they are loyal to the state, conform to the authority, and they do not prefer foreign things (Erickson, 2009). They may grow up during Culture Revolution (1966-1979) and are called as “lost generation”. There are two types of person who encountered losing chances in life. Broaded (1991) mainly discussed one type: those “worker-peasant-soldier” students who do not have strong academic performance were recruited as university students and experience status elevation first and status degradation soon because the university admission approach was later changed. Students who can pass examinations and have better academic performance were preferred in school and workplace. Another type of “lost generation” was sent to the countryside and lost the chance of high education or delayed the entry into universities although some of them successfully pass the examination and were admitted by universities during 1977-1980 after the university admission system was changed. Hung et al. (2007) found that they are less open to change, pessimistic, non-materialistic, and they remain frugal, conservative in their consumption, and spend money more carefully. They are less likely to purchase novelty products or foreign brands (Hung et al., 2007).

The generation who were born about 1961-1979 grew up when China had undergone reforms (1980-1991). The economy in China is shifting from centrally planned system to market system which emphasizes entrepreneurship and individual accomplishment (Hung et al., 2007). People in this generation have more emphasis on personal rights and freedom, and they receive more influence from the traditional Chinese culture and western culture (Erickson, 2009). Accumulating wealth and pursuing a comfortable life has advocated. Very different from the last generation, people in this generation seek novelty and become materialistic (Hung et al., 2007).

The young and old generations have demonstrated difference on their values. For example, individualism or collectivism dimension can differentiate the old and young generations. There is a coexistence of individualistic and collectivist value

systems (Weber, 2009), and the importance of the individualistic and collectivist values is different in old and young generations. In the young generation, aspiration for self-actualization, and worshipping Western lifestyle is popular (Wei & Pan, 1999); while in the old generation, practicality and asceticism are more important than one's own needs (Scarry, 1996; cited by Lin & Wang, 2010).

In addition to individualism and collectivism, the study by Sun and Wang (2010) added one more dimension, the secular-orientation or ideology orientation dimension, and also identified different perceived importance of values in different generations. They consider individualism and secular-orientation as modern value and collectivism and ideology orientation as traditional value, and found that the youngest generation score highest on modern values and the Great Leap Forward generation shows the lowest score. As might be unexpected, the youngest generation has the highest score on traditional values as well, and it was explained by the education emphasis on traditional culture. The younger generation also considers "enjoyment" more important compared with the older generation, probably showing a favor of hedonism. And the value "family" is perceived important across different generations.

The society in China is shifting from communist with social welfare to a consumer-driven market economy promoting individual social responsibility, (O'Hara-Devereaux, 2013). Since the values of generations are formed by what they experienced when they are growing up, these major shifts may shape the values and beliefs of the new generations. The Generations Y is growing up when China is having rapid economic growth. They have experienced major events like the rise of social media, and their values are largely influenced by these changes in China. Their characteristics will be discussed in more details in the followings.

4.6.4 Values of The Young Generations

The generation Y were born in the years from 1980 to 1995 and grew up in a more open society when China was entering the global community (Erickson, 2009; Feng, 2011). Because of China's Reform, western culture and Chinese traditional culture were welcomed again during the time when Post-80 was growing up. Thus their values are diverse (Cheng & Foley, 2017).

This generation was born when China was implementing one-child policy, thus, grow up in an environment where family members all try to indulge them (Hung

et al., 2007). They are portrayed as little emperors and people who show less caring towards others (Cheng & Foley, 2017). The traditional Chinese value of the relationship between siblings becomes weak. They are individualistic, self-centered, and freedom-seeking (Cheng & Foley, 2017).

The young generation grew up in the commodity society when China has well developed in material wealth and they enjoy it without much consideration about their responsibilities toward the society (Feng, 2011). They have strong novelty seeking and materialistic values; thus they may have more conspicuous consumption and prefer foreign brands (Hung et al., 2007). They seek for good quality of life and look for hedonistic values more than utilitarian values (Cheng & Foley, 2017). To strive for materialistic, hedonistic values and status display, they may look for an economic success (Erickson, 2009).

The post-80s generation shows different lifestyle and beliefs compared with their parents. Because they grow up in an open era, they are more westernized in terms of diet and interest of trendy products. Since they have been enjoying the material wealth in Chinese society (Feng, 2011), they desire better products and services. The reasons for preferring innovative and high-end service show some of their values and beliefs: pleasing oneself, emphasizing personal taste, and being trendy (Wong, 2017). In term of travel, they like adventurous but safe journeys (Cheng & Foley, 2017), and prefer a relaxing and slow way of travel (Feng, 2011).

In terms of the traditional culture influence on this generation, different studies show different results. Feng (2011) argues that the traditional Chinese culture has little influence on them. They are trendy, energetic, independent, “the products of a commercialized society and of modern means of science and technology” (Feng, 2011). But Sun and Wang (2010) found a high score of traditional value among the youngest generation which is probably a result of the emphasis on traditional Chinese culture in education.

The young generation has higher openness to change, lower conservation value, lower self-enhancement value, and strong self-transcendence (Tang, Wang, & Zhang, 2017). The characteristics of the young Chinese show many similarities compared with the generation Y in the US who have high self-esteem, narcissism, less concern on social rules, more likely to change job often and dislike conformity

(Twenge & Campbell, 2008). The generation Y in the US experience depression and anxiety (Twenge & Campbell, 2008) and the generation Y in China also have low happiness level due to the increasing cost of housing. The difference is that when the generation Y in the US worry about their personal control over the environment (Twenge & Campbell, 2008), those in China have a more positive attitude towards their future income and are willing for spend future money (Feng, 2011).

When the role of women is changing dramatically among the generation Y in the US and the socioeconomic status indicators like income and education are increasing among women (Twenge & Campbell, 2008), young women in China also become more independent, self-conscious, and open-minded (You, 2012). The change of value is contributed by travel. Generation Travel (Generation T) refers to the Chinese women who are at their 20-30-something and whose values are shaped by travel (You, 2012). The change of value is more significant because the culture in China is more traditional, and the women travelers become less eager about stable life and are more willing to challenge traditions after having the travel experience (You, 2012).

4.6.5 Factors Influencing the Value Changes

The formation of values is closely related to the personal experience and environment. Thus some demographic factors may influence value changes. The literature on value changes in China reveal five factors which shape the important of certain values. The five factors are life stage, social status, the region of residence, value orientation, and government forces.

People in different life stages may perceive the importance of values differently. The generational cohort theory suggests that the values which are shaped when they grow up will remain stable and guide the behavior, while life stage theory reveals that people in the same life stage share similar values (Cheng & Foley, 2017). In the reality, both of them can be observed. The generation effect is found in a study of happiness, e.g. the people born in 1960 are more likely to have depression compared with the people born in the years earlier and after; at the same time, the life stage effect can also be found since people are happier when they are under the protection of family, more depressed when they grow up and have more responsibilities, and happier again after 55 when they start to prepare for retirement (Su & Yao, 2016). In the study of Sun and Wang (2010), it is found that the young generation in China

places a high importance of “self-development”, in contrast to the older generation. Although the change of importance of “self-development” was explained by the shift of values over time by the researcher, the life stage of the participants may play a role.

Chinese luxury travelers may include a significant number of elites in China and the social status of elites is relatively more stable even under the dramatic changes happening in China. In the study of Chen, Naidu, Yu, and Yuchtman (2015), the socioeconomic status is measured by the educational attainment among the three generations: pre-Mao, Mao, and post-Mao. Other than education, father’s Communist Party membership, whether they live in the coastal or inland region, whether father works in public or private sector will have an influence on children. In most of the time, the social status is stable and the children of the elites are also more competitive in the education system. Broaded (1991) reviewed the “lost generation” who have joined universities as “worker-peasant-soldier” and experienced the sudden change of status. The status elevation and degradation brought by the education system does not influence much on people with the political elite background but influence a lot on the “worker-peasant-soldier” from humble origins (Broaded, 1991).

The region of residence, as part of the socioeconomic status, may have an influence on the western culture acceptance. In Beijing, the customers are more quality oriented and less prestige oriented comparing with customers in Guangzhou (Li & Gallup, 1995; cited by Lin & Wang, 2010). Shanghai has a “materialistic” value system compared with other regions (Wei & Pan, 1999). In Hong Kong, the importance of Chinese values is affected by western culture. The study conducted by Wong and Lau (2001) shown that Hong Kong Chinese tourists did not rate face as an important factor during the trip. The less focus on protecting face might be due to the “east meets west” special cultural background in Hong Kong.

The influential power of different values on Chinese travelers will be affected by the value orientation of individuals (Pearce, Wu, & Osmond, 2013). It is believed that: family and relationship focused travelers, society and government focused travelers, business and money focused travelers are dominated by Confucianism value system, Communism and Capitalism correspondingly.

Chinese government influences the Chinese value system a lot. For example, the number of consumer complaints is increasing because of government’s

promotional campaign on customer rights (Ho, 1997; Lin & Wang, 2010). The introduction of anti-corruption and anti-extravagance campaigns in 2013 by Chinese government suppress the extravagant travel behavior and luxury gifting (Moshinsky, 2015). Government head who spend a lot on luxury hotel and travel has been removed from office (Xinhua, 2013), and this demonstrates government's influence on the luxury travel industry in the segment of government officers. Many luxury brands encountered a double-digit percentage decline in sales in 2015. The government campaign in China is usually influential and persistent, thus, may play a role in shaping the development of luxury travel market, especially the share of luxury trips undertaken by government officers.

The contemporary Chinese values consist of traditional Chinese values especially values from Confucianism, and modern values from Western culture. While some traditional values remain powerful in influencing Chinese behavior, the values have been significantly changed over the last 50 years in China due to several major events happened. Different generations who have experienced these events when they grew up have shifted their values. The values persist and still guide their behavior. While Chinese culture is generally perceived as collective, the individualism is getting stronger among the young generations. The generation Y in China is more westernized in terms of their values and behaviors. Other than the generation cohort theory which explains the value change, the life stage, social status, region of residence, value orientation and government forces may also influence the perceived level of importance of values at a particular time period.

4.7 Chapter Summary

The Confucian values including face, group orientation, frugality, family orientation, self-cultivation, harmony, and respect for authority have far-reaching influence on Chinese luxury consumers and travelers. Considering that Chinese luxury travelers are part of Chinese luxury consumers or Chinese travelers, these values may influence the motivations or behavior of Chinese luxury travelers. The potential motivations of luxury travelers based on the discussion in this chapter is presented in Table 8. Many modern values from contemporary Chinese value system may also influence Chinese luxury travelers, and the influential power is different among different age groups and regions. Thus, in this study, the variety of age and residence place of participants is a consideration during the recruitment of luxury travelers.

Several segmentation studies have identified different types of luxury consumers in China. For example, around half is quality focused and another half is status focused. It is possible to find different types of luxury travelers in the current study as well. Hence, Chinese luxury travelers are segmented after the analysis. This chapter captures how traditional Chinese values are influencing travel and luxury consumption, and how the values of Chinese are changed over time. The means-end theory which links the product preference with human values will be explained in the next chapter. The discussion focuses on why this theory could be helpful for addressing the research question.

Table 8. Summary of potential motivations based on the discussion in Chapter 4

Potential motivations of luxury travel	References
Face	(Chan et al., 2009; Jacobs et al., 1995; Kim et al., 2015; Le Monkhouse et al., 2012; Mok & DeFranco, 2000; Salazar & Zhang, 2013; Wan & Poon, 2014; Wong & Ahuvia, 1998)
Family orientation	(Feng & Page, 2000; Fu et al., 2015; Sun et al., 2014)
Group orientation	(Hsu & Huang, 2016; Mo & Roux, 2009; Mok & DeFranco, 2000; Phau & Prendergast, 2000; Wang et al., 2011)
Long term	(Lu, 2008; Ngai & Cho, 2012; Zhou et al., 2010)
Quality	(Lu, 2008; Ngai & Cho, 2012)
Self-cultivation	(Fu et al., 2015; Jacobs et al., 1995; Xu, Morgan, & Song, 2009)
Status	(Gao et al., 2009; Lu, 2008; McKinsey & Company, 2011; Ngai & Cho, 2012; Zhan & He, 2012)
The art of living	(Lu, 2008)
Uniqueness	(McKinsey & Company, 2011; Ngai & Cho, 2012)
Wealth equalization	(Peng & Chang, 2012)
Worshipping Western lifestyle	(Scarry, 1996; cited by Lin & Wang, 2010; Wei & Pan, 1999)

Chapter 5 Means-End Theory

5.1 Introduction

The Chinese values may have an influence on the consumption behaviors of Chinese. Their consumption of luxury travel products relates to the values they strive for. This chapter introduces the connection between product attributes and human values which is the core idea of the means-end theory, explains the reasons why this idea is suitable to be applied in this study, and then review the current use of means-end theory in tourism or other research fields to have a better understanding of its applications in different research topics. Since values are the essential concepts in means-end theory, this chapter also discusses Rokeach's studies on human value concepts.

5.2 Means-end Theory

The means-end theory is rooted in Rokeach's (1968) idea of beliefs and values. Belief is a proposition inferred from what a person says or does and it cannot be directly observed (Rokeach, 1968). Rokeach (1968) believes that the importance levels of beliefs are not equal. Some of the beliefs are more central and resist change, such as "value". There might be tens of beliefs but only dozens of values. It is the core of the belief system about how one ought to behave or about the end-state of existence to attain (Rokeach, 1968), thus values will influence human actions.

There are two types of values: instrumental values which are the desirable modes of conduct (e.g. clean, honest, loving, logical), and terminal values which are the desirable end-states of existence (e.g. freedom, happiness, true friendship, self-respect) (Rokeach, 1968). These values are distinguished as means- and ends- values. Both types of values constitute the value system which is "an enduring organization of beliefs" (Rokeach, 1968).

Based on the assumption that values govern behaviors, Gutman (1982) proposed the means-end chain model to provide insights on marketing strategy. The meaning of "means" and "end" has changed. Means are the products or activities in which people engage. For example, travel could be one of these activities. Ends are the values which are the desirable end status (e.g. happiness). The role of value is the most important assumption of this model, there are three other assumptions: 1), customers will group products based on values to reduce the complexity of choices;

2), all consumer actions have consequences which are the direct or indirect result of consumers' behavior; 3), consumers will associate consequences with actions.

Gutman's (1982) model for means-end chain describes three parts of the decision-making process: firstly, customer's behavior of choice causes consequence; secondly, these consequences are evaluated by values and customers will learn to distinguish desired and undesired consequences; thirdly, sequences became criteria and customer will group products based on product attributes and make choice based on the consequences. The core idea is that consequences link the values and product attributes, which allows values indirectly influence consumers' product choices.

Other than the core idea of Gutman (1982)'s model, three issues are addressed in his proposal and are related to this study. First, he mentioned that culture may produce values. Thus, cultural background of Chinese travelers is considered as an influential factor in this study. Second, he suggested that the model can also help to determine why some products are not chosen. Thus, when the motivations for choosing luxury travel are discovered, the reasons why other types of travel products are not chosen can also be found. Third, customers' understanding of sequences and values associated with the product attributes is developed based on previous experience, thus, the previous luxury travel experience of luxury travelers is important in understanding their motivations.

5.3 Application of Means-End Theory in Research

The means-end theory links product attributes and customers' values. It has been applied to investigate consumer behaviors, e.g. motivations of purchasing organic food (Zanoli & Naspetti, 2002), and has also been used in tourism research to explain tourist motivations and behaviors. Klenosky (2002) applied means-end theory to explain the attributes of destination as pull factors of travelers. Jiang et al. (2015) also applied the theory in exploring the motivations of Chinese outbound tourists. Ho, Lin, and Huang (2014) explored the motivations behind working holiday taken by Taiwanese. The existing studies adopting the means-end theory show that this theory is an effective theoretical background for studies related to motivations, thus, it is used in the current study to explore the motivations of Chinese luxury travelers.

The research question of the current study can be well addressed by means-end theory. When travelers are asked to describe their motivations, they either mention

a concrete construct, e.g. penguin in the Antarctic, or mention an abstract construct, e.g. excitement. There could be an underlying relationship between abstract construct and the concrete construct. For example, the relation could be that the penguin in the Antarctic brings excitement. If one person mentions penguin and another person mentions excitement, it is possible that they actually have the same motivations. But without discovery the association between penguin and excitement, the finding might be that the motivations of two persons are different, which is not true. The means-end theory provides an idea to link all these constructs. Since this study aims to explore the motivations of Chinese luxury travelers, the means-end theory can guide this study by mapping the luxury travel preference with the underlying values motivating them to travel in luxury.

As shown in Table 9 which lists the studies adopting the idea of means-end theory, a few studies conducted quantitative analysis and many studies use laddering interview to explore the perception and choice of travel. Since the topic of this study is rarely explored, a qualitative approach will enable the researcher to collect rich and in-depth information. The widely used laddering technique will be adopted in this study and will be explained in details in Chapter 6.

Table 9. Studies using means-end theory

Studies	Topic	Sample	Technique
(Klenosky, 2002)	Destination choice	53	Laddering interview
(Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2009)	Host attitudes in the destination	Proposal	Laddering interview
(Mattila, 1999)	Perception towards luxury hotels	61	Laddering interview
(Watkins & Gnoth, 2011b)	Travelers' choice of activities	14	Laddering interview
(Chen, 2006)	The experience of sport tourists	33	Laddering interview
(Ho et al., 2014)	Motivations of working holiday	60	Laddering interview
(Kashyap & Bojanic, 2000)	Differences between leisure and business travelers	444	SEM
(Petrick & Backman, 2002)	Revisit intention of golf travelers	448	CFA and MAC
(Madrigal, 1995)	The influence of value and personality on travel style	514	Multiple regression and t-test

5.4 Categorization and Characteristics of Values

Values serve as standards to guide people in different ways, for example in decision making (Rokeach, 1973). As mentioned in 5.2, there are two types of values. Terminal values are concepts about ultimate goals or desired end-state, and instrumental values are the concepts about the behavior modes to reach the end-states (Rokeach, 1979). For example, being loving (an instrumental value) can be a mode of behavior to reach mature love (a terminal value). Both types of values are motivational (Rokeach, 1973). By behaving the modes which instrumental values reveal, the desired end-state may be achieved as a reward, thus, instrumental values are motivational. The end-state which terminal values represent are those what people may strive for, thus terminal values are also motivational. Values are closely linked to needs since they are the cognitive representation of needs (Rokeach, 1973). The individual needs, again, may have motivational components. Considering the motivating competent in values, applying the concepts of values in the current study about motivations seems suitable.

An assumption of Rokeach's discussion on value system is that the number of values is small. The list of values used in Rokeach's value survey includes 18 terminal values and 18 instrumental values.

The terminal values are: 1) wisdom which means a mature understanding of life, 2) freedom which means independence and having free choice, 3) self-respect which refers to self-esteem, 4) a sense of accomplishment which is lasting contribution, 5) a world at peace which is the status of free of war and conflict, 6) equality which means the brotherhood and equal opportunity for all, 7) a world of beauty which refers to the beauty of nature and the arts, 8) inner harmony which is freedom from inner conflict, 9) family security which concerns taking care of loved ones, 10) social recognition which means the respect and admiration, 11) happiness which is the contentedness, 12) an exciting life which refers to a stimulating and active life, 13) a comfortable life which means a prosperous life, 14) true friendship which refers to close companionship, 15) mature love which is the sexual and spiritual intimacy, 16), national security which means the protection from attack, 17) pleasure which refers to an enjoyable and leisurely life, and 18) salvation which means the saved and eternal life. The terminal values can be further categorized into two types:

personal values which are self-centered (e.g. freedom) and social values which has more interpersonal focus (e.g. a world of peace) (Rokeach, 1973).

The instrumental values are: 1) being intellectual which means being intelligent and reflective, 2) being capable which is being competent and effective, 3) being honest which is being sincere and truthful, 4) being responsible which refers to being dependable and reliable, 5) being imaginative meaning being daring and creative, 6) being independent which refers to being self-reliant and self-sufficient, 7) being broadminded which is being open-minded, 8) being logical which means being consistent and rational, 9) being ambitious meaning being hard-working and aspiring, 10) being helpful which means working for the welfare of others, 11) being courageous which refers to standing up for your beliefs, 12) being self-controlled which refers to being restrained and self-disciplined, 13) being loving which is being affectionate and tender, 14) being forgiving meaning willing to pardon others, 15) being cheerful which refers to being lighthearted and joyful, 16) being polite which is being courteous and well-mannered, 17) being clean which means being neat and tidy, and 18) being obedient which is being dutiful and respectful. The instrumental values include two types: moral values which have interpersonal focus (e.g. being honest) and competence values which are about self-actualization and have more personal focus (e.g. being intellectual) (Rokeach, 1973).

After developing the set of values, Rokeach (1979) had conducted a number of studies to survey the perceived importance of these values as the guidance of life among different groups of people. For example, scientists value a sense of accomplishment most important and salvation least important among all terminal values, and they value honest the most important and obedient least important among all instrumental values. Students in Australia value happiness most important while the parents value family security most important among all terminal values. For instrumental values, both students and parents rank being honest as the most important value. The importance of values as the guiding principles of life can be different among different groups of people.

The perceived importance of values may also change over time. As demonstrated in Rokeach's (1979) another survey on the changes of values of American over three years from 1968 to 1971, a world at peace remains the most important terminal value, but social recognition becomes significantly less important

in 1971 compared with 1968. Although values are the core of the belief system and are relatively stable, they may change over time. The change of values is also happening in China, as discussed in 4.6, the values of the younger generations in China will gradually replace the values of older generations.

The changing of values can also be observed by looking at the values of people from different age groups and Rokeach (1973) found 14 development patterns. Eight patterns show the decrease of importance in old age: 1) the values which people perceived less important when they are young and gradually more important and become less important again during old age are accomplishment, wisdom and responsibility; 2) values which suddenly becomes important only during college year are intellectual, logical and inner harmony; 3) values which are important in early age but less important in college and afterwards include beauty, true friendship and polite; 4) one value which importance drops at year 11-14 is obedience; 5) the values which are moderately important but getting less important after adolescence are an exciting life and pleasure; 6) the value which is the second important value during early adolescence and linearly decreases in its importance over the years is loving; 7) the value which appears at fifth important for people in college time and gradually become less important is mature love; 8) values which show gradually decrease of importance during adolescent years are comfortable life, cheerful, clean, forgiving, helpful.

Other six patterns are: 9) values which become important during college and remain important are self-respect, ambitious and broadminded; 10) values which are perceived as similarly important during almost all ages except late adolescence and college time are peace, family security and capable, 11) values showing sudden decrease and increase often are equality and independent, 12) value which has little importance at young age and becomes more and more important when people getting older is salvation, 13) value which appears to be unimportant at the beginning and becomes more important during adolescence and college time is national security, 14) stable values include freedom, happiness, social recognition, courageous, honest, and self-controlled. The observations of values in different age groups echo the idea of life stage theory, which implies that people in the same life stage will share similar values (Cheng & Foley, 2017). The importance of values, thus, may change over one person's lifetime.

Since income and educational level are two indicators of status, Rokeach (1973) also tested whether income and educational level have any influence on values. The results show that the more than half of the values are perceived in different importance level, e.g. richer the respondents, less important clean and comfortable life is perceived. It was explained that clean and comfortable life are not less important for rich people but were taken for granted. The richer placed more importance on values related to capability, intelligence, and self-actualization.

The difficulties of the understanding values are shown in the above example of ranking clean and comfortable life low. A person may rank a value high because it is not achieved yet, or it is achieved but more is desired; a person may rank a value low because it is achieved, not achieved and not desired, or the value cannot be understood or appreciated by the person yet (Rokeach, 1973). It is difficult to interpret the survey results because the items ranked low are not necessarily less important than the others if they take these values for granted. The difficulty also comes from the way values are applied. There might be single or double or even triple standards when values are applied (Rokeach, 1973). People may apply the value to either everyone, oneself only or others only.

One of the important assumptions of the value system discussion is that the antecedents of human value can be linked to culture, society, institutions, and personality (Rokeach, 1973). Although values are related to society, values are different from social norms because: firstly, value is mode of behavior or end-state while social norm is the mode of behavior only; second, value can be applied in different situation while social norm is situation specific; third, value is more internal and personal while social norm is external and agreed.

Rokeach's value survey has been used some studies conducted among Chinese, and the differences exist between the value systems in China and other countries. Feather (1986) investigated and compared the value systems in China and Australia. Chinese and Australian consider some of the values as similarly important, e.g. freedom and friendship. But Chinese place more importance on values including "a world of beauty", "national security", "pleasure", "social recognition", "wisdom", "being ambitious", "being capable", "being courageous", "being imaginative", "being intellectual", "being logical", and "being self-controlled" compared with Australian. The researcher did not discuss the relationship between these value differences and

cultural background difference. Latter, Wang, Rao, and D'Auria (1994) compared the perceived importance of values in China and in the US by applying the Rokeach value survey. They studied instrumental values only and significant differences were found from the comparison: being honest, being ambitious, and being responsible were the most important instrumental values in the US, and being cheerful, being polite, and being independent were ranked most important among Chinese. The researchers further explained the differences by tracing the cultural influence: being cheerful is advocated in Confucianism which forms an important part of Chinese value system; being independent shows the influence of Marxism and western individualism.

Since Rokeach developed the value surveys without taking specific attention on Chinese local culture, the listed values may not fully represent the values and beliefs in China. China has undergone dramatic changes in recent decades and change of values among different generations is getting rapid. Even if Rokeach did include Chinese culture into the consideration, these studies may not reveal the current values and beliefs among Chinese. Never the less, it is believed that values of the person remain relatively stable and guide the behaviors, thus, can reveal the underlying reasons of travel preference. And these studies have shown important characteristics of values to be considered when the values are reviewed to explain the luxury travel motivations: 1), values may change in different life stages, 2), values may change across the generations, 3), values may be different among people who have different income level.

5.5 Chapter Summary

Rokeach has identified 18 terminal values and 18 instrumental values. Different people may consider the importance of these values differently, and the personal values as a whole show the end-state one-person desire to achieve. The values are guiding people in the daily life including product choice. The means-end theory, thus, is developed based on Rokeach's idea of human values. There are three important concepts in means-end theory: attributes, consequence, and values. The product attributes what customers prefer are related to the consequences desired by the customers, and further linked to the values of the consumers. This idea is suitable to be applied in researches which aims to explore the underlying reasons behind the preference. Although values are guiding the human behavior, conflicts can exist among values (Rokeach, 1973). For example, being honest can have a conflict with

friendship if honest behavior brings any harm to the interests of friends. This study does not aim to reveal the comprehensive value system of Chinese, but will focus on exploring the motivational values of luxury travel among Chinese travelers.

Chapter 6 Research Design and Methodology

6.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of two parts. The first part explains the methodology for this study, starting with the discussion of different approaches: qualitative and quantitative approach, inductive and deductive approach. Then, the philosophical paradigm, the ontology, and epistemology will be clarified. Phenomenology, which is the philosophical paradigm for this study, will be discussed in details. Laddering technique which is the data analysis technique in the current study will be explained. The second part introduces the research design details including the procedures of two phases of this study, triangulation, population, and sampling; and examines the reliability, validity, data collection, analysis, and limitation of the research design.

6.2 Research Framework

The research framework is presented in Figure 3. The first part (including the three gaps) of the research framework summarizes the literature review. The main aim of the current study is to explore the motivations of Chinese luxury travelers. The literature regarding the motivations of travel is reviewed and little explanation is found on the reasons for luxury travelers to choose this particular travel style. The literature on motivations of luxury consumption shows that conspicuous consumption can be explanation for people adopting luxury style and status would be the value seek by consumers. It is found that Chinese cultural background influences Chinese motivations of luxury consumption and motivations of travel. Thus, the cultural influence may also be found on motivations of Chinese luxury travelers.

In order to achieve the objectives in section 1.6 and answer the research question about motivations of Chinese luxury travelers, the latter part of the research frameworks guides the study. The means-end theory is adopted in the current study. In order to achieve objective 1, the understanding of luxury traveler's motivations is obtained from both luxury travel agents' perspective and luxury travelers themselves. One basic assumption of the means-end theory is that customers make decisions based on whether the product matches the values they are looking for. Thus, the match between luxury travel product and luxury travelers' values can motivate them to travel in this particular style. According to the different "means" and "end" of the luxury travelers, they are segmented into different groups, thus the objective 2 is achieved.

Referring to the literature about luxury consumption and Chinese culture, the findings will be further discussed to explore the role of luxury travel as a luxury product and the influence of Chinese culture on the motivations of luxury travelers.

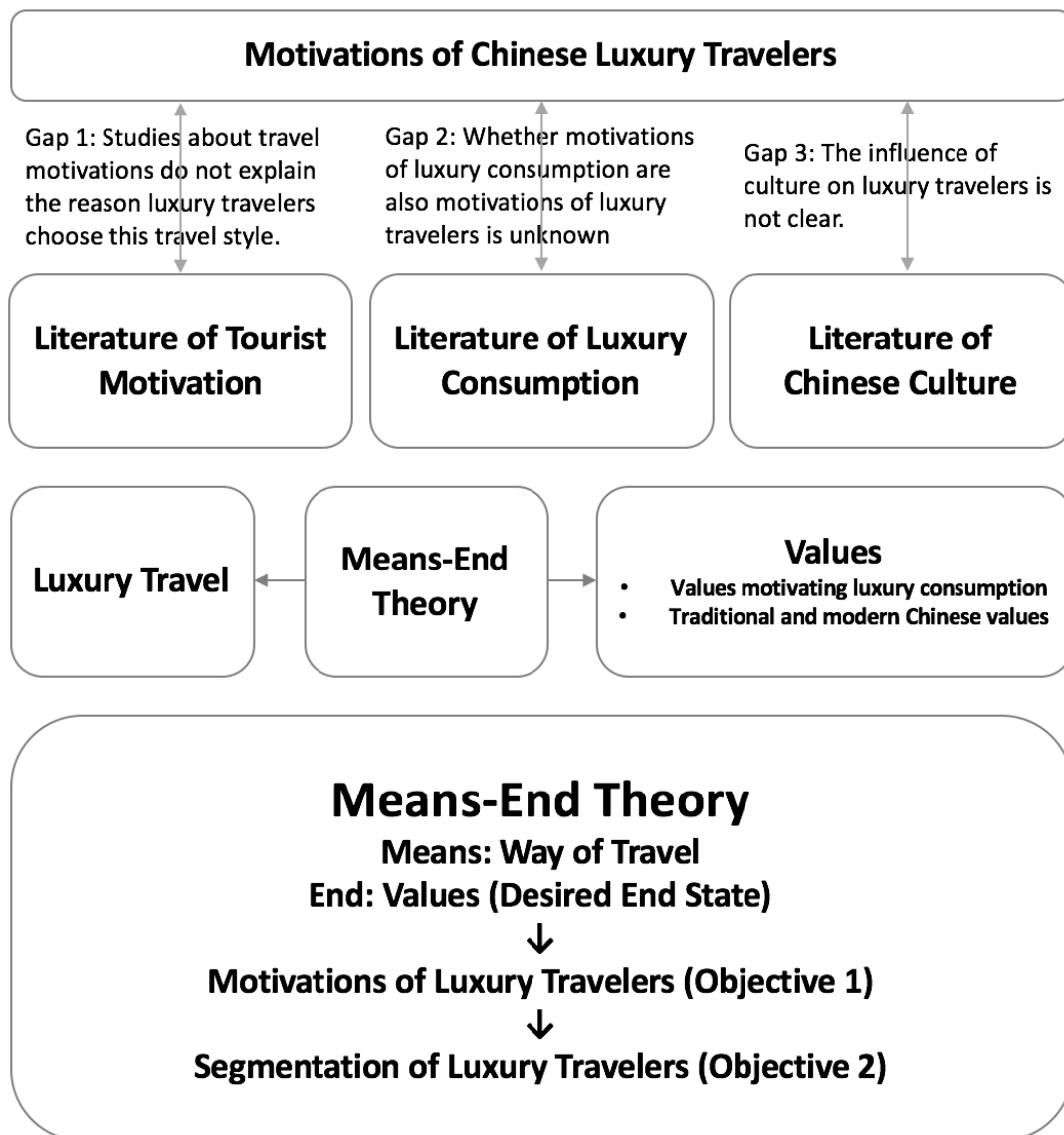


Figure 3. Research framework

6.3 Methodology

6.3.1 Qualitative and Quantitative Research

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods are legitimate and valuable (Melkert & Vos, 2010; Walle, 1997). The characteristics of these two methods will be reviewed before deciding one of them or both of them should be used in this study.

The quantitative research method is associated with positivist research paradigm (Melkert & Vos, 2010). It is mainly based on collecting a small amount of

data from a sample, which should be representative of the population (Jennings, 2001). On the other hand, qualitative research methods are grounded in interpretive social science paradigm (Jennings, 2001). It tends to collect in-depth information from a small number of participants (Melkert & Vos, 2010), does not aim to represent a wider population (Jennings, 2001), but to provide rich and descriptive information (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). In terms of the approach and procedure, quantitative method is more strictly structured and qualitative method is more flexible.

The quantitative method has the advantage of rigor and qualitative method has the advantage of rich data. To have the advantages of both methods, the qualitative and quantitative methods are sometimes combined in one study (Melkert & Vos, 2010). This is called mixed method approach. Although mixed method aims to utilize both qualitative and quantitative methods, there will still be a predominant use of one method (Jennings, 2001). In some studies, the two different methods are used in different stages of the study and are serving different purposes, for example, using qualitative method for scale development of an under-researched topic and adopting quantitative method to test the scale developed. The two stages are related to the same topic but carry different purposes. Thus, even if the mixed method is used in one study, researchers should still be aware of the strength and weakness of each method in each stage.

6.3.2 Inductive and Deductive Approach

Inductive and deductive approaches represent the different ways new knowledge is generated. Inductive research starts with observing the patterns, continues with developing theories via a series of hypotheses and testing the hypotheses against the new cases until saturation (Bernard, 2011). Qualitative method is inductive in nature, starting from real-world setting and ending at a generated theory (Jennings, 2001). Data are collected and analyzed, and then theories are generated or modified.

Deductive research starts with theories (Bernard, 2011). Hypotheses are developed from theories and then are either confirmed or rejected by observations (Bernard, 2011). Quantitative methodology is deductive in nature, starting from theories and hypotheses (Jennings, 2001). Generally, a less known topic leads to more inductive approach, thus the qualitative method is more suitable. Confirmatory research on a topic with much available information will lead to deductive approach,

and quantitative method will often be adopted. Similar to that qualitative and quantitative can be mixed to facilitate a research, real research can also be a mix of inductive and deductive approaches (Bernard, 2011).

Considering the fact that little knowledge about luxury traveler is available, and motivations are underlying reasons which can be better explored by in-depth communication with the travelers, thus, an inductive approach is suitable and qualitative method is used in this study.

6.3.3 Theory Development

There are five aspects of theory: the direction of theorizing, the level of analysis, the theoretical focus, the form of explanation, and the range of theorizing (Neuman, 2005). These five aspects will also be discussed in order to clarify which type of knowledge will be generated from this study.

The first aspect of the theory is the direction of theorizing which can be deductive or inductive (Neuman, 2005). As discussed in the previous section, the deductive direction is from abstract theory to more concrete empirical evidence; while the inductive direction is from concrete empirical evidence to more abstract theory. This study adopts an inductive approach.

The second aspect is the level of analysis (Neuman, 2005). A theory can be: (1) micro-level of analysis, which focuses on social life that happens over short duration with a few individuals and often involves direct personal physical contact; (2) macro-level of analysis, which focuses on large-scale social events in long duration, e.g. decades; or (3) meso-level of analysis, which focuses on level of organizations, social movements or communities. This study contributes to meso-level theory focusing on the community of luxury travelers.

The third aspect of the theory is whether the theoretical focus is substantive or formal (Neuman, 2005). The substantive theory focuses on particular topic or content; formal theory focuses on general processes or structures operating in multiple areas, this, it is more general and abstract. This study focuses on the particular content of luxury travelers in China and contributes to substantive theory.

The fourth aspect is whether the form of explanation is theoretical or ordinary (Neuman, 2005). A theoretical explanation tells why something occurs or takes in a specific form, and an ordinary explanation makes something clearly illustrated, e.g.

what good teachers do. In this study, both types will be generated. The relationship between product attributes and the values travelers are seeking belongs to the theoretical explanation. The attributes distinguishing luxury travel products and other travel products are an ordinary explanation.

The fifth aspect is the range of theorizing (Neuman, 2005). The range could be from empirical generalization to theoretical framework. Empirical generalization is a narrow statement regarding a specific case, fitting into a substantive theory. The theoretical framework is a very general theoretical system consisting of both substantive and formal theories. This study mainly contributes to empirical generalization theory.

6.3.4 Philosophical Paradigm

As stated in the previous two sections, this study will adopt an inductive approach and use a qualitative method to generate meso-level, substantive, ordinary explanation and empirical generalization type of theory. The belief system guiding researcher and research process is called philosophical paradigm and will be discussed in this section (Guba & Lincoln, 1994)

A research paradigm refers to the beliefs, assumptions, and values underlying the way of interpreting the reality (Jennings, 2001). Most quantitative studies are guided by positivism or post-positivism paradigm (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). These two paradigms occurring in the early stage of last century are more nature science rooted and share the belief that knowledge is to be discovered instead of created. Some other paradigms appeared latter and lead to qualitative methods (Jennings, 2001).

Research paradigm, as a belief system, includes ontological, epistemological, and methodological beliefs (Jennings, 2001). Ontology is the view of reality (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013), addressing the question of what the real world is and what exists in it (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Epistemology is the view of knowledge, concerning the questions including what knowledge is, to what extent the knowledge can be gained, to what extent knowledge can represent reality, and what the relationship between the knower and the knowledge is (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). The review of reality and knowledge will then lead to a preferred method to gather data and information. For example, critical theory is a paradigm viewing the reality as

a complex world with hidden power structure where less powered minorities are exploited. Thus, in order to uncover the hidden structure and improve the condition of exploited minorities, a qualitative method is often used (Jennings, 2001).

6.3.5 Phenomenology

Since paradigm guides the researcher and research process, the choice of paradigm will influence the research results. In order to determine the paradigm, researchers need to think about their view of the knowledge and the best way to obtain knowledge (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Luxury travelers associate the product attributes and values in their mind. The reality to discover in this research is a product of the mind and is closely linked to individual experience. Phenomenology is developed based on the belief of understanding the experience, thus, it is adopted as the paradigm for this study.

Following the phenomenology stand, the ontological assumption in this study is that the reality is an individual's interpretation of experience, and epistemological assumption in this study is that knowledge is derived from the interpretation of individual experience (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). The researcher, in this paradigm, is acting as a self-aware translator. Luxury travelers may choose luxury product guided by certain values, to discover the structure under the phenomenon will be the goal of the study.

Taking phenomenology as the philosophical stand, how luxury traveler experience luxury travel product and what are the motivations of luxury travelers is a major concern. In order to gather the information, various methods could be used departing from phenomenology: interviews, observations, journals, and conversation (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Since luxury travelers consider privacy during the trip very important, the observation during the trip may not be feasible. The disadvantage of using journals as data in this study is that the data collected will be limited by what participants have been written and published. Since interview could also include conversation, interviews were conducted in this study to collect data.

An interview can be defined as the literal meaning of "inter-view" and it is the interchange of views on a theme (Kvale, 2007). It enables researchers to engage participants in a conversation to generate participants' experience and their interpretation of experience (Schultze & Avital, 2011). Although it is a method with

the potential to bring rich data, it does not ensure that rich data can be collected. Other than the experience of the interviewer, the method of interview is even more important for obtaining rich data (Schultze & Avital, 2011). Phenomenology usually leads to unstructured phenomenological interview as data collection method (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). In this study, however, interview questions are designed according to laddering technique. The structured interview by laddering technique is still rooted in the phenomenological stand and the theoretic background of laddering technique is the means-end theory explained in Chapter 5. Why laddering technique is suitable for this study will be explained in the following section.

6.3.6 Laddering Technique

Laddering technique was adopted in this study when interviews with luxury travelers were conducted. It is powerful in generating rich data and is used to identify the relationship between product attributes and values.

The idea of laddering is originally from psychology study for understanding the relationships between personal constructs (Miles & Rowe, 2008). However, this method, which is being used today, grows in the marketing field and is developed as a technique based on means-end theory. Means-end theory suggests that product attributes carry personal relevance or meaning for consumers. It means that, when consumers decide to buy a product, they are expecting that certain product attributes will lead to certain consequences and the consequences are associated with personal values (Mulvey, Olson, Celsi, & Walker, 1994). And the related attribute, consequence, and value form a means-end chain, in another word, attribute-consequence-value (ACV) chain. The “value” in this chain represents consumers’ needs, goals, and beliefs.

Laddering technique introduces a relatively systematic way to generate the ACV chain. There are in total three steps: 1) eliciting attributes; 2) generating ACV chains; 3) analyzing of laddering results (Miles & Rowe, 2008).

In the first step, attributes can be elicited and there are five popular methods to achieve this (Miles & Rowe, 2008). The classic one called triadic sorting is to ask participants to consider three items, then tell the differences between two items and the rest one item. And the differences are used as attributes. The two methods called ranking and free sorting are performed with sample products. The method called

attribute list is conducted with a list of pre-designed attributes. And the method named as free/direct elicitation asks participants to think about important attributes when they make choices. In this study, pre-designed list of attributes is not available. Since the luxury travel products vary a lot, it is not possible to include all types of products as choices in the interviews. Considering that the participants would be travelers who have luxury travel experience before and they are familiar with the attributes of luxury travel products, thus the free/direct elicitation was adopted.

In step two, after the attributes are identified, participants are asked to answer a question: “why is that important to you” (Miles & Rowe, 2008). One characteristic of values is that they “need not be explained”, they are “explanations” (Biddle, 1979). This is probably the reason why asking “why” question until the answer cannot be explained anymore can help the researcher to discover the values. There are two types of laddering in this step: hard laddering forces participant to produce ACV chains; soft laddering allows participants to say anything about the issue and the ACV chains will be developed by a natural flow of the speech. Usually when participants are very familiar with the topic, soft laddering will generate richer information. Since the participants in this study are all the actual users of luxury travel products and are very familiar with the topic, thus, soft laddering was used.

In step three, the content of interview result should be analyzed. The results can be presented in a number of ways: (1) summary matrix, which uses numbers to represent attribute, records the ACV chains as sets of numbers and presents in table; (2) aggregate implication matrix, which counts the direct relationship as 1 and indirect relationship as 0.1 in a table to show how strong the relationship between two concepts; (3) counting the abstractness (the measurement of whether the concept is close to the attributes side or the value side) and centrality (meaning the extent of connection between concepts and all other concepts) of a concepts; (4) hierarchical value map (HVM), which presents all the ACV chains in one map (Miles & Rowe, 2008). All these tools were used in the current study to analyze and present the results.

The above description of procedure reveals one advantage of laddering technique. The interview and analysis was conducted in a systematic way. However, the procedure also shows a number of weaknesses. First, the interview is time-consuming and costly, thus, it cannot be conducted with large sample size; second, it requires high interview technique and thus involves in high training cost; third,

participants may not be able or willing to give honest answer, forth, interviewer bias exists in interview and data analysis procedure (Miles & Rowe, 2008).

The first weakness is not a major concern. Although laddering technique takes a long time and is costly, the concepts elicited are rich. The second weakness was minimized. Since the number of interviews is limited, all the interviews were conducted by the same interviewer. The third weakness may appear in any interviews, thus, cannot be avoided. The last weakness was minimized by triangulating data collection and data analysis methods. The result of analysis of two phases was compared and discussed. In these two phases, data were collected from travelers and travel agents, and analyzed by different approaches: traditional content analysis and laddering technique.

6.4 Research Design

6.4.1 Procedure

There are two phases of this study, both phases are qualitative and adopt interview as the data collection approach. The Phase I is semi-structured interviews with luxury travel agents. In Phase II, laddering technique is applied to conduct interviews with Chinese luxury travelers. The interview guidelines for these two phases are attached in Appendix.

In Phase I, the interviews with industry players carry two purposes. The initial purpose is to understand luxury travelers from the perspective of industry players because they are the group of people who communicate a lot with luxury travelers. The second purpose is to recruit any potential participants for Phase II from the contact with industry players.

In Phase II, the interviews were conducted with Chinese luxury travelers using laddering technique, in order to explore the reasons behind their preference for luxury travel products. The procedures in conducting laddering technique are introduced in the previous section. The interviews were started by asking participants to describe themselves and some recent or memorable travel experience. The travel style and preference were understood and knowing more about the traveler also assisted the latter laddering questions. Participants were asked to describe their preference for different aspects of a trip including flight, accommodation, dining, transportation, use of travel agent service and other destination activities. Regarding each aspect, travelers

were asked to explain the differentiated attributes motivating them to choose luxury travel products. After they have indicated several attributes, further questions were asked for them to reveal the reasons for “why this attribute is important to you” until no further reasons can be provided. Since the laddering process is difficult for participants, the travelers were well informed about the procedure at the beginning of the interview.

6.4.2 Interview Questions

The idea of means-end theory about the linkage between product attributes and consumers’ value guides the interview question design. In the Phase I, the interviews with luxury travel agents mainly cover two areas: luxury travel agents’ perception of luxury travel clients and how the luxury travel products match their needs, in other words, luxury travel agents’ perception on the “end” of luxury travelers and how they try to create the “means” to match the “end”. In the Phase II, the interviews with luxury travelers aim to understand their preferred way of travel, and the reasons behind the preference. The interview questions are reviewed in details in this section.

The interview questions are amended slightly according to the background of the travel agents or travelers for a smoother conversation during the interviews. For example, the word “slow” is often mentioned on the official social media account of a luxury travel agent, thus, an extra question about whether “slow” is an important element of their travel products is added to this particular interview. The standard interview questions in both English and Chinese are attached in the appendixes as Phase I Interview Guideline (Industry) and Phase II Interview Guideline (Travelers).

Interview with Luxury Travel Agent

The interview with luxury travel agent starts with questions about the participant’s personal industry experience: “*Could you please describe your experience in luxury travel industry?*”. Since one purpose of these interviews is to understand their perception of their luxury traveler clients, when they started to work in the luxury travel sector, how many clients they meet every year, and in which way they communicate with the clients can provide information about their stand or lens of the perception.

The second part of the interview is about their luxury travel products which are the available “means”: “*Could you please introduce the luxury travel products*

provided by your company and what are the features of these products?”. In order to encourage them to reveal more product attributes, comparison questions are asked: *“Comparing with other luxury travel companies, what are the special features of your products?”* and *“What are the features making a luxury travel product differ from ordinary travel products?”*. When the means-end theory is applied in exploring the underlying reasons for the purchase decision, the starting point is to identify the important attributes driving the purchase. Although laddering interview is not applied to luxury travel agents, the sequence of “from product attributes to customer values” is adopted. Another reason for asking about products before asking about travelers is that luxury travel agents are all familiar with the products provided by their companies, but probably not everyone has direct contact with their clients. Starting with the topic the interviewees are familiar with may smoothen the conversation during the interview.

The third part of the interview about their clients is most important and longest. The main question in this section is about the reasons why customers choose their luxury travel product: *“Based on your observation, what are the top three reasons for your customers to choose luxury travel products? Any other reasons?”*. If the participant has direct contact with their clients, another question will be asked: *“Are there any travelers who talked about the reasons why they would like to choose luxury travel and what are the reasons?”*. It is believed that the answers to these main questions will be able to show some needs or even values of their clients.

After these main questions are answered and discussed, a set of questions about potential motivations for choosing luxury travel and behaviors of luxury travelers are asked. These questions are designed based on literatures. For example, Fu et al. (2015) found that elite Chinese travelers often escape from the unpleasant weather in their regular resident place and may even purchase a house in the destination for vacation use. A relevant question is designed to ask whether there are any cases found among their clients. The set of questions are listed in Table 10 with the related literature. Since the questions are close-ended, participants are asked to explain more and share some examples if they agree that a potential motivation exists among their clients to avoid the issue of leading questions.

Table 10. Interviews with luxury travel agents about luxury travelers

Literature	Interview Questions
Behaviors of luxury travelers	
Seasonal vacation of elite Chinese (Fu et al., 2015)	<i>Are there any travelers who travel because they would like to escape from the unpleasant weather in their residence place (for example, it is cold in Shanghai during winter and people would like to visit warmer places to avoid the low temperature)? Example?</i>
Confucianism advocated wealth equalization because of luxury consumption (Peng & Chang, 2012)	<i>Are there any examples of travelers who show that they do not mind to spend more and allow the travel agents to have more revenue? Examples?</i>
Luxury travel is perceived more important among frequent luxury shopper than infrequent shoppers of luxury goods (Park et al., 2010)	<i>During the trip, how important is shopping activities for luxury travelers? Examples?</i>
Chinese travel who emphasis price/quality ratio because of frugality (Li et al., 2011b)	<i>Are there any examples of travelers who have a limited budget and want high-end products?</i>
Potential motivations	
Conspicuous display of having a devoted partner (Wang & Griskevicius, 2014), family orientation among Chinese which is rooted in Confucianism (Park & Chesla, 2007b) and influences travel decision (Hsu & Huang, 2016), happiness which is a result of purchasing leisure goods (DeLeire & Kalil, 2010) status as a motivation of luxury travel among Chinese (Hurun Report, 2015c), memory book which is suggested to be provided to Chinese traveler (Cao, 2015), worshipping western lifestyle which is popular among Chinese young generation (Wei & Pan, 1999), quality focused Chinese luxury consumer (Lu, 2008; Ngai & Cho, 2012), uniqueness seeking Chinese luxury consumers (McKinsey & Company, 2011; Ngai & Cho, 2012) and Chinese luxury traveler (Cao, 2015)	<i>Are there any examples of travelers who choose luxury travel because of partner/for the family/because luxury travel can bring them more happiness/for status display or face/for a beautiful memory in the future/for worshipping western lifestyle/for better quality/for a unique experience? Examples?</i>
Chinese luxury travelers look for worth sharing trips (Cao, 2015), conspicuous display of vacation (Hsieh, 2014)	<i>Will travelers often use social media to share their trips? If yes, what did they share?</i>
Chinese travelers would like to visit most popular sites in a destination because of conformity (Hsu & Huang, 2016).	<i>Are there any examples of travelers who would like to know the itinerary and preference of other luxury travelers, e.g. asking “are there any popular itineraries”? Examples?</i>
Visiting less visited places can be a status symbol, e.g. international travel (Gunter & Netto, 2015; Guo et al., 2007), space travel (Billings, 2006).	<i>Are there any examples of travelers who would like to join itineraries that only a few people have joined? Examples? If the prices are the same, would overseas travel more popular than domestic travel?</i>
Veblen effect when expensive goods are preferred (Leibenstein, 1950)	<i>Are there any examples of travelers who prefer more expensive?</i>

The last question in third part is to encourage participants to categorize their clients and explain the different needs of different types of luxury travelers: “*Could you please try to categorize your clients into different categories and what are the different needs?*”. As a summary of last interview section, this question may be able to catch any special types of travelers which have not been discussed in the previous sections.

Interview with Luxury Travelers

The interview with luxury travelers starts with questions about the travelers’ personal information and general travel experience: “*Could you briefly talk about yourself? How often and with who do you travel? Could you talk about the destinations you have visited?*”. In order to know the travel style of the participant, they are asked to describe a worth sharing trip or the most recent trip: “*Could you please describe the most worth sharing trip or your last trip? Can this trip represent your usual way of travel?*”. In this beginning section of the interview, these straightforward questions serve two purpose: first, they enable the interviewer to know interviewee better, thus, the following questions can be adapted according to the background of participants; second, they can help to create an atmosphere which interviewees feel comfortable to talk since the questions are easy to answer without much thinking and can encourage the interviewees to talk more. Both the understanding about the traveler and the atmosphere created are the preparation of the latter laddering section which sometimes can be difficult to conduct.

In the second part of the interview, more detailed travel products preferences are asked and the laddering questions are asked. Flights, hotels, dining, destination transportation and the destination activities are discussed. As the starting point of laddering, participants are asked to identify the important attributes which make them prefer the more luxurious option at each aspect. For example, in terms of flight, a question is prepared as: “*What are the differences of service or facilities which make you prefer business class or first class over economy class?*”. Then, regarding each attribute, participants are encouraged to explain the reasons behind: “*Why are these differences so important to you?*”. If any reasons are provided, “*why is this so important to you*” is further asked and repeated until no further reason can be provided. The procedure is repeated with each attribute at each aspect to explore the values linking to the attributes.

Other than the standard laddering questions, questions regarding flights, hotels, dining, destination transportation and destination activities will be asked to encourage the participants to reveal more about (1) how they perceive themselves and their personal beliefs (which may show the customers values, e.g. *“Overall, do you think the person stay in business class have any differences with those in economy class? What are the differences?”*, *“What kind of person do you expect your kids to be after growing up and why?”*) and (2) what they appreciate about luxury travel products (which may show the important attributes, e.g. *“What is your favorite hotel brand and why?”*).

The questions listed in Table 10 are selected and asked in the second part. To avoid any discomfort of interviewees, questions like *“Will you often use social media to share their trips? If yes, what did you share?”* will be asked direct, and questions like *“Do you travel in luxury for status concern?”* will not be asked unless travelers have revealed any status or face concern by themselves during the interview.

The interview will end with the question about the dream trip: *“May I know the dream trip in your mind? Do you consider the current travel style as the ideal one?”*. The answers to the question can provide insight on the end state they are trying to reach and also reveal the possible change of travel style in the future. Thus, it is possible to relate different participant’s current way of travel and future way of travel to observe any transformation.

Depending on the relationship between the participant and the referral, sometimes, the referral may not feel comfortable to ask about the yearly travel expenditure of the participants. In order to ensure the participant can meet the criteria on travel expenditure, the information was asked from different approaches. In the second part of the interview, questions *“What are the aspects (including flights, hotels, the local experience activities) worth allocating more budget? Will budget influence your choice?”* is asked. Since budget is mentioned, the traveler may reveal some information about how they spend their money on travel. Another question *“You don’t have to answer the following question about consumption if you don’t feel comfortable with it. What is your expenditure/budget of travel per year?”* is asked either before the last question about dream travel or after the interview on WeChat.

6.4.3 Triangulation

Triangulation is an approach to cross-examine the results and increase the credibility of a study (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). This approach is originally in military and navigation sciences and is becoming popular in qualitative studies, and adopting this approach can address the concern about reliability and credibility of qualitative research (Decrop, 1999). In triangulation, the single research question will be addressed based on different sources and the bias existing in research will be minimized.

There are four types of triangulation. The first type is data triangulation. Data could be collected from different time, space, and source (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). One technique for interview study is that non-textual observation during the interview can be marked, thus, both text and non-text data can be collected and analyzed (Decrop, 1999). The second type is method triangulation. For example, mixed method or combination of different qualitative methods (Decrop, 1999). The third type is investigator triangulation, meaning more than one investigator working on one research. Not only researchers but the informants should also be involved in investigator triangulation. Participants will be asked to confirm the results of the analysis, and this is a process called member-checking (Decrop, 1999). The fourth type is theoretical triangulation which involves multiple perspectives for data interpretation (Decrop, 1999).

In this study, data triangulation and investigator triangulation was adopted. Firstly, as data triangulation, data were collected from luxury travelers and luxury travel agencies. Secondly, as investigator triangulation, interviewer rephrased the answer of participants during the interview and asked them to confirm the statement. And after the interview, follow-up questions were asked to confirm the analysis result. It is believed that triangulation will contribute to the credibility of this study with the proper research design.

6.4.4 Population and Sampling

The target population of this study is Chinese luxury travelers and luxury travel agents. The Phase I of this study was conducted among luxury travel agents and the Phase II was carried out among luxury travelers.

In Phase I, luxury travel agents were studied to understand their knowledge about luxury travelers. The target sample in this Phase includes managers in top 12 luxury travel agents listed in 2016 Chinese Luxury Travelers Report by Hurun Report (2016). They are My Tour, Ctrip, 8 Continents, HH Travel, Zanadu, Imperial Tours, CITS, CITS Amex, Diadema, CYTS, Wild China, and CTS. All the 12 companies were contacted, and the contacted persons who were agreed to participate were interviewed. One participant introduced a new participant. Although the new participant was not working in the above 12 company, her company was listed in The Luxury Travel Agents List of Readers' Choice Awards 2016 by Condé Nast Traveller (2016). Thus, she was also interviewed. The reason why luxury travel agents were selected instead of other luxury travel service providers like luxury hotels is that luxury travel agents will cater the needs of luxury travelers at various aspects and thus they will have a more comprehensive understanding of luxury travelers.

In Phase II, Chinese who have individual net worth not less than 10 million, travel expenditure per year not less than CNY 100, 000 (USD 14, 500), and have at least two round trips with business/first class/private jet of the past three trips are the participants of interviews. The samples were mainly collected by snowball sampling. Snowball sampling, also referred as chain referral, reputational or network sampling, is often used when participants are difficult to reach (Jennings, 2001). The reason why snowballing is suitable in Phase II is that luxury travelers are much less accessible compared with mass travelers. The number of participants depends on the data saturation.

6.5 Trustworthiness

In a quantitative study, reliability and validity are both concepts to measure the quality of studies, but they sometimes also be considered in designing qualitative studies for ensuring the quality. Reliability refers to whether the same results could be obtained each time if a same technique is applied on the same object repeatedly (Babbie, 1990). If reliability is achieved, results are consistent over time and over different samples under a similar methodology (Joppe, 2000). Validity refers to how adequate the empirical measure can reflect the real meaning of the concepts (Babbie, 1990). It is commented that perfect validity ensures perfect reliability, while perfect reliability could also be obtained without validity in cases like obtaining the consistent result from a broken thermometer (Kirk & Miller, 1986). Thus, ensuring validity could

be even more important. The problem of validity in qualitative research is whether “the research sees what he or she thinks he or she sees” (Kirk & Miller, 1986).

Instead of reliability and validity, Lincoln & Guba (1985) use “trustworthiness criteria” to evaluate the quality of qualitative research, and later they proposed another set of criteria named as “authenticity criteria”. Trustworthiness criteria includes four: (1) credibility (alternative of internal validity), meaning the fitness between respondents’ views and researchers’ reconstruction and representation; (2) transferability (alternative of external validity), dealing with issue of case to case transfer and suggesting that researcher should provide sufficient information on the case studied; (3) dependability (alternative of reliability), meaning whether the process is logical, traceable, and documented; (4) confirmability (alternative of objectivity), referring to that the data and interpretations of inquiry should be linked to assertions, findings, interpretations and so on to achieve a result which can be confirmed by others (Schwandt, 2007).

The set of “authenticity criteria” includes: (1) fairness, referring to how respondents’ different construction of concerns and issues and their underlying values are interpreted by researcher in a balanced manner; (2) ontological authenticity, meaning whether the respondents’ constructions were enhanced after participating the research; (3) educative authenticity, which refers to the extent to which participants in a research develop greater understanding and appreciation of the constructions of others; (4) catalytic authenticity, meaning the extent to which action is stimulated and facilitated by the research process; (5) tactical authenticity, which is the extent to which participants in the research are empowered to act (Schwandt, 2007).

In this study, the trustworthiness is achieved by carefully designing and conducting the research. Credibility is achieved by triangulation and follow-up questions (Shenton, 2004). Transferability is achieved by providing detailed information about this research process. The “restrictions in the type of people who contributed data” is described in section 1.4. The number of participants, data collection method, the number and length of the data collection process in two phases, and time period of data collection are presented in details. Dependability is achieved by providing the information about how data is collected and analyzed, so that the study can be repeated by other researchers. Confirmability is achieved by providing

detailed information about methodology, so that the results of this study can be compared with other studies.

The set of “authenticity criteria” can be applied in this study. Fairness can be achieved by the strategy of identifying all stakeholders and obtaining their constructions (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2008). The two phases of the studies with two different stakeholders address the needs for fairness. Ontological authenticity can be achieved by providing participants with vicarious experiences and help to increase their awareness of their own context (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2008). In this study, the interviews with travelers began with straightforward questions (e.g. numbers of travel experience) to help the participants to increase their awareness. Educative authenticity is not a concern in this study, because luxury travelers’ own experience and opinions will be the only focus. Whether participants will recognize other luxury travelers or service providers’ value system will have little influence on this study. Catalytic authenticity can be facilitated by researcher’s systematically follow up to assess participants’ understandings (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2008). During the interview, questions were asked systematically following laddering technique. Tactical authenticity can be met by researchers’ and participants’ assessment on the degree of empowerment (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2008). At the beginning of the interview, participants were briefed on their freedom to share their understanding, and after the interview, researcher evaluated how empowered the participants appear to be.

Although the concepts of validity and reliability cannot be applied in the qualitative study as how they are used in quantitative studies, validity and reliability have been addressed by applying the above “trustworthiness criteria” and “authenticity criteria”. Reliability is better achieved in this study since data has been collected from both traveler agents and luxury travelers for triangulation. And validity is achieved by carefully reviewing the literature regarding luxury consumption and means-end theory after defining the research questions to ensure the study design matches the objectives of this study.

6.6 Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted from December 2016 to January 2018 with firstly luxury travel agents and secondly luxury travellers. The interviews last from half an hour to one and half an hour. All the interviews were recorded and latter transcribed into scripts for analysis.

In the Phase I, industry experts who are currently working for luxury travel agents specialized in providing domestic or outbound travel service for Chinese are selected as participants. Their companies are all listed as top luxury travel agents in either The Chinese Luxury Traveler 2016 by Hurun Report (2016) or The Luxury Travel Agents List of Readers' Choice Awards 2016 by Condé Nast Traveller (2016). Ten interviews were conducted in Mandarin or English during the period from 7 December 2016 to 17 March 2017 over the phone. Because of one participant's strong preference on written communication, one of the interviews was conducted via Emails by written Chinese. Regular semi-structured interviews were carried out with a total of 11 participants in Phase I.

To prepare for the Phase II interviews where laddering technique is employed, interview practice was undertaken after the Phase I interviews. The practice of laddering interview technique is very different from regular semi-structured interviews and the procedure of asking "why" requires skills of interviewers to phrase the questions in different ways in order to make the questions sound less boring. Since luxury travelers are difficult to recruit, it is important to make sure the interviews can be conducted effectively. Thus, interviews to practice laddering technique were conducted in March 2017 with four participants on the topic of "why Japan is a favorite travel destination". They were asked to name the attributes which make Japan as a preferred tourist destination, and further explain the reasons why these attributes are important to them. Although the questions are not related to the motivation of luxury travel, the interview experience helped the researcher to practice the technique and became more confident and comfortable in conducting interviews with actual participants.

The recruitment of participant in Phase II was guided by the three screening criteria: 1) individual net worth not less than 10 million, 2) travel expenditure per year not less than CNY 100, 000 (USD 14, 500), and 3) have at least two round trips with business/first class/private jet of the past three trips. The last criterion is the most important determinant of whether they are suitable to be recruited since it tells the way people travel, the first criteria is to ensure that the individual's financial ability can support their way of travel and the second criteria is to screen out these travelers who do not use own money for travel. The amount of wealth or expenditure is self-report based, and they will not be required to tell the exact amount but only need to judge

whether they meet the criteria. When couples found it difficult in calculating the individual net worth, the first criterion was adjusted to the total household wealth not less than 20 million.

The Phase II interviews were conducted in two rounds. The first round of interviews was completed from March 2017 to July 2017 and there were ten participants in this round. One purpose of conducting Phase I interviews was to find any potential interviewees for the Phase II from the client base of luxury travel agents. However, after the Phase I, none of the luxury travel agents felt comfortable to refer any clients as participants in this study. Thus the interviewees in the first round were recruited from researcher's connection and snowballing. Since nine of these interviews were conducted from March to May 2017 and only one interview was done from June to July 2017, researcher started to look for alternative ways to speed up the data collection process.

Considering the difficulty of collecting more data before data saturation, research companies who can help to recruit participants were contacted. The data collection company named Lightspeed was selected because of its relatively lower recruitment fee. Researcher prepared a questionnaire survey for online recruitment including the screening questions to select the participants. Travel experience related questions were also included to facilitate a better understanding of the participants before the interview. During the time of contacting different research company and preparing the online survey, the interview guideline used in the first round of interview was reviewed and modified based on the interview experience. The major change is to ask the travelers to describe a recent or memorable travel experience instead of asking the travelers to list the recent three trips. The purpose of this question is to understand the way participants usually travel in. Listing the recent three trips can be challenging and time-consuming because travelers sometimes found it difficult to recall.

The second round of interviews started in November 2017. After the online survey, Lightspeed provided a list of respondents whose answers indicating them as potential participants. Thus, these respondents were contacted by the researcher via phone call or WeChat. Majority of the respondents input wrong information in the survey, thus, they were not qualified as participants. Three of them would not be available for interview from November to December in 2017. In the end, two

participants were recruited in Shanghai and researcher visited Shanghai to interview them. Lightspeed and researcher discussed the low success rate of online recruitment, latter, Lightspeed changed the approach to look for participants via its connection with airlines. As a result, four other participants were interviewed over the phone. In total, six of participants were recruited by research company and interviewed by the same researcher.

During this period, the researcher contacted the previous participants again to see if there were any potential interviewees they could refer, e.g. their friends or relatives. Four participants were found via this approach. Friends and family friends of researcher also helped to source any potential participants via their social network and sixteen participants were interviewed face to face in Beijing or Haining or over the phone.

For how long the researcher will collect data from participants in qualitative studies often depends when the data reach saturation (Jennings, 2001). Theoretical saturation means that new data does not provide new theoretical elements but rather confirms the previous findings (Punch, 2013). Researcher decided to stop the data collection process at the point that the findings of the new interviews repeat the prior findings. When data appeared to “saturate”, the researcher stopped the recruitment of interviewees and completed the remaining scheduled interviews. Since there were no new ideas from the remaining interviews, the data collection process was ended.

To summarize, a total of 36 travelers were interviewed during 23 March 2017 to 4 January 2018. Six of them are not included in the final analysis for one of the following reasons: 1) record is incomplete, 2) travelers’ leisure trip experience cannot meet the screening criteria on experience of taking business class or first class flight, 3) the response of follow up question shows that travelers cannot meet screening criteria on yearly travel expenditure. Thus, in total, there are 30 respondents included in the analysis.

6.7 Data Analysis

Content analysis was carried out for the data collected. The analysis of the data from two phases is different in the use of laddering analysis in Phase II. In Phase I, a total of eleven transcripts were analysed using Nvivo. 11. Researcher started with open coding to generate codes and combine the related codes into dimensions. In Phase II,

the part of content describing the facts and figures of participants' travel experience was organized in a table, e.g. how often do they travel with business class. The part of the content which are the answers to laddering questions was manually coded into Attribute Consequence Value (ACV) Chains according to the approach described in section 6.3.6. The chains are presented in the summary matrix. Aggregate implication matrix was prepared afterward to show the counts of the direct or indirect relationship between two concepts. And the same relationship is only counted once for the same participant even if the participant mentioned this relationship twice. The abstractness and centrality of every concept are then calculated based on the number of direct or indirect relationships. Finally, hierarchical value map (HVM) is prepared with the cut-off of four, meaning that only chains with a total number of direct or indirect relationships for four or more are presented on the map.

One objective of this study is to explore the types of luxury travelers. Thus, after understanding the motivations of each traveler and all travelers as a whole, segments are generated based on mainly the motivations of undertaking luxury traveler, supplemented by the ways they travel and the use of different travel products.

6.8 Research Limitations

The data collection process may generate some bias for two reasons. Although the researchers tried to recruit participants with diversified profiles and did successfully interviewed people in different age groups, many of the participants are recruited from personal connections. Some participants even know each other as friends, and four of the participants are two couples. Since family members or friends may share similar values, a more diversified profile of interviewees may bring new insights. But for the practical reason considering the difficulties in recruiting participants in limited time, the current study would consider the less diversified profile as one limitation of the current study. Another reason is related to the media used in interviews. Face to face interviews are preferred since facial expression can also be well observed during the interview. However, the potential participants are often busy with their own schedule and live in different parts of China, thus, it was difficult to schedule a face to face interview with them. Phone interviews were conducted with many of the participants whenever the participants felt comfortable. Other than being more flexible in scheduling, phone interview also allows participants to stay in the comfortable environment, e.g. home, and they may feel less pressure in

answering the laddering questions. The results of the interviews show that the time participants could spend on phone interview is longer than the face to face interviews. Thus, phone interview can also generate rich data despite the fact that facial expression can be not observed.

This study adopts laddering technique for data collection and analysis. The limitation related to this technique is that participants may not be able or willing to give honest answers (Miles & Rowe, 2008) and it will mainly influence Phase II of this study. The interview with industry experts in Phase I provides some help in identifying any dishonest answers in Phase II.

This is a China-specific study and the result cannot be generalized to other countries or in other cultures. In the research design, Chinese culture was taken into consideration and the data were collected among Chinese travelers. Thus, results are very relevant to Chinese context but cannot be directly applied to other countries. Further studies should be conducted if researchers or industry players would like to understand luxury travelers in other countries.

Since the definition of luxury travel may change over time due to the nature of the concept “luxury”, the definition of luxury travel needs to be reviewed in future study and updated if it is needed, especially the measurable criteria of Chinese luxury travelers.

Like all qualitative research, the reliability and validity cannot be measured by numbers, although the issues of reliability and validity are addressed throughout this study. This is considered as the last limitation in the current research design.

6.9 Chapter Summary

Taking phenomenology as a philosophical stand, this study has two phases. The Phase I includes interviews with industry experts and the Phase II is interviews with Chinese luxury travelers. Laddering technique was adopted in Phase II for data collection and analysis. The ACV chains are generated from this phase and will be presented in findings. There are reliability and validity issues related to the methods used. And these issues were addressed by adopting triangulation, and careful research design. Finally, limitations of this studies are acknowledged.

Chapter 7 Agents' Understanding of Luxury Travelers

7.1 Introduction

The findings of this study are presented in the following two chapters: Chapter 7 about interviews with travel agents, and Chapter 8 about interviews with travelers. The current chapter discusses the findings of the first phase of interviews with luxury travel agents in China. The characteristics of their Chinese luxury traveler clients are revealed. Luxury travel agents were also asked to describe their perception of why their clients would like to choose luxury travel product. Their perceived motivations of choosing luxury travel service, especially the travel products provided by luxury travel agents, are analyzed and explained.

7.2 Luxury Travel Agent Participants

The purposes of recruiting luxury travel agents as participants are to firstly explore their perceptions of the luxury travel market based on their industry experience, especially “who are the clients” and “what are the needs of their clients” according to their understanding. Secondly, their view of whether and how their travel products can satisfy those needs will be investigated. Their opinions may provide insights for understanding the part of luxury travellers who used luxury travel agents service. The survey conduct by Hurun Report (2017b) shows that about half (58%) of the participants have used personalized travel service, even though the participants of that survey were recruited by four luxury travel agents. It is believed that a more significant portion of the luxury travellers either purchase the standardized travel products provided by luxury travel agents or plan the trips by themselves and book directly from the end suppliers. The luxury travel agent perspective may be more relevant to the part of luxury travellers who have hired luxury travel agents.

The eleven informants include ten Chinese and one non-Chinese working in China. There are five frontline staffs and six managers. The average working experience in luxury travel sector of these informants is 8.2 years. The list of respondents is provided in Table 11.

Their companies provide luxury travel products ranging from simple hotel reservation to sophisticated tailor-made travel. All of them focus on providing outbound travel products with limited domestic travel products. The products cover

popular outbound destinations like Europe and Australia, less visited destinations like Africa, South America, and high-cost destinations like the Arctic and the Antarctic.

Table 11. List of luxury travel agent respondents

Participants	Company Base	Position	Industry Experience
Informant 1	Shanghai	Marketing Officer	9 Years
Informant 2	Shanghai	Regional Manager	3 Years
Informant 3	Beijing	Assistant General Manager	6 Years
Informant 4	Shanghai	Travel Consultant	4 Year
Informant 5	Shanghai	Travel Consultant	6 Years
Informant 6	Hong Kong	General Manager	26 Years
Informant 7	Beijing	Marketing Director	8 Years
Informant 8	Beijing	Travel Consultant	5 Months
Informant 9	Shanghai	Regional Manager	9 Years
Informant 10	Beijing	Founder and CEO	8 Years
Informant 11	Beijing	Founder and CFO	17 Year

7.3 Clients of Luxury Travel Agents

During the interviews, luxury travel agents have shared their understanding of their customers. The clients usually travel as couples, family, or with a group of friends. When a couple organizes a travel for the big family, they will cover the cost of everyone including the old parents and children in this family. A family may like to have a relaxed itinerary. Informant 3 mentioned one type of travellers as “family and relaxation”. *“They do not like to change hotel too frequently. It would be better to change only one or two hotels for the whole trip...the itinerary will be relaxed, more leisure time, cannot be full of schedule.”* (Informant 8). When they travel with friends, they will focus more on the activities during the trip. A very limited number of people will travel solo.

Most of the clients are not price sensitive. *“Whether the price of your trip is 10,000 or 50,000 is not their focus”* (Informant 4). *“They will not struggle about the price. Before they find us for tailor made tour, they already saw our price put online for the standard trip, they probably already know the rough cost.”* (Informant 8). But the price should be reasonable. *“Most of the high-end customers will focus on values. If it is expensive, they wanted to know why...”* (Informant 9). Some customers who have limited budgets would also like to have high-end products. Usually either the luxury travel agents tailor a product to fit the budget or the customer raise the budget for a better product.

Many clients are time poor. *“They are busy in daily life...Because every year, he will accumulate the vacation until the year end. During daily life, he is busy and does not have time to travel, then when he visits Europe, he will spend one month.”* (Informant 2). Because they are busy during office hour, luxury travelers would like to have an accessible service, e.g. consultation after work is needed. *“For example, after work, many of our clients will contact us out of the normal working hour...Basically, the normal time they can discuss and decide the travel plan is...40% of decisions are made in non-office hour...”* (Informant 4).

Some travellers are rich in both money and time including wealthy clients who have no job and travel spontaneously, and orderly who are the target of medical tourism:

“Wife and kids are free at home, if they are not happy (with the weather), or have foggy days recently, they will go travel. I do not want to stay at home, it is too cold, I want to enjoy the sunshine in the Maldives, to visit some warm places, I want to have seafood in Thailand. These clients are really rich. Be honest, they have time and money, they can travel whenever they want.” (Informant 2).

Another special type of travellers are celebrities and important persons. *“They will escape from the crowd...they do not care about the tourist activity anymore, they focus on how to avoid the public and have time to relax and rest.”* (Informant 4). *“They need a quiet environment (without disturbance).”* (Informant 6).

Although clients of luxury travel agents are mainly travellers whose travel choice are not limited by travel budget, there are a few exceptions. One-time luxury travellers can be found among travellers who travel in special occasions or to dream destinations. Some clients are not well-off but will accumulate their saving for a dream trip. *“Many clients are earning the set salary for the whole life and do not have any individual business. They simply get the salary. But they will have a dream place to go, e.g. polar area, south American or Africa.”* (Informant 7). Some travellers would like to have luxury travel service for a special occasion. *“For one special trip, they would like to try (luxury travel) one time.”* (Informant 5). Their special moments include *“proposal, girlfriends’ birthday”* (Informant 8), *“anniversary... honeymoon”* (Informant 1), *“big days”* (Informant 3). But these travellers can hardly become repeat customers of luxury travel agent even they are satisfied with the travel experience.

“They are willing to spend such amount of money for this experience, but afterwards, they will return back to their normal daily life. They will not be willing to spend such amount of money to experience similar product (in the future), even if our service is good.” (Informant 4).

Luxury travel agents generally believe that their clients tend to be loyal to the travel agent company and many of them are repeat customers, except those one-time luxury travelers. There may be two main reasons for this practice: the convenience travelers enjoy when they use the familiar travel agents, and the risk they can avoid by not switching to other travel agents.

The convenience they can enjoy is that the travel agent has already understood the preference of the travelers from previous trips and travelers do not need to explain their requests explicitly again to the travel agents. The time and effort spent on communicating with the travel agent are less for a repeat customer. If they switch to another travel agent, they cannot enjoy the convenience and will have to invest their time and effort to communicate with the new travel agent again. Informant 6 has explained one time when she chose a luxury hotel for her client and the client really likes the hotel because the hotel satisfied her subtle needs for showing off her status.

“Why is she so happy (about the trip arrangement) ...When she visits Hong Kong, she also chooses average hotels...But this time, she will need to treat her relatives who are immigrated to other countries. I think there must be...one aspect...to show hospitality, another aspect...for her face...We have known each other for more than a decade, only I know what she needs, when she arrived the hotel, she took photos and send to me. (She feels that) it was really amazing...” (Informant 6).

To avoid the risk of having an unpleasant journey organized by a new travel agent is the second reason for being loyal customers. Luxury travel is high-stakes consumption because travelers will have to spend not only money but also precious time on it. Thus, if they are satisfied with the previous travel experience, they may stick to the familiar and reliable travel agent.

“They have the reassurance. Because they have experienced previously and feel that the service or other aspects are overall good. Because if he wants to change (a travel agent) for the next trip, he would need to start from the beginning. He is not clear about how service attitude of (the new travel agent) is...” (Informant 8).

They not only always choose the travel agent by themselves but also bring new clients to the travel agents. The reason why they would like to introduce travel agent to their friend and the reason why people will follow their friend's suggestion on travel agent is probably linked to the face concern.

"... (Face) should be one important reason. Like we have a lot of clients who will bring their friends. Many of them have traveled with us for one time, when they feel good about the trip, they will bring their friends to travel for one more time. Or someone has heard that their friend joins our trips and he has the willingness to find us. In this situation, it feels that... I think they must want to keep up with the Joneses to some extent. It's like, he went, so I must go... So the high-end clients are like this. They will be in a small circle, so this situation happens quite often..." (Informant 7).

Many Chinese luxury travelers use luxury travel service. It is surprising to find that only a few travelers can accept the concept of purchasing the service provided by a travel agent. Informant 10 mentioned that *"overall from the whole luxury travel market, if you ask me to use a figure, I think it would be... less than five percent of clients will really want to pay for the service."* And Informant 11 believed that it takes time for the market to accept the value of service.

"I think we need to develop the market slowly because not everyone can accept the service charge. Many people will think, the consultation should be free, especially close friends. He may think it should be free of charge if you make an itinerary for his trip to the US. But actually, we have spent time on it. It seems that many Chinese do not understand this clearly. He believed that the labor should all be free" (Informant 11).

7.3.1 Entry-Level Travellers

Luxury travel agents tend to categorize their clients in terms of their travel experience. The less experienced travellers are names as entry-level travellers. Since they are first-time visitors to many destinations, they show their characteristics of first time visitor. They would like to choose famous chain hotels and visit those famous attractions. *"Travelers whose travel experience is not so rich, what he focuses more is that... regular places he must visit, famous places, I must go."* (Informant 5).

By their financial ability, travellers in this group can be further categorized into two groups: the wealthy customers who have limited travel experience, and less wealthy customers who have limited experience in luxury travel.

The first group is mainly new riches who have little travel experience and are not price sensitive. They are wealthy and not clear about what they can expect from a travel experience.

“When I just join this company in 2009, the most clients I met is new riches...They will not negotiate the price with you and will accept any price you proposed. The only request is that service provided must be sufficient. They do not have any concepts or experience of travel. The time they get rich is not long and they have not travelled a lot...” (Informant 7).

The typical practice of this group of travelers is to request having everything best. *“He would not expect a very complex itinerary. As long as the hardware in this journey is good, the facilities are good, hotel must be the best, car must be the best, he will be okay...”* (Informant 7). The practicing of having everything best may reveal their status concern. And this shows what has been revealed by Pearce: status is a travel motivation more important among less experienced travelers.

They are easy to satisfy, probably because they have less ability to arrange trips by themselves. *“They are rich, but they do not know how to travel. When they have joined our trip for one time and feel fun, better compared with other travel agents, he will stay with us...”* (Informant 5).

The second group of travellers is those who will choose more high-end travel product when they accumulate more wealth. For example, Informant 11 has mentioned their clients who can only afford high-end tour package have the desire to have a tailor made private tour when their financial ability allows. *“Those guests who travelled with our group tour mentioned that they wished to travel privately with only family members in the future...”* (Informant 11). Some potential clients who have been following luxury travel agents’ social media account for a long time are waiting for the time when they can afford those products. *“(They) said we will try our best to earn more money so that we can join your tour in the future...”* (Informant 2).

7.3.2 Experienced Traveller

There are more and more experienced travellers. When they visit a place for the second time, they may want to visit a less popular area. *“If someone would like to visit a destination for a meal, and he will visit the destination again, in this situation, he may want to visit some niche places, places they haven’t been to, or places fewer people will visit”* (Informant 8). They are well travelled so they look for new destinations and experience, as mentioned by Informant 3. *“Whenever there are new products available, he would like to try. If the product is good, he will let others know. There are also this type of guests, but not many.”* (Informant 7). Experienced travellers are more difficult to satisfy. *“Their requirements are difficult to satisfy, you must provide very in-depth, special, things with local features, then you can satisfy them”* (Informant 5).

These travellers know clearly what they want from the trip when they approach luxury travel agents.

“He (traveller) may have his own preference, he will be specific, I want this type of hotel...they may have requirements on the seat angle on the flight, if he can lie down, if the aircraft is big and spacious enough. They will have these requirements. Then about the car model, I think they may want to be more comfortable” (Informant 8).

Experienced travellers know what they want because they have more travel related knowledge. *“Experienced (travellers) have high awareness on hotel brands, and their travel preference is clearer.”* (Informant 1).

Unlike travellers who have difficulties in arranging trips by themselves, experienced travellers are able to arrange a trip but they still do not want to spend time on planning because they are busy in daily life. They would like to outsource travel planning to agents in order to save time and effort. They prefer to spend time on their own business and believe that they can generate more revenue by using the time saved from travel planning.

“They do not want to spend time on travel planning but they actually know how to plan, they are experienced travellers... (the client think that) I have the ability to plan a trip, but I am not young any more...I have money and my time is more precious. I do not want to spend my time on travel plan, it is not only wasting my time but also

wasting my money. I would rather spend some money on the service, and you can help me to design a trip. I only need to point out some areas I don't like for amendments and you will give me a satisfactory version after sometime.... In this way, he can spend a small amount of money to buy some time and earn more money” (Informant 5).

They do not have time to compare price, so usually the time they need to make the purchase decision is little and luxury travel agents are happy to have this type of travellers. *“They are the clients we would like to meet most. Clients do not compare price. If we can provide the satisfactory product, they will take it and do not compare price...They have a high budget and very straightforward.”* (Informant 2).

Some experienced travellers are, however, are price sensitive. They are willing to spend time on travel planning and will compare prices provided by different travel agents. This group of travelers is growing and *“there are more and more well educated luxury travelers”* who look for both quality of service and value for money (Informant 9). They are demanding in terms of both the trip arrangement itself and the price quality ratio, and not easy to satisfy.

“They are experienced on travel, every time when they plan the vacation, they will have many ideas. We will need to spend more time. Even for hotel choice, they may have their professional opinions...They usually will compare the prices, the reason of comparing the prices is not because they do not have the spending power, but because they are informed and also have time, they will visit the official website or other reservation websites to compare prices on different channels...” (Informant 2).

If whether income level will limit ones' travel preference is used to define luxury travelers (Popescu & Olteanu, 2014), this type of traveler may be not counted as luxury travelers because their choice will be influenced by price. But whether the reason for being price sensitive is due to income level or consumption attitude is not clear.

Another special type of luxury travellers is adventurer. Some travellers do not have many requirements on comfort during the travel and would like to have adventures. They look for challenge and self-actualization. *“They do not care about the dining and living, they just want to arrive. He simply would like to achieve this dream. They do not care about other aspects”* (Information 7). *“They have the desire*

for challenge, and would like to arrive the place...he has been to many places already and he would like to visit more. Maybe he will visit the Antarctic to swim...it feels like to proof one's ability" (Informant 9).

The changing travel motivation is also recognized by travel agents. Travelers may have different motivations at different life stages.

"It will change. For example, when you are young, you would like to have experiential product, like hiking...When you are getting older, you want ease, or want something to actualize the dream in life, like visiting Antarctic or Arctic. When you become even older, you will have requirements on the health...they would not want to have adventures at the same time...So people may have different thoughts and dreams in different stages..." (Informant 7).

7.4 Perceived Reasons for Choosing Luxury Travel Agents

The transcripts of interviews with luxury travel agents were analyzed with the help of NVivo. 11. Regarding the perceived reasons for choosing luxury travelers, the respondents sometimes focus more on describing travelers and sometimes emphasize their travel products. In total, 55 codes are generated after open coding, 28 of codes refer to description of luxury travelers and 27 codes refer to description of luxury travel products.

Since the discussion in this section is based on the "perceived motivations" of luxury travelers from the perspective of luxury travel agents, the term "perceived reasons" will be used in this section to differentiate with the motivations revealed by luxury travelers in next chapter. The codes revealing perceived reasons of luxury travel are organized under ten dimensions and further grouped into two parts. Those perceived reasons which can be addressed on some extent by regular travel will be categorized into "travel related perceived reason dimensions" and those reasons which can only be achieved by having luxury travel is categorized as "luxury travel related perceived reason dimensions".

Seven "travel related perceived reason dimensions" comprises stimulation, novelty, relax, relationship, recognition, self-development, and isolation (Table 12). The codes showing travel related perceived reasons not only reveal the reasons why Chinese luxury travelers would like to undertake trips, "why they travel", but also reveal one important reason for choosing luxury travel: because luxury travel is

superior in terms of satisfying the travel motivations. Thus, these perceived reasons are better addressed travel motivations when having luxury travel.

Three “luxury travel related perceived reason dimensions” are quality, individual and social dimensions (Table 13). The codes further explain “why they travel in luxury way”. The participants discussed how they address clients’ needs by providing specific service when they discuss the characteristics of their clients.

7.4.1 Perceived Reasons: Travel Motivations

The perceived reasons of why Chinese luxury travelers choose luxury travel agents show that the travel motivations of luxury travelers have many similarities compared with regular mass tourists (Table 12). It seems that these perceived reasons can explain why Chinese luxury travelers undertake trips but cannot explain why they travel in a luxury way. In fact, one major reason for undertaking luxury travel is related to these travel motivations: such motivations can be better catered by luxury travel and this is the reason for choosing luxury travel.

Table 12. Travel related perceived reasons

Dimension	Perceived reasons
Stimulation	Adventure Want memorable experience
Novelty	Novelty Hobby
Relax	Better relax
Relationship	Piety Parenting Making friends
Recognition	Share on social media Leading
Self-development	Travel as hobby Explore a destination Physical exercise
Isolation	Privacy

Stimulation is one dimension of perceived reasons, in particular, luxury travel agents believe that their clients want adventure or memorable experience. Informant 9 mentioned memorable experience as one reason for choosing luxury travel agent.

“He joined the tour of your company, your price is much more expensive than others and the experience you provide is almost the same (with other), why would the client still want to choose you for the second time? He must experience something

different. He must have a strong impression of this trip, he remembers this trip, maybe just that particular moment.” (Informant 9).

And based on traveler agents’ understanding, guests’ memorable experience is usually the experiential activities which travelers can participate.

“...for example you can pick vegetables by yourselves and cook together with the chef...after the trip, what guests can remember is this experience...many years later, they will forget those famous hotel names they have stayed in...but those special experience provided by the hotel...you will be able to recall even after more than ten years...” (Informant 11).

It is not necessary to obtain memorable experience by having luxury trips, however memorable experience seems to be guaranteed from tours organized by luxury travel agents because they are purposely arranging these moments for guests, e.g. celebration on special days during the trip. Thus, it is possible that travelers may want to use a luxury travel agent in order to ensure a memorable experience.

Luxury travel agents indicated that their clients are motivated by new or different things in a destination and are interested to join a trip if it is themed with their personal hobbies, showing that novelty is also an important motivation. Informant 3 described the type of travelers looking for something new: *“we have some guests who have traveled a lot already, so what they will say, okay, where is the new place, new happening place, so they are more (like) earlier adopters, you know they want something new.”* Novelty is an important motivation of travelers who move from the familiar living place to a destination. Cohen (1972) conceptualized travel as a balance between novel environment and familiar micro environment. While luxury travel is providing a familiar environment to travelers who would like to maintain their level of comfort at home during the trip, it also better facilitates the desire of novelty since luxury travel itself can be new to some travelers. Informant 10 has mentioned how their guests firstly decide to use their luxury travel products.

“Many of our guests have been traveled abroad for several times. They will compare. When I travel with traditional travel agent, I do sightseeing and just look around every day (during the trip) ...So they are not satisfied with this. So they start to look for new way of travel.” (Informant 10).

According to luxury travel agents, many people travel to relax. It is believed that luxury travel can help them relax better. *“Some people need a destination for perfect holiday. It is just to spend a weekend on the beach, and relax, have a few drinks, good food, and spend time with the family, and that’s it...”* (Informant 3). And Informant 3 believes that this group who simply want relaxing time with family is the largest group of their guests. Relaxation is also the main purpose for celebrities to have trip, as mentioned by Informant 4. Although relaxation is a popular motivation of travel, many tourists cannot fully relax. Since they are physically exhausted after the trip although they achieve mental relaxation (Crompton (1979). The agents believe that luxury travel can enhance the relaxation benefit of travel by maximizing physical relaxation. By having comfort facilities such as flat seat in first class flight and less tiring itinerary, *“luxury travel can help travelers to relax better”* (Informant 1).

Enhancing relationship is another important dimension of perceived reasons. Making new friends is a travel motivation not only among luxury travelers. Professional based group travel among lawyers, teachers and doctors also have this need (Crompton (1979). However, if the travelers only want to make friends with people who can afford luxury tours, people who are of the similar social status, and who have similar interest, they may join luxury tours for social reason. *“...many people travel not for travel itself, but for connecting with others who are of the similar status, and this may benefit their daily life and career development...”* (Informant 7). Other than making friend, enhancing the family relationship is also an important reason. Comparing with regular tour, inviting old parents to join a luxury trip can satisfy their need for piety better. *“...this senior guest has this wish to travel, his children will of course choose those comfortable, less tiring...”* (Informant 7).

Luxury travelers may also choose luxury tour because of the duty of parenting and they will specifically choose a luxury travel agent to ensure better safety. *“When he travels alone, he may travel as individual tourist, or find other travel agent. But if he brings kid, he will choose us, because he feels more ensured...”* (Informant 1). Travel is a way to enhance relationship among family members (Pearce, 2005). Choosing luxury travel products for old parents and kids can better address travelers’ need for filial piety and parenting, thus better enhancing the relationship is perceived reason of purchasing luxury travel products.

Luxury travel agents found that the clients may choose luxury travel because of recognition, thus, some travelers prefer to visit a destination where other friends have not been to and many travelers will share a trip on social media.

“We have some guests, they feel that they have visited many places and they just want to go to (less visited destinations). All my friends have not been to Africa; I would like to be the first person who travelled to Africa. Someone may travel for this purpose. Or I would like to be the first person who see Arora, to visit polar area, to see penguins, see some animals which can only be found in polar area. Of course we will have a part of guests who are like this. There are exploring. We also have guests who want to purchase those travel products which are not the main stream products.” (Informant 2)

Luxury travel agents, unlike regular travel agents, provide wider arrange of destination choices and even have service in rarely visited destinations. Some travelers would like to have travel experience which their friends do not have. *“Someone may have the desire to seek novelty, he would like to have an experience that only a few people have, they want something different...”* (Informant 7). It is possible that travelers look for products only available from luxury travel agents and undertake luxury travel for recognition among friends.

Self-development is another perceived reason, supported by the fact that luxury travelers developed travel as a hobby, would like to have more physical exercise, and would like to explore and learn more about the destination. Luxury travel agents found that entrepreneurs would like to exercise and challenge themselves during the trip: *“those entrepreneurs from business schools will go to a remote area to have a challenge, to have a hiking to exercise the body...they would like to have self-actualization in the nature environment. This is quite popular in China right now...”* (Informant 9). These trips are usually available in a form of luxury travel packages. For travelers who would like to learn about the destination, *“...they actually pay more attention...on the surprise feeling they will have when they experience the local culture...”* (Informant 4).

Luxury travel agents argue that the travelers can understand the local culture better in tours organized by the agents. *“...The concept of “travel as local” is for luxury travel...for example, I would like to sit in a café in Barcelona and have a cup*

of coffee...stay there doing nothing for the whole afternoon, and look at the people surrounding me...” (Informant 10). *“He (the traveler) would like to see what people will not pay attention to, some in-depth culture, to understand the story behind...”* (Informant 11). Luxury travel agents understand travelers’ desire of getting to know a destination, and provide a slow paced itinerary allowing more time and chance for travelers to interact with locals. Thus, if travelers would like to join an adventure trip with entrepreneurs or to have a slow paced guided tour, they may choose tours organized by luxury travel agents.

Depending on the type of destinations, travelers sometimes would like to enjoy the private time without the disturbance of crowds, as mentioned by luxury travel agents. Travelers generally have higher requirement of privacy if they visit islands as destination comparing with city destinations. *“For example, for those itineraries to Maldives, the destination is a place for vacation. They (travelers) will focus more on privacy...”* (Informant 4). Informant 8 identified privacy as the reason why travelers would like to have tailor made tour: *“Privacy is very important. Because I think the high end guests must be...He would like to travel by himself, does not want to join a package tour, then he asks for tailor made tour from us.”*

Luxury travelers are portrayed as people who enjoy travel and who would like to have the best travel products. In order to satisfy their travel motivations in the best way, they may choose luxury travel service. And this is the important reason for undertaking luxury travel. Similar to other luxury product, luxury travel appeals consumers who seek perfectionism (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004). Informant 11 has explained this well and Informant 7 also revealed similar view.

“...Sometimes, guest may find one aspect more important, but actually...if any one aspect goes wrong, guest will have dissatisfied feeling...So every aspect is important. In the reality, if you ask a guest what is most important to you, they will have different answers, someone believes A is the most important, and someone feels B is the most important, but actually, ABCDEFG, everything is important to them. If any aspect goes wrong, guest will complain.” (Informant 11).

“He (the traveler) would like to achieve multiple purposes, and choose high end travel finally. High-end travel can satisfy his needs at different aspects. He can have the comfort guaranteed, the uniqueness of the trip guaranteed, the security and

safety guaranteed. Based on all these guarantee, he can have a good memory.” (Information 7).

7.4.2 Perceived Reasons: Non Travel Motivations

Some luxury travelers consider luxury travel as a norm. When a travel agent was asked about the reason why her clients will choose luxury travel, she said: *“our clients are at this level, they don’t have to choose between the middle and high end”* (Informant 10). It may be difficult to specify the motivations in this case. However, other luxury travel agents do reveal some opinions on why luxury travel is preferred. These luxury travel related motivations show some distinguishing characteristics of luxury travelers.

Unlike the perceived reasons presented in the last section which can be also addressed to certain extent even by ordinary travel product, the perceived reasons in this section can hardly be general travel motivations. But once travelers are motivated to take a trip, these reasons may drive them to choose luxury travel service.

The functional, social, and individual dimensions explain the reasons of undertaking luxury travel instead of regular travel (Table 13). The functional dimension includes perceived reasons closely related to the quality of the travel product; the individual dimension contains the perceived reasons which are personal benefits; and the social dimension comprises the perceived reasons which are social benefits.

Table 13. Luxury travel related perceived reasons

Dimension	Perceived Reasons
Functional	Hassle free service as the norm Overall high standard Avoid risk in quality Safety
Individual	Luxury destination as a dream Maximize the enjoyment Comfort Pleasant experience Outsource travel plan
Social	To feel prestige Status Control and influence Everything best

Functional dimension includes the superior quality of both facilities and service. Service, in particular, is an important reason for some travelers choosing luxury travel products and many aspects of service quality are mentioned. *“The majority would like to have better service, would like to have a niche travel...”* (Informant 7). Service quality is determined by reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding/knowing the customer, and tangibles (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985). The findings show that the perceived reasons of spending a premium for luxury travel service is closely related to some of these determinants including competence, credibility, and security. They may not travel in order to enjoy the competence, credibility and security of luxury travel service, but when they would like to travel, they may choose luxury travel agents because of their competence, credibility and security.

Luxury travelers may choose an agent for their professionalism. As described by informants, some luxury travelers were impressed by the professional knowledge of luxury travel agents and then decided to choose them to be their travel planners. *“Guests said we are the only agent who is able to tell him a confirmed answer when he asked about whether certain flight provides flat-bed-seats in business class”* (Informant 6). The professional knowledge shows the competence in service quality.

Another reason for choosing a luxury travel agent is the credibility. When travel agents are unknown to guests, a reliable referrer such as the private bank travelers use or the hotel they stay will bring guests’ trust. For example, Informant 8 mentioned that her company firstly gained the trust of the first group of clients via bank. Their potential clients are the clients of private banks and the bank introduce this travel agent to the clients. Guest *“will think I am the VIP guest for the bank, they must select the travel service provider carefully”*, and even if any issues happen during the travel, *“I can find the bank”* (Informant 8). They may choose a luxury travel agent with recommendations of someone they trust to reduce the risk of using a less qualified travel agent.

From luxury travel agents’ perspective, being free for risk and danger is a reason for choosing luxury travel, meaning that travelers need security. Some travelers may only choose luxury travel agents when they would like to visit some less popular

destinations where they do not feel safe if they travel by themselves or using a regular travel agent.

“Some guest will choose less visited destination...They would like to experience those places that no one has visited. When they would like to choose these destinations, they will choose reliable travel agents. Because for him, the safety is the first in those less visited destination. They will consider the safety. So if they make this choice, at the same time, they will have the safety concern, and choose a better travel agent for travel arrangement...” (Informant 4).

Another dimension of the perceived reasons for choosing luxury travel is the individual dimension. Two aspects under this dimension are: luxury travel as a way to enjoy comfort and pleasure, and a way to achieve a dream. They may not travel for comfort and pleasure, but when they travel, they may need a comfortable and pleasant journey and then choose luxury travel products. Some travel dreams can only be achieved by having luxury travel, thus, become the reasons for undertaking luxury trips. These two aspects are explained in details as follows.

Luxury travel agents thought that their clients choose luxury travel products to maximize the enjoyment, to have a comfortable and pleasant experience. Informants have mentioned being effortless during travel as one important reason for choosing luxury travel agents. *“When they have reached a certain level, especially people have some social status seeks comfort. They want to save some effort and be effortless...”* (Informant 6). *“The money for them is just a number. So they would like to have one effortless (trip)...”* (Informant 10). Thus, they may spend money for enjoyment of travel. *“The luxury travel must allow people to enjoy the more comfortable travel experience and heart-warming service. I think this is why they choose luxury travel. It is not like they want surprise. Surprise is not provided in every trip ...”* (Informant 2).

Luxury travel is also perceived as a dream for some luxury travelers, especially trips to some less visited luxury destinations, e.g. Antarctic. Respondents mentioned that these destinations are luxury in nature because the cost of visiting is high, but the trip itself may not necessarily as comfort as many other luxury travel products. As discussed in section 7.2.1, many one-time luxury travelers would join a luxury tour to their dream destinations. Travelers who always undertake luxury trips, however, may

seldom see a destination as a dream. But they may see a challenging activity as a dream to achieve in an adventure trip.

The last dimension of perceived reasons is social dimension including the values luxury travel will bring in relation with social groups. There are mainly two aspects: status concern and entitlement. Status and entitlement may not motivate them to have a trip, but when they do travel, they may choose luxury travel product because of status concern and the entitlement they needed.

Some clients want everything best and luxury travel agents consider it as status concern. They believed that these travelers feel prestige when enjoying the luxury travel service and differentiate their status by high-end facilities.

“Because they are new riches, when they start the conversation, they are very busy in the daily life and it is hard for them to find the time for travel. They will say I want the best, I must have first class for flight, if there is first class, I must have first class. I want to have the best hotel, I don’t want the basic room type, I want the best room. This type of guests has the financial ability, and he also want to show that he has taste on choosing travel agent. There must be such type of people. Most people nowadays will post on WeChat moment when they travel to show where he visits today and tomorrow. This kind of (status)motivation will be found among some guests on some extent...” (Informant 2).

The respondents also revealed the desire for entitlement as a perceived reason for choosing luxury travel products among luxury travelers who would like to have personalized private tour. Those travelers prefer to have full control over the trip and avoid any restrictions and limitations resulting from traveling in a group or having mass tourist products. They would take the initiative to influence the itinerary design. The following comment from travel agents illustrates it well: *“They have their own ideas...they are seldom restricted by the structured itinerary...they will input their design and thoughts...”* (Informant 4). Luxury travel agents believe that these clients enjoy the freedom of being entitled to make any spontaneous changes during the trip. As mentioned by Informant 4, *“...what they care more is the freedom...when they are at an attraction, if they really like it, they probably will spend a whole day there and will not visit other attractions originally planned...”*.

They are also considered as people who wish to enjoy private time and avoid any interruption from other travelers. *“What he wishes to have is the exclusiveness, not for everyone to share, he does not want to be interrupted by others...They have more control (over the trip) ...they like to control ...they focus on the exclusives and privacy...”* (Informant 4). The required degree of control over the travel planning and the whole trip may be one unique characteristic of luxury travelers according to what is mentioned by respondents. Generally, Chinese travelers are described as showing high collectivism feature and following the respected authority, for example, they may follow what tour guide suggested (Mok & DeFranco, 2000). However, Chinese luxury travelers are willing to pay the premium to have “more say” over the travel arrangement. The flexibility and freedom of making requests and changes are important for them. This finding echoes what was found by Hurun Report (2017b) that the personalized service was the second important reason why luxury travelers prefer a travel agent. Their elite role in their daily life probably raises the urge of making the travel under control.

To summarize, luxury travelers generally have high expectations on every aspect during the trip. But there are different needs focus among different people. Informant 8 illustrated the idea of diversified needs of luxury travelers. *“Everyone has different travel inquiries; you need to find out what he travels for. Sometimes guests do not know where they want to travel to, I need to deeply understand the purpose of the trip and professionally anticipates customers’ preferred destination.”*

7.5 Chapter Summary

The findings of interviews with luxury travel agents in China are presented in this chapter. Luxury travel agents perceive most luxury travelers in China as travelers who are well educated, well-travelled, and well off. But they also recognized that some of the clients do not show the general characteristics of luxury travelers, for instance, some travelers have limited budget and some have limited travel experience. The luxury travelers are often categorized by their available budget for travel and the travel experience they have. Special types of travelers including adventurers and celebrities are also mentioned. Agents believe that their clients are motivated to choose luxury travel agents because firstly, the luxury travel product can satisfy their travel motivations better, e.g. they can relax better in a luxury trip, and secondly, luxury travel product can satisfy their needs for making new friends of similar social status,

showing status, enjoying superior product quality, seeking pleasure, and having entitlement. The interviews with luxury travelers including many independent travelers echo some of these perceptions. The comparison between agents' perspective and travelers' perspective will be discussed in Chapter 9.

Chapter 8 Typology of Chinese Luxury Travelers

8.1 Introduction

The finding of the first phase of interviews with luxury travel agents are explained in the last chapter, and this chapter presents the finding of the second phase of interviews with luxury travelers in China. The demographic characteristics and travel preference of the participants are introduced firstly. Then the findings of laddering analysis are discussed, which includes the important attributes of luxury travel products perceived by luxury travelers, the perceived benefits associated with these attributes, and the values of travelers revealed by their travel preference. Based on travelers' motivations for choosing luxury travel products and their current way of travel, they are categorized into seven segments. The characteristics of each segment will be reviewed in this chapter.

8.2 Luxury Traveler Participants

A total of 30 luxury travelers were interviewed and included in the analysis. Table 14 shows the list of respondents with their brief personal information and travel preference. The sample had 16 females and 14 males. Their age ranged from early twenties to the early sixties. About half (14) of them were at their life stage with kids, while other respondents were at other life stages including singles, engaged, having a partner, married without kids, with teenager kids, with adult children, or with grandchildren. Most of them are working, except two students and two housewives.

The respondents can hardly tell the exact yearly expense on travel, but most of them managed to estimate a range of their expense or gave examples of their recent trip. Thus, the interviewer can make a judgement regarding the screening questions. The revealed range of travel expense is from "above CNY 1 million (USD 145,000)" to "CNY 50,000 (USD 7,000) to CNY 100,000 (USD 14,500)". 24 of them have the expense ranging from "above CNY 100,000 (USD 14,500)" to "above CNY 200,000 (USD 29,000)".

The screening question about flight cabin requires at least two business or first class round trips out of the past three leisure trips. One of the respondents who cannot meet this requirement is also included because she always takes the economy class to the destination and take the business class or first class back home. Out of the 29 travelers who can meet the screening question, 13 respondents always take business

class or first class, three of them may take economy class if the flight time is only 1-2 hours, 12 of them may take economy class if the flight time is within 4 hours, one of them will choose the same cabin with travel partners.

Many travelers consider hotel as an important element during the trip and prefer five-star hotels. Only three of them can accept hotels with or under three stars if it is the best hotel available at the destination. In terms of transportation at the destinations, 11 of them would rent a car with driver, 13 of them would do self-drive and only rent a car or use the car their relatives own at the destination, rest of them would either take taxi or be served by drivers arranged by traveler agents as part of the tour service. They sometimes mix different types of transportations tool according to the destination condition. About one third (11) of them would like to visit Michelin or famous restaurant in a destination, other six of them would need a decent restaurant to dine in, and the rest of them have no particular requirement. One respondent has joined a tour organized by a luxury travel agent, and seven of them have used tailor-made travel service provided by traditional travel agents. Two male respondents mentioned that they sometimes will ask travel agents to book air tickets and hotel rooms.

Table 14. List of luxury traveler respondents

Name	Gender	Life Stage	Work	Yearly Travel Expense (CNY)	Business Class	Hotel	Transportation	Dining	Luxury Travel Agent	Traditional Travel Agent
Fa	M	With partner	KOL	150K+	Always	Five star	Self-drive	Decent restaurant	Cannot name	Do not use
Gen	M	With adult child	Work	200K+	Always	Five star	Travel agent arrange car with driver for private tour	No requirement	Cannot name	Used tailor made service
Helen	F	With young kid	No	100K+	3-4 Hour +	Five star	Rent car with driver	Decent restaurant	Cannot name	Used tailor made service
Hua	F	With adult child	Work	100K+	3-4 Hour +	At least 4 star	Travel agent arrange car with driver for private tour	No requirement	Cannot name	Used tailor made service
Huo	M	With grandchildren	Work	100K-150K	Always	At least 3 star or best available	Rent car with driver	No requirement	Cannot name	Do not use
Jie	M	Young couple	Work	100K+	1-2 Hour +	At least 4 star	Self-drive	No requirement	Cannot name	Do not use
Jim	M	With young kid	Work	100K+	1-2 Hour +	Five star	Rent car with driver	Michelin or famous restaurant	Know but do not trust	Air ticket and hotel reservation
Kim	F	With young kid	No	100K+ will be spent before departure of every trip	Always	Five star	Rent car with driver	Michelin or famous restaurant	Know but do not trust	Do not use
Li	F	With young kid	Work	100K+	3-4 Hour +	Five star	Rent car with driver	Michelin or famous restaurant	Know but do not trust	Used tailor made service
Liang	M	Single	Work	100K+	Always	Five star	Travel agent arrange car with driver for package tour	Decent restaurant	Cannot name	Satisfied with package tour
Lia	F	With young kid	Student	100K+	Always	Five star	Self-drive	Michelin or famous restaurant	Cannot name	Do not use
Ma	F	With adult child	Work	100K+	3-4 Hour +	Five star	Taxi	No requirement	Cannot name	Do not use
Ming	M	With young kid	Work	100K+	1-2 Hour +	Depends on destinations	Self-drive	Decent restaurant	Cannot name	Air ticket and hotel reservation
Pei	M	With grandchildren	Work	Never calculate	Always	Five star	Rent car with driver	Decent restaurant	Cannot name	Do not use

Qi	F	With young kid	Work (flexible working time)	100K+	Always	Five star	Rent car with driver	Michelin or famous restaurant	Know but do not trust	Do not use
Ren	F	With young kid	Work	100K+	3-4 Hour +	Five star	Self-drive	No requirement	Know but it is too expensive	Do not use
Ria	F	Young couple	Work (flexible working time)	100K+	3-4 Hour +	Depends on destinations	Self-drive	Michelin or famous restaurant	Cannot name	Do not use
San	F	With young kid	Work	100K+	Always	Five star	Rent car with driver	Michelin or famous restaurant	Know but do not trust	Do not use
Shen	M	With grandchildren	Work	Never calculate, 200K+	Always	Five star	Self-drive	No requirement	Cannot name	Do not use
Shu	F	Single	Student	Never calculate, 100K+	3-4 Hour +	Five star	Self-drive	Michelin or famous restaurant	Cannot name	Do not use
Si	F	Engaged	Work	Never calculate 100K+	Always	Depends on destinations	Rent car with driver	No requirement	Cannot name	Used tailor made service
Tia	F	With young kid	Work	100K+	Return way	Five star	Self-drive	Michelin or famous restaurant	Cannot name	Do not use
Wei	M	Single	Work	100K+	Always	At least 3 star or best available in remote area	Self-drive	No requirement	Cannot name	Do not use
Wong	M	With young kid	Work	<1 M	3-4 Hour +	Five star	Rent car with driver	No requirement	Cannot name	Used tailor made service
Yi	M	With young kid	Work	100K+	3-4 Hour +	At least 3 star or best available in remote area	Self-drive	No requirement	Use luxury travel agent's package	Do not use
Ying	F	With teenager kid	Work (flexible working time)	1 M+	3-4 Hour +	Five star	Rent car with driver	Michelin or famous restaurant	Cannot name	Do not use
Yu	M	With young kid	Work	100K+	3-4 Hour +	Five star	Self-drive	No requirement	No need	Do not use
Zhang	M	With grandchildren	Work	200K+	Always	Five star	Self-drive	Decent restaurant	Cannot name	Do not use
Zhe	F	With young kid	Work	50-100K	Depends on partner	At least 4 star	Travel agent arrange car with driver for package tour	No requirement	Cannot name	Satisfied with package tour
Zuo	F	Single	Work	100K+	3-4 Hour +	Five star	Travel agent arrange car with driver for private tour ⁷	Michelin or famous restaurant	Cannot name	Used tailor made service

8.3 Laddering Analysis

The laddering analysis of the 30 interviews was conducted. The results of the analysis at different stages during the process are presented in different approaches including summary matrix, aggregate implication matrix, abstractness and centrality. Finally, the Hierarchical Value Map (HVM) displays the main findings. The analysis process is illustrated in Table 15 with real examples from the data.

Table 15. Laddering analysis steps

Step	Result	Examples From Data																																																																																																				
1, Extracting the concepts (attributes, consequence, and values) via content analysis	List of attributes (A1-A61) List of consequence (C1 to C51) List of values (V1-V20) Summary matrix (list of Attribute Consequence Value chains)	<p>Jim gave an example of how staying in a luxury hotel can help him to better relax that: <i>“If you stay in a nice hotel, for example at the seaside, when you open the curtain, or you sit at the balcony, you can face the sea. You have a peaceful scenery. This is why the room with sea view is more expensive. You will have a better mood...If you stay in the city center in a small and noisy room, you cannot even have a good rest.”</i></p> <p>Luxury hotel provides better view is coded as an attribute Beautiful scenery (A8). As a result, traveler can have a relaxing environment and have a better rest. This is coded as a consequence Relaxing (C2). Having a better mood is coded as Pleasure (V1). In the Summary Matrix, this result is listed as Jim 22: A8 C2 V1.</p>																																																																																																				
2, Count the number of relations (direct and indirect) between each two concepts	Aggregate implication matrix	<p>Since there is Attribute Consequence Value chain: A8 C2 V1, in the matrix it will be recorded as:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>A1</th> <th>...</th> <th>A8</th> <th>...</th> <th>C2</th> <th>...</th> <th>V1</th> <th>...</th> <th>V20</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <th>A1</th> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <th>...</th> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <th>A8</th> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td></td> <td>0.1</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <th>...</th> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <th>C2</th> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <th>...</th> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <th>V1</th> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <th>...</th> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <th>V20</th> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>A8 may lead to C2, so 1 is marked as a direct relation. C2 may lead to V1, so 1 is marked as a direct relation. A8 may lead to V1 via C2, so the relation between A8 to V1 is marked as 0.1 to display an indirect relation.</p> <p>The relations revealed from different interviewees will be added to the Aggregate implication matrix. Thus it is a quantified way to present the chains listed in Summary Matrix.</p>		A1	...	A8	...	C2	...	V1	...	V20	A1										...										A8					1		0.1			...										C2							1			...										V1										...										V20									
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3, Calculate	Abstractness of concepts Centrality of concepts	<p>Abstractness=The number of relations with a concept as an consequent /The number of relations includes a concept</p> <p>The Abstractness of V1= (1 direct+1 indirect)/ (1 direct+1 indirect) =1</p> <p>The Abstractness of C2= (1 direct+0 direct)/ (2 direct+0 indirect) =0.5</p> <p>The Abstractness of A8= (0 direct+0 direct)/ (1 direct+1 indirect) =0</p> <p>Centrality=The number of relations includes a concept/The total number of relations in the Aggregate implication matrix.</p> <p>The Centrality of V1= (1 direct+1 indirect)/ (2 direct+1 indirect) =0.67</p> <p>The Centrality of C2= (2 direct+0 direct)/ (2 direct+1 indirect) =0.67</p> <p>The Centrality of A8= (1 direct+1 direct)/ (2 direct+1 indirect) =0.67</p>
4, Show the relations revealed by participants for at least 4 times	Hierarchical Value Map	<p>The relation C2 → V1 is mentioned by at least four participants, thus it is included in the Hierarchical Value Map.</p> <p>The other two relations A8→C2 and C2→ V1 are less frequently mentioned, thus, they are excluded from the map.</p>

The beginning of the laddering analysis is similar to the open coding of content analysis and codes are generated from the content. At the same time, the codes are also categorized into three types: (1), attributes which are the content about product features; (2), consequences which tell why these attributes are important to these participants and are unusually the benefits of having these products; and (3), values which further reveal why these consequences are important to these participants and which present the values and beliefs of the participants. The content analysis of transcripts generates 64 attributes (coded from A1 to A61), 51 consequences (coded from C1 to C51), and 20 values (coded from V1 to V20) (Click to view the list in the appendix: Content Codes).

Since the attributes, consequences, and values are linked, the sequential orders contain valuable information. The linked attributes, consequences, and values are recorded in a form of chain. There are 360 ACV values chains generated and are listed in the summary matrix (to download the file including summary matrix, aggregate implication matrix, abstractness and centrality of concepts: goo.gl/T6bmNa). In the summary matrix, the relationships are listed according to the participants. It is easy to

identify the value chains revealed by each participant, but it is difficult to identify the most frequently occurring relationships across different participants. Thus, the aggregate implication matrix is prepared and in the table, every direct relation is counted as 1 and every indirect relation is counted as 0.1. By the number of direct relations and indirect relations, how strong the relation between two concepts is shown.

The abstractness and centrality of each concept are calculated. Both values range from 0 to 1 and reveal the status of each concept. If the abstractness is close to 1, the concept is more abstract and close to the value side; if it is close to 0, the concept is more close to the attribute side. As might be expected, the abstractness of values is relatively higher than consequences and attributes. However, some travelers are not able to identify the further reason of “why this consequence or attribute is so important” and the ACV chains cannot reach the value level. Thus, some of the consequence and attribute concepts display a high abstractness, e.g. Experiencing a destination (C20) shows an abstractness 1 which is same to many other value concepts.

The centrality of each concept is also calculated. The concepts with higher centrality show more connection with other concepts. Pleasure (V1), comfort (C9), business class (A3), good rest (C5), and good hotel/luxury branded/five-star hotel (A20) are the five concepts with centrality larger than 0.1. These are the important concepts which connect with other concepts. How they are connected with other concepts can be found in HVM (Figure 4).

In the aggregate implication matrix, the relations between different concepts are shown. The counts of the number of direct and indirect relationships show the most frequently found answers when participants were asked to describe why they would prefer luxury travel products. However, the large number of concepts makes a complex matrix. Thus, it is difficult to view the most important values and the relationships. By looking at the concepts with higher abstractness and centrality, some important concepts can be identified, but not the relations. Thus, the HVM is prepared to show these most important concepts and relationships extracted from the complex aggregate implication matrix.

HVM presents the most frequently mentioned concepts and relationships and it visualizes the major findings from the laddering analysis. Two decisions are made

before preparing the HVM. Firstly, both direct and indirect relations will be included in the HVM because sometimes the indirect relations may also occur frequently and thus worth learning. Secondly, the cut-off level is decided to be 4 because the main ideas presented on the map are not lost when the cut-off level is changed from 3 to 4. Overall, the map with the cut-off level 4 can interpret the data clearly.

The laddering interview and analysis process help to explore the motivations of Chinese luxury travelers. After the analysis, HVM presents the major findings, thus, includes the important motivations found often among participants. Every relation between concepts will be only counted for one time for each participant even if a relation is mentioned twice during an interview. Thus, the cut-off level 4 means that every relation shown on the HVM is at least revealed by four participants.

8.4 Motivations of Chinese Luxury Travelers

Since the main concepts and relations from the laddering analysis are shown in HVM, Figure 4 is used as a reference in the discussion about the motivations of Chinese luxury travelers in this section. The advantage of interpreting the data by preparing HVM is that the most frequently found motivations can be shown clearly. However, there is also a loss of information if only the most frequently found motivations are discussed when luxury travelers are discussed as a homogenous group. As an exploratory and qualitative study, even if a finding is not relevant for a significant number of participants, it is still worth discussing. Thus, in the latter section, different types of luxury travelers will be discussed, and the less frequently revealed motivations associated with a particular type of luxury traveler will be explained.

In Figure 4, the width of the line and the number next to the line shows the number of connections with other concepts. One direct relation is counted as 1 and one indirect relation is counted as 0.1. Thus, the broader lines mean more direct relations between two concepts.

The position of each concept is placed according to the abstractness. Usually, values have abstractness closer to 1 and attributes have abstractness closer to 0. For example, the abstractness of freedom (V14) is 1 and more choices (A21) is near 0, thus, V14 is placed high and A21 is placed at the bottom. By displaying the concepts according to abstractness, the sequential order is clear: it is always the bottom concepts

lead to high concepts, expect a few cases. The sequential order between good rest (C5) and comfort (C9), comfort (C9) and being energetic (C6) are sometimes mentioned by participants in a reverse way. It is probably due to the fact that the feelings often appear at the same time and it is difficult to distinguish the order.

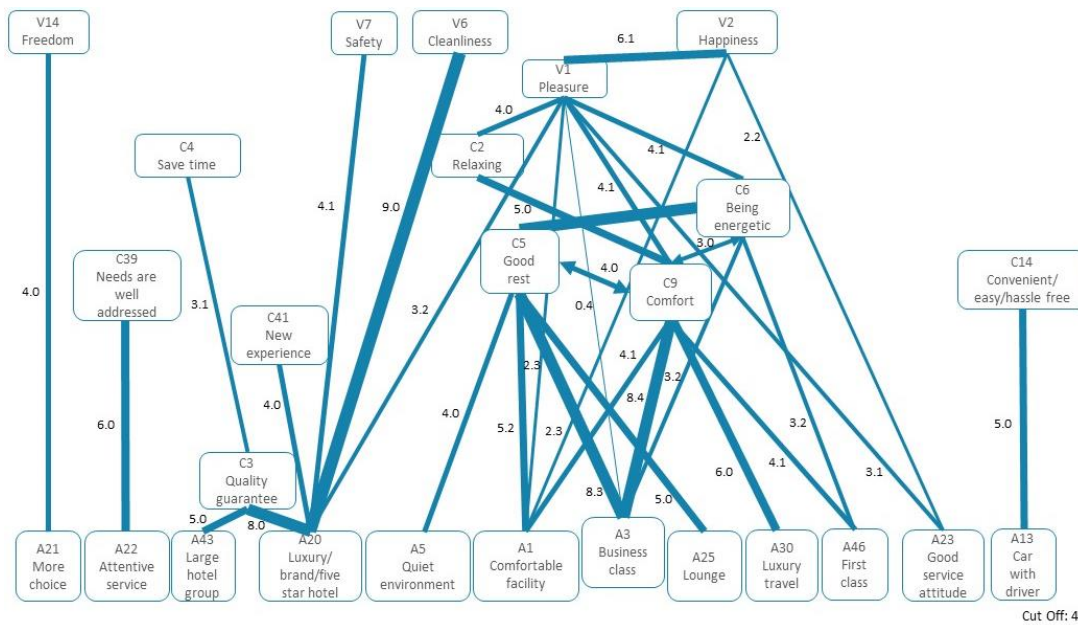


Figure 4. Hierarchical value map

There are five core values associated with participants’ consumption of luxury travel product: pleasure (V1), happiness (V2), cleanliness (V6), safety (V7), and freedom (V14). They are mostly often found values guiding some Chinese to choose luxury travel products.

Safety (V7) and cleanliness (V6) are basic needs and they are often linked to attributes directly without a consequence in between. Nine participants revealed that they would like to stay in high-end hotels for cleanliness; and five participants seek safety by staying in top hotels.

“We would like to stay in a good hotel, at least the washroom should be clean...It is better to stay in a nice hotel and you can feel safe. I cannot stay in bad hotels, I will feel scaring...(The safe feel comes from) many security people and you can only go to the certain floor by presenting your hotel key card...” (Participant Shu)

Pleasure (V1) and happiness (V2) are often linked and mentioned as a reason for their choice of different luxury products. The pleasure is derived sometimes directly from attributes including luxury brand and five-star hotel (A20), comfortable facilities (A1), and good service attitude (A23) and sometimes via consequences

including relaxing (C2), good rest (C5), comfort (C9), and being energetic and less tiring (C6). The popular motivations of taking business class and first class is that business class (A3) or first class (A46) will lead to the benefit of having good rest (C5), being comfort (C9), being energetic after the trip (C6), then, they can better relax (C2), and finally achieve pleasure (V1) and happiness (V2). Ying explained the reason for choosing business class and similar opinion was shared by Lu.

“If I travel abroad, I must choose business class, I hope I can sleep well during the flight...I think the flight time is long, if I sit in (economy class), it will be tiring. It is going to influence the quality of my trip. Because I think I travel for enjoying the pleasure and relax, not for suffering (from the tiredness).” (Participant Ying)

“Falling asleep is always difficult for me, when I took economy class, I sat there and could not fall asleep, and the more than ten hour flight time was a nightmare for me...(but when I take business class), I feel like I can have a meal, and have a sleep, and wake up to have breakfast, and then you arrived!...It is the difference between you can or cannot fall asleep. If you can fall asleep, you can start the journey directly after you have arrived. Otherwise, you need to take some rest...For me, sleep is important...If I cannot fall asleep, I will feel no energy and tired all day long, and will suffer from bad mood. It’s like...your trip is screwed up at first step.” (Participant Lu)

This finding echoes what was perceived by luxury travel agent: Chinese luxury travelers may choose luxury travel product because they can relax better during the trip.

Luxury travelers would like to enjoy the freedom (V14) during travel, and have more choices in travel service, e.g. flight meal options. When Hua described her reason of having a private tour with only her friends, she mentioned freedom (V14): *“We organized a tour by ourselves, we can arrange what we want. There is freedom.”* And she also enjoys the many meal choices in flight: *“Their service (in first class) is very good. You can order what you want (for breakfast).”*

Time saving (C4), needs being addressed (C39), new experience (C3), convenience/easy/hassle free (C14), and quality guarantee (C3) are the other consequences linked to attributes but not values. These consequences can also be used to explain the motivations of choosing luxury travel products. To be specific, attentive

service (A22) bring them the feeling of “their needs are well address” (C39), for example, San mentioned the service provided by Cathay Pacific was nice because of attentive flight attendant: *“when you just about to take off your clothes, they are standing beside you already and will take your clothes and hang it.”* Travelers choose large hotel groups (A43) or luxury brand/five star hotels (A20) for quality guarantee (C3) and then they can save some time on making the decision (C4). Travelers may also prefer to stay in luxury brand/five star hotels (A20) for new experience (C41). Hotel itself sometimes becomes an attraction and Yu mentioned that he may visit a destination simply for a nice hotel. Some travelers will hire a driver and rent a car during the trip (A13) and it is for the convenience (C14). Ren described the convenience of having a car and driver: *“If you have a driver...you can call him to pick up you and do not need to consider issues like parking.”*

The important attributes perceived by luxury travelers include both service attitude and facilities. The good service attitude and the comfortable facility can match travelers’ values including pleasure (V1) and happiness (V2). As Qi mentioned, whether the facility is user-friendly is important for her: *“the functional aspect (is important for her choice on the hotel), ...if you will get wet when you turn on the shower head, I will never visit it again.”* This finding aligns with the literature which considers product quality as an important dimension of luxury product (Choo et al., 2012; Nwankwo et al., 2014; Vickers & Renand, 2003; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Wiedmann et al., 2009).

To summarize, the often observed values guiding some Chinese travelers to choose luxury travel products include pleasure (V1), happiness (V2), cleanliness (V6), safety (V7), and freedom (V14). Travelers are also looking for benefits including time saving (C4), having every need being addressed (C39), new experience (C3), convenience/easy/hassle free (C14), and quality guarantee (C3) from their choice of luxury travel.

Other values revealed by the participants are not displayed in the map because they are less frequently found among travelers. They are self-fulfillment (V3), social status (V4), a comfortable life (V5), a world of beauty (V8), health (V9), esteem (V10), family security (V11), being respect (V12), security (V13), learning (V15), ambitious (V16), privacy (V17), responsibility (V18), friendship (V19), and

leadership (V20). These values will be explained when different types of travelers are discussed in details in the following section.

8.5 Types of Travelers

It seems that seven types exist among the 30 travelers according to their motivations of choosing luxury travel products and their travel experience, although further study with larger sample size is recommended to validate them. The seven types are named as: Always Luxury, Adventurer, Family Oriented, Reward Seeker, Achiever, Status Pursuer, and Aspire to Luxury.

As shown in Table 16, the seven types show differences at both “means” and “end”. As “means”, different level of luxurious travel style is an aspect to differentiate travelers. As “end”, the benefits and values travelers desire to achieve are reflected as distinctive motivations. By evaluating whether they consider luxury travel as a sign of status, achievement, and fulfillment, whether they consider luxury travel as novel experience, whether family is a reason of choice, and whether luxury travel is considered as reward, these seven types of travelers appear discrete.

Table 16. Seven types of luxury travelers

Type	Sample	Distinctive Motivation	Level of Luxury	Starting of Luxury Travel
Always Luxury	5	Luxury travel as <i>norm</i>	High	As early as school time
Aspire to Luxury	7	Luxury travel as <i>novel experience</i>	Middle	During or after school
Family Oriented	4	Choose luxury travel product <i>temporary for family</i>	Middle	After having children
Achiever	6	Luxury travel as a way to enjoy their <i>achievement</i>	Middle	After they had career accomplishment
Reward Seeker	4	Luxury travel as a <i>reward</i> for hardworking	Middle	Around five to ten years ago
Status Pursuer	2	Luxury as <i>status</i> symbol	Low	Since recent two years
Adventurer	2	Enjoy travel including luxury facilities and <i>adventure</i> trip with minimal comfort	Variable	After working

There are three segments having status related motivations including Achiever, Status Pursuer, and Aspire to Luxury. The Aspire to Luxury segment differentiates itself with the rest two segments by the motivation of novelty. They consider and appreciate luxury travel as a new experience, while the other two segments do not. The Achiever and Status Pursuer are similar in terms of status related motivation. Among these two segments of travelers, Status Pursuer is new to luxury travel but they have stronger status motivation and stronger attachment to luxury travel compared with Achiever.

The other four segments have little status concern. Reward Seeker is unique in term of their motivation of travel as a reward of busy work. The Adventurer and Family Oriented both consider family members in their travel choice. They choose luxury travel product for the comfort and safety of their family members, especially kids. The Adventurers are different from Family Oriented because they currently have flexible choice of travel product and they undertake adventurous trips with minimal comfort. Thus, they travel differently with or without family members. Family Oriented travelers may return back to less luxurious travel product when their kids grow up.

The Always Luxury segment is not motivated by any one of these dimensions but their way of travel is overall most luxurious. It is understandable because they consider luxury travel style as a norm and do not need many reasons for their choice. It is “natural” for them to travel in luxury style. It is also interesting to find that Aspire to Luxury travelers are motivated by both status and novelty. They are very motivated and it is probably why they are making the best use of their wealth in undertaking luxury travel, even their financial ability cannot fully meet their travel desire.

8.5.1 Always Luxury

This segment is named as Always Luxury and five travelers are under this category: King, Si, Qi, San, and Jun. They are named as luxury travelers because they tend to choose the “best” solutions at different aspects during travel. They always choose business class regardless of the length of the flight or the travel partners choice. They choose accommodation among five-star hotels but not every five-star hotel can satisfy them. They may choose various transportation tools depending on destinations, but all of them have used and liked the car rental with driver option. This types of

travelers know what they want, have the financial ability to purchase what they want, and choose the best from the best.

They are different from other segments in terms of their financial ability which allows them to travel in the ideal way, their travel related knowledge, and travel experience. Different from other travelers in the Aspire to Luxury category who may wish to have more income to achieve their dream trip, when Kim was asked to describe a dream trip during the interview, she mentioned that *“Because I plan to have a second baby, my dream trip will be having a family trip with four people. Similar to the current way of travel, it would be a vacation trip to some island.”* They have more travel related knowledge comparing with the Achiever category who also tend to choose the “best” solution at different travel aspects but know less about current travel trends or brands of the travel industry. There are only six of all respondents who have heard about high-end or luxury travel agents in China, and all five respondents in the Always Luxury segment know about luxury travel agent brands. One of them even try to quote a price from Zanadu, one of the top 12 luxury travel agents in China, but latter she hesitated and decided not to purchase from the agent. She does not trust the travel agent on whether they can provide the product as good as what was described.

Another characteristic of this groups is that they all have international exposure. Jim and San had their university study in the UK, Kim has studied in the US, Qi has studied in HK and Scandinavian, and Si is currently working in HK. It is probably why they started to take business class or first class as early as high school or university since the difference of flight experience is more significant for long-haul trip. As Kim and San have described, they all well-travelled in the continent where they have studied. San believes that the western culture had some influence on her values and beliefs.

“I have stayed in the UK for such a long time (7 years), the most education I received is from western education...So my background is somewhat international. I think, although I work hard, I should still enjoy the pleasure time. Not too extremely (focus on work only). If I put it in a good way, I think the quality of life and the way you live is important.” (Participant San)

This is probably the reason why pleasure (V1) was found as the top one value linking to travelers’ choice of luxury travel products. Since they are looking for

pleasure, it will not be surprised to find facilities providing physical comfort (A1) as the top one attributes, relaxing (C2) and comfort (C9) as top two consequences. The importance of value pleasure and comfort shows that luxury travel is associated with the meaning of luxury including comfort, pleasure, and enjoyment (Collins, 2018; Longman, 2018). Relaxing which is one of the travel motivation can be better catered by luxury travel products.

The fact that they know some luxury travel agents show that they are the potential clients. However, there are two issues stopping them from purchasing luxury travel agent service. Firstly, the displayed sample products of luxury travel agents cannot meet their requirements on a trip, e.g. safety, thus, they do not even bother to have a tailor-made one. Safety (V7) is one of the top values among this group of travelers.

“They (luxury travel agents) make high-end products, but do not consider the best option for you. For example, they will arrange business class for you, ..., (but) for the trip to Taiwan, they choose the business class from China Airline which is quite cheap. And the airline had a lot of accidents...Even if you gave me a business class ticket for free, I will not take it...They did not consider what this group of consumers (luxury travelers) want. If a person would like to take business class, I think he or she does not care so much about the amount of money. You should just provide a better option. I believe, Eva Air is a totally different airline. Anyone would prefer Eva Air over China Airline” (Participant San).

In fact, many respondents who often choose business class do not have strong preference on airlines as she does. Secondly, even if the product is attractive, the trust between the travel agent and the travelers is difficult to build. For example, Kim finally decided not to buy from Zanadu because she does not trust the agent. It will be easier to develop trust between two people who are originally friends, Jim had been using travel agent service for ticketing, room reservation, and tour arrangement, and the contact person is his friend. He emphasized that *“suggestions (provide by travel agents) are reliable.... mainly because this is a familiar person”* and he mentioned that there is little chance that he will switch to another travel agent.

The Always Luxury travelers are comfortable with people serving them and even enjoy it. Dislike some travelers who will feel discomfort when there is a driver

serving them and will choose to drive by themselves, travelers in this segment enjoy the service even if some of the service does not bring them solid benefits. Qi appreciated the turn down service during long-haul flight: *“although it (the service) is useless, you feel that they are really taking care of you.”* Kim describes the airport pick service as one reason of choosing peninsula hotels when it is available at the destinations: *“the staff is waiting for you at the arrival gate...He will bring you to the immigration and help you to carry the luggage. They take care of everything and you just enjoy the feeling. It really feels good...”*

Among all respondents within this category, Si is different from the rest on her dining choices since she did not have much requirements on dining and will not make a reservation for restaurants in a destination, unlike others who will try to book Michelin restaurants or restaurants listed as world top restaurants. She is also more flexible in accommodation choice. Unlike Kim who stated that she will never go to a destination if there is no nice hotel in the destination, Si had experienced to stay in hotels with room rates of more than CNY 10,000 (USD 1,450) per night and about CNY 60 (USD 9) per night.

Little status concern is found in their choice of travel product and they choose a product only when it serves the needs. One example is that Kim will choose a suite if she travels with the kid and will choose a standard room if she travels with her husband because she would like to provide more space for the kid to move around. If it was status-driven consumption, she would probably consistently choose a suite for any trip. Another example is San’s choice of airline. Since safety is a major concern when she chooses an airline, she would rather choose economy class for a higher price from an airline with better safety record. She took the business class of Hong Kong Airline only when all seats of Cathay Pacific are sold out.

“I seldom take Hong Kong Airline because it is a budget airline, it’s ticket is very cheap, it’s business class ticket is similar to Cathay Pacific’s economy class (in terms of price) ...I have many friends who probably will not take business class, but they will not choose red-eye flight, budget airline and will choose large airplanes.”
(Participant San)

Her choice may not necessarily show her monetary ability, but shows her knowledge on airlines. Her description about her friends probably means that the

“status” of being informed, having the knowledge about airlines, and making the wise decision on which airline to take is more important than the “status” of “I can afford business class.” She and her group of friends may be typical examples of who Currid-Halkett (2017) described as “aspirational class” who identify their status position by knowledge and value system. When she further explained her preference of other products she used in daily life, it seems that she believes “what you choose represent who you are”. The choice of luxury travel product is probably also linked to self-identity, which is a dimension of luxury (Nwankwo et al., 2014; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004).

“The way we live is always like... We do not need to wear best clothes and drive the best car, but...when we buy something we used in the daily life, we will buy something in good quality, it may not be very famous and others may not see...This is my attitude toward life.” (Participant San)The little status focus, function or quality concern and their background of international exposure seems similar to the type of luxury consumers named “overseas pack” who also seek product quality instead of status (Ngai & Cho, 2012).

Among all travelers in this group, San has a very strong concern on safety (V7) and security (V13). She will not choose some destinations where she thinks risks may exist, and one of the considerations of choosing a better hotel is also on security and safety. She mentioned: *“In fact many hotels...if the hotel is slight worse, the thief may happen, it is quite often in Thailand. So I always believe that the more expensive hotel will provide better service, better quality, better safety, and privacy.”* She is also unique in terms of her strong attachment to work. By having luxury hotels and business class, she can have more time and energy to complete some business tasks even during the vacation. She is the only participant who emphasized being ambitious (V16), responsibility (V18), and having leadership (V20): *“This position has a lot of influence on others, and there are responsibilities and duties, so I will basically (still work during vacation).”*

8.5.2 Aspire to Luxury

This segment is named as Aspire to Luxury mainly because they enjoy the way they are travelling now and they may travel in an even more luxurious way if their wealth increases. One evidence is that they still have items in wish list which can be achieved by increased income. For example, Lia mentioned a hotel she would like to

visit, Soneva in the Maldives: *“I would like to visit a very good hotel there, but it is too expensive, I plan to go there some year latter...It will take more than 20K per night, but super beautiful.”*

All of them have mentioned their own “rule” on when to choose business class other than Lia who will take business class all the time. Ria, Shou, Zuo will choose business class if the flight takes more than 6 hours, 4-5 hour more for Li, 2 hours more for Jie, and only the return flight for Tin. It seems that the benefit of having business class for short haul is not as much as long haul. Since the premium they have to pay for short haul business class is more than the extra benefit they perceived, they will not pay for that. Assume the extra benefits remain the same, and the price difference between economy class and business class is perceived less important for them in the future (e.g. if their wealth increases a lot), they will probably buy business class or first class. Ria usually takes premium economy class for a larger space during the flight when she does not take business class. When she was asked that when she would always take business class for all long haul and short haul flights, she answered and explain the reason as limited income.

“In the future, if my yearly income is more than 50 million...no much meaning to take business class for short-haul flight because you only get a little better on food...when the time (I have 50 million yearly income), I probably buy a business class ticket just like having a meal, will not care so much about the money spent.”
(Participant Ria).

When many respondents say whether taking business class or economy class does not matter for short haul trips, it probably implies that the price difference between economy class and business class ticket matters. Tia explains that the reason of only choosing the return flight as business class is to lower the average cost of the air ticket and will take round business class trip *“if I have 10 million as yearly income”*. When the monetary barrier is gone, they will have even more luxury trip, e.g. choose business class all the time.

Travelers in this group may have the desire to be one of the members in the segment of Always Luxury and status concern is found among three of them. The way Lia travels is very close to Always Luxury travelers. She always travels with business class, stays in luxury hotels, and arrange Michelin restaurants during the trip, but not

“as fine as hiring a driver” (as described by herself). She did not mention any status concern when she describes the reasons for choosing various luxury travel products, but she did reveal status as a motivation when she decided to choose business class all the time. To avoid this feeling of not fully belonging to luxury travelers’ group, she stops taking economy class for saving money and takes business class all the time.

“Especially there was one time, we visited Mauritius. We stayed in Club Med. That Club Med is good and expensive, around several thousand per night. Then I was thinking, maybe we can save some money and buy a cheaper air ticket, then we feel that we were very humble. It’s like...when we got off from the same airplane, and hotel sent the limousine to pick up us, all the people who were together with us were from the business class in the front, then we followed them humbly at the back, and then sat in the same car. Others may think, where do these two person come from, this kind of feeling, the whole trip is not consistent...Originally, staying in luxury hotels is enjoyable, but I just felt that other people will look down on you...Cannot tell this feeling exactly, they may think you guys also stayed in the same hotel...I think maybe because I was not confident, they did not express anything. It is a progress. When I was a teenager, I stayed in inns. When I gradually grow up, I wanted to stay in nicer hotels. I purposely wanted to enjoy the life and be luxury during the travel. But it feels that I did not play the full series of drama. I have the heart to be luxury, but becomes humble in the middle. Maybe I took the poor car at the beginning and then enjoy at the hotel latter, there is a gap in between. It feels that I did not play the whole set of the drama...I think it is the peer pressure.” (Participant Lu).

The Chinese culture value of face may play a role in this decision. Not only the choice of business class, but also the experience in fine dining restaurants and luxury hotels can be a source of status and self-esteem. Shu mentioned dining at Michelin restaurant brings her feeling of achievement and she would also like to display this achievement to others, revealing the values including self-fulfillment (V3) and status (V4).

“I have tried many Michelin restaurants...I love to try Michelin restaurants and I don’t know why. I wanted to ‘eat’ all Michelin restaurants in New York. Since I have already tried so many restaurants in New York (she studies in New York), there is nothing wrong with eating in restaurants in other cities...I wanted to write a post

on WeChat moments stating the number of Michelin stars I eat before I go back to China” (Participant Shu).

The materialistic value measuring the perceived importance of possession and ownership of a luxury product (Wiedmann et al., 2009) may have a different version in luxury travel: the ownership of experience. Shu also revealed that the experience in luxury hotels will bring her a feeling of being superior.

“I can take a photo of the hotel and post it, tag the location in this hotel (The Upperhouse), it’s so proud”. She believed that sharing the travel photos can bring more fun: *“I think I must share the photos I took to show other people. Look, I have been to such a beautiful place... You have been to the same place, but you did not find this beautiful scenery. You could not take such pretty pictures... There is subtle feeling of being superior out of nowhere.”* (Participant Shu)

This feeling of being superior is probably out of the exclusive travel experience while she was enjoying the exclusive beautiful view (V8 A world of beauty). Jie, the only male respondent in this group, mentioned status concern in his general description about choosing a better travel product: *“If you would like to save money and lower your level, the travel experience cannot serve your need (for relaxing).”* Esteem (V10) and social status (V4) are found as the top three and four values.

Other four respondents did not mention status or self-esteem as one motivation of luxury travel, but two of them show interest on elite lifestyle and one of them shows the desire for being separated with many other Chinese travelers. When Ria introduced a hotel she visited in Japan, she firstly mentioned the royal family in Japan: *“There is the hotel called Yunoshimakan. It has a long history and Japanese Emperors in different generations will visit the hotel for hot spring... We book the best room in it.”* Tia mentioned one enjoyable moment when she had the high tea experience in Ritz-Carlton London.

“They have a dress code, girls must wear dresses and high heels, and bring handbags, boys cannot enter the venue by wearing T-shirts and jeans. You must wear a suit, very decent, and leather shoes, and then can enter the venue. You must make a reservation one or two days before, around CNY 500 (USD 72) per person, and you must make the payment online first before you can enjoy the afternoon tea. Then you can experience it. It is very old fashioned afternoon tea...you can experience the

(life of) nobles in London a long time ago. The restaurant has been here one hundred years ago. You can experience how the nobles in London spend the boring leisure time in the afternoon." (Participant Tia)

They would like to follow the elites' choice on leisure activity, showing the bandwagon effect in luxury consumption (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012). Zuo described the benefit of being high-end guests.

"You can enjoy different scenery just for this group of guests. They set a higher price, and if you go, you are not looking at the attraction among a group of tourists, you can quietly enjoy the scenery. It feels differently... You can sit there, have a chat, being slow... not only take a photo, but feel the scenery... Sometimes, especially people from our home country are really loud" (Participant Zuo).

It seems that they enjoy the exclusivity of luxury travel products which are linked to elites. Similar to a luxury product which will be preferred because of its exclusiveness (Choo et al., 2012), luxury travel may be preferred because of the same reason. However, the difference is the exclusiveness in luxury travel product often associated with other benefits, e.g. less crowded, less waiting time, while exclusiveness of luxury product is mainly linked to rarity.

They are similar to Always Luxury in terms of the knowledge about luxury travel. They are informed, know what are the available luxury travel choices and are able to evaluate luxury travel products using their own criteria. Ria discussed her preferred Airlines and reasons.

"Cathay Pacific's economy class is not satisfactory at all because the space has no difference with budget airline... I think Singapore Airline is good, the business class is much bigger than Cathay Pacific, it is very comfortable when you lie down... Japan Airlines provides good food because Japanese eat Japanese food, very good" (Participant Ria).

Zuo also prefers Singapore Airline but for a different reason: *"What I like about Singapore Airline is that it is really on time. Then ANA, I think their food is tasty."* Lia likes Singapore Airline for its service: *"I think Singapore Airline is better in terms of the service among all airlines I have taken. Actually, the facilities of Cathay Pacific are good, but the service is a bit cold."*

They are looking for pleasure during the trip and Shu even states that she believes hedonism, which is an important dimension of luxury (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Nwankwo, Hamelin, & Khaled, 2014; Wiedmann, Hennings & Siebels, 2009; Choo, Moon, Kim, & Yoon, 2012). That is why pleasure (V1) and happiness (V2) is found as the top two values, similar to “luxury traveler”. Shu mentioned these two values together with a comfortable life (V5).

“I don’t know since when, probably since when my family does not have much money, I start to wish a comfortable life. I am an individualist. I think I am the most important person. I think I live in this world for a short period of decades, I would let myself to live a happy and comfortable life...If latter, I have the ability, I will make sure I live in a comfortable way, no matter what, I must live comfortably and I will consider myself first.” (Participant Shu).

Other than being pleasure driven, she seems to be individualist based on the description of her beliefs, but her motivation of consuming some luxury travel products is also more conspicuous than functional, e.g. the Michelin restaurant visits. This is different from what was found in another segmentation study: collective consumers are conspicuous and individualistic consumers are all function focused (Lu, 2008; Ngai & Cho, 2012).

Concepts of novelty and familiarity proposed by Cohen (1972) can be used to explain the differences between Always Luxury and Aspire to Luxury. Always Luxury are looking for the familiar luxury condition during travel, while Aspire to Luxury are experiencing the more luxurious life comparing to their daily life as novelty. Luxury travel is more like an exciting experience rather than a norm for them and they are trying to utilize their financial ability to enrich their luxury travel experience. Jie practices thrift during daily life but spends more during travel: *“During daily life, I will not spend as much money as during travel. Usually, I will practice thrift and save money.”* He rent a sport car during the trip for experience because it is not part of his daily life: *“it is a new experience for me...most importantly I will take a photo...I can save the photos to my computer.”* Although the Confucian concept thrift is practiced by him, during travel, the practice stops. Lia would like to mix fine dining with other casual restaurants to save cost.

“It is impossible for me to have every meal in fine dining mainly because it is not possible to consume like this. You will not eat like this when you are at home, it’s good to just experience (fine dining) and mainly eat conveniently and lightly for the rest. You will not spend so much money on meals” (Participant Lu).

Li tried Spa in Banyan Tree not because Spa treatment was something she would enjoy during daily life but mainly because Banyan Tree is famous for Spa: *“Because it is a hotel of Banyan Tree, so I had Spa. I will not have (Spa treatment) every time (when I visit island resorts).”* Tia controls budget by only taking business class and first class for the return flight, but chooses first class instead of business class when she would like to experience the best service of an airline: *“when I have picked a good airline and would like to experience their top service, I must choose the first class...The price difference (between business and first class) is not big, when we choose Emirates, we must pick the best.”* They spend money on collecting experience and these experience can be used as topics during conversations. Tia mentioned that *“for every trip, we need a point which you can bring your memory back when you talk about your trip”*. Lia has the similar point of view: *“if you have not been to these places and learned these stuffs, what are you going to talk when you have chat with others?”* She links travel with more conversation topics and further with friendship (V19). The importance of worth sharing trip aligns with what is revealed during an industry forum (Cao, 2015).

Probably because the luxury travel experience is an excitement for them, Lia also considers luxury travel as a way to learn, especially visiting luxury hotels, and revealed learning (V15) as her important value.

“We are learning hotel management, if others ask what did you study? I study hotel management. But if you have not been to and have not seen (these hotels), what did you study? ...Learning can enrich your brain. If you have a lot in your brain, you will be a more interesting person” (Participant Lu).

Although their way of travel is not the most luxurious among all the respondents, some of them will try to influence others’ way of travel. Ria influences her husband on the choice of business class although her husband was the person who usually arranges the whole trip: *“actually the person who raises the issue first is me, I ask him to not take economy class for flights which are more than six hours. I try to*

implant this idea in his mind.” Shu influences her mother on hotel and flight choice. This segment of travelers has a clear idea about what they want and may even transform their close family members into luxury travelers

“She did not have much requirements on hotel before, but I will tell her that you should make sure that you are comfortable...she is probably be influenced...for example for taking high speed train, I will say, you should sit comfortably...for example to Beijing, it takes so long and it would be much better if you have lied down and have a nap. Could you buy the business class seat?” (Participant Shu).

8.5.3 Family Oriented

This segment is named as Family Oriented because they choose luxury travel for the family and kids. Helen and Wong are a couple with two kids, and what they have revealed as dream trip is different from how they are travelling now. They choose luxury hotels mainly because of safety. Ren stated that she is now starting to switch back to economy class for short haul because her kid is now growing up. Thus, they are “temporary luxury travelers”. This is an interesting finding. The literature on luxury consumption often emphasizes the non-return effect or ratchet effect (Kapferer, 2012). The effect means that travelers cannot enjoy economy class anymore once they have tasted business class. However, Ren is switching to economy class when her kid is growing up gradually.

Helen and Wong are the mother and father of two kids. Helen is responsible for making travel plans and Wong will pay for the trips. Sometimes Helen will plan the trip with kids first and Wong will try to join if his time allows. They begin to choose business class when Wong had a business trip in first class and told Helen that *“if next time we take kids for travel, we take business class or first class...it’s more comfortable and fast...you don’t have to bring kids in the crowd”*. They stay in luxury hotels, e.g. Helen chooses Ritz-Carlton when it is available, take business class for long-haul trips, and may rent a car with a driver because of the convenience. However, the dream trip of Helen is very different.

“I would like to go to Tibet...maybe now I do not want to stay in hotels anymore, I would like to live in small-scaled local accommodation, to be a backpacker...I don’t care if it will be tiring, or dirty, or whether is food is good, accommodation is good.” (Participant Helen).

Wong stated that his current travel choice is mainly for kids but not for himself: *“I choose five-star hotels for kids’ safety and comfort, family’s comfort. If I have business trip, I will consider the self-image for work, and clients’ feeling. If none of these is into the consideration, I can accept those family-run accommodations.”* Family security (V11), thus, is found in this segment.

The fact that their desired way of travel is not achieved because they consider the needs of kids first show that the values sometimes create conflicts according to Rokeach (1979). Wong can only sometimes join the family trips and in many occasions he cannot travel because of busy work, and he described how he sacrifices his own hobbies for work and family.

“Actually I love travel and I seek quality of life. But I give up (and travel less) for the business and family...Our generation is lack of material wealth when we were little and we grow up during the economy reform. So we will have a strong desire for achievement and material. If I have a chance, I must catch it and I will not give up...I gave up many hobbies and interests, the ideal way of living.” (Participant Wong).

Ren and Helen, both as mothers, choose luxury travel products to make their travel easier. Ren revealed the difficulties of taking kids to travel as the reason for taking business class: *“Once you bring kids, everything gets more troublesome, so I started to choose (business class) ...the kid is growing up, and we will choose economy class if it’s only two hours flight. It is not necessary to take business class.”* Even if she chooses nice hotels, she is not satisfied with the toys provided by many luxury hotels, e.g. Ritz-Carlton. *“The toys provided in its kids’ club have poor quality, far away from the brand image of Ritz-Carlton...I have been to many very good hotels in China, none of the hotels have a good choice in kids’ toy brand”*

Zhe is also family oriented but different from Ren, Helen and Wong. She does not prefer luxury travel products because of the kids, but choose package tour because of kids. She will choose tours from different travel agents to facilitate kids’ learning: *“because kid needs to broaden the horizon and learn something.”* While the kid is growing up, she will let kid make his own destination choice. It confirms the previous study which found parenting responsibility as a motivation of travel and parents would like to educate kids via tours (Fu et al., 2015).

The next generation of this segment of travelers may become Always Luxury as Wong expected.

“If he has experienced (business class) since young, he may have a stronger reason for choosing (business class) ...I think if I have enough wealth and can create a comfortable environment for kids, in the future, they will not work so hard on achieving (material and success), he can keep the personality better...He does not need to work hard to create the material life, but desire more on a spiritual level and make himself happier.” (Participant Wong)

What distinguishes Family Oriented segment with other travelers who sometimes travel with kids is the difference between the way they travel with or without kids. Family Oriented tends to travel very differently when they travel with kids especially in terms of choosing luxury travel products. For example, Kim who is categorized into Always Luxury is also a family-oriented young mother since she always likes to travel with her son from the time she had this baby. But her choice of travel product does not change a lot with or without traveling with the kid. Family Oriented segment well demonstrates kinship as a motivation of travel, and luxury travel products may better cater the need since the facilities and service products are more family friendly.

8.5.4 Achiever

Travelers in this segment are near retirement. Most of them are around 50-60 years old and have grandchildren. They have accumulated a certain amount of wealth and can spend the wealth freely because their children have grown up. Similar to luxury travelers, they usually do not have a budget for travel and will spend as much as what is needed. Pei commented on travel agents’ business model.

“I think travel agents’ most significant misunderstanding on clients is that...they always wanted to save money for someone, if you travel to several countries, I help you to save how much money. They (the travel agent) do not know that we do not need to save money.” (Participant Pei)

In their generation, thrift is appreciated. However, the travelers in this segment share similar values which are not thrift driven. Pei seems to believe that people should spend money when it is available.

“Because I think I am a person...probably Chinese will perceive it as lavish. Because we also see people who gamble until losing all property...If you do not have money, you may tell your daughter clearly that dad does not have money recently and please save some money, you can spend hundreds of thousands if latter there is money to spend. It does not matter.” (Participant Pei)

Huo stated that the way people spend money is related to personality: *“I think it is related to personality. Someone may be very rich but still always count the money to spend...But like us...we will not value money so much.”* Ying shares the similar view.

“It is related to everyone’s personality. The attitude towards the life is different. I think the money you make is for you to have a better life. It is for you to enjoy the pleasure. I don’t value money...My view of life and world is different. I think I know how to enjoy life” (Participant Ying).

Zhang consider the limited time of travel and his hard working over past years as justification of luxury travel style: *“I will tell them (his two daughters who usually arrange trip for the family), the time dad travels is limited, I had been hard-working for the whole life, let’s use first class and five star hotels to match.”* And he further explained his view on the meaning of consumption.

“After all, it is first class and five-star hotels and it is very comfortable...you cannot always look for value for money...when you have to end your life, you will find it is not value for money at all...if you wait until you do not have the energy to spend money or even move, you cannot take first class even you would like to, then you think back, it is not worth it” (Participant Zhang).

They find that the absolute amount of money they can spend on travel is limited compared with their total wealth. Zhang mentioned the reason of choosing first class.

“I calculated, the number of times I will take airplane is not many...I have been hard working for 30 years...A lot of entrepreneurs in China become bosses of large business but they are still saving money. They have not calculated how much time they will be able to live and how long they will be able to spend money for” (Participant Zhang).

Pei also mentioned the limited amount of travel expense: *“One person’s lifetime, how much money can be spent on travel, not much.”* Huo believes the yearly

expense on air ticket is limited: *“The yearly expense on air tickets is not much, like me, maximum fifty or sixty thousand a year.”* The practice of calculating the total expense on travel and then make a decision may show the long-term orientation.

The amount they spend on travel is probably limited by their knowledge of travel. They have less knowledge and information of current travel trend compared with Always Luxury and Aspire to Luxury who are younger. Although Zhang has been taking first class for more than ten years and started to stay in five-star hotels even longer, it seems that he is not familiar with hotel brand names. He considers Hong Kong Airlines as a good airline while San (who is categorized as “Always Luxury”) mentioned the same airline as a budget airline. Since he mentioned safety as an important factor in choosing airlines, he will probably prefer Cathay Dragon which will be more expensive compared with Hong Kong Airline if he has more knowledge on airlines. Pei knows more hotel brands e.g. Sheraton, Shangri La, and Sofitel, and he believes that the fresh air is sent from the first class so it is healthier to take first class. Gen and Ying always takes business class or first class, but they cannot distinguish first class and business class.

Luxury style during the trip is an extension of their daily life. Different from Aspire to Luxury segment who considers luxury travel experience as new and exciting experience, Achiever would like to maintain many habitus in their daily life during travel. Pei mentioned his requirement on car model during trip: *“For example the vehicle used during the trip, it should be high-end. Please do not use a Buick. It is not comfortable when you sit inside. Because the cars we used to sit at home are all nice cars.”* He hires a driver at home, it would be natural to have a driver during travel. Zhang commented on the differences between tangible and intangible luxury products and considers luxury goods as necessities like bread.

“Luxury goods are something you must use. But travel is what you do one or two times a year when you have time. So you cannot compare...If you go for a concert, you spend two thousand, if you (use that two thousand) to buy bread, you can eat for two months, cannot compare...Human beings are advanced animals and you must look for pleasure from different aspects, you must enjoy the concert, and you also need to eat bread” (Participant Zhang).

Luxury travel, as intangible luxury experience, is also an extension of tangible luxury goods. For Gen, travel is an extension of his social life, he is not passionate about the service details of airlines and hotels, not interested in understanding destination, not willing to try local food, but enjoy travel because he can spend time with his friends: *“I am not interested in particular countries, so I do not feel the need to have a deeper understanding...The happiness is mainly from the people we travel together. We have a lot of common languages.”* Huo shares the similar opinion: *“The key is the travel partners. If your travel partners are excited and happy, you can enjoy it.”*

This segment is named as Achiever mainly because they are somewhat status focused and luxury travel provides them a sense of achievement. After self-evaluation of their own wealth and age, Zhang believes that he has already reached the status who can and should take business class or first class. Zhang decided to take first class after he has experienced once when economy class was not available.

“Latter I was thinking; it feels like I should also take the role of being a first class traveler...I evaluated my ability, my age, the strength of my company, and the fact that I have been fighting for my whole life, shall I take first class or economy class? This is one aspect, and another aspect is to act according to one’s ability. I did self-evaluation regarding the size of my company, the yearly revenue of my company, I think it is suitable to take business class. I feel comfortable after self-evaluation” (Participant Zhang).

Except comfort and safety provided by five-star hotels, Zhang also has status concern when he chooses these hotels: *“All people need honor. For example, if you stay in five-star hotel, look, it is also a sign of your prestige taste.”* Gen finds it difficult to comment on whether taking business class or first class is worth the money, but the major reason for his choice is that he has the financial ability to support his choice. He may believe that it is natural to choose the best he can afford.

“It is difficult to evaluate whether it is worth the money. You take the same flight, someone may take economy class, and the destination is the same. The key of the key is that, first, I get used to it, second, you need the financial ability to support” (Participant Gen).

Huo also thinks that it is natural to take first class if it is affordable: *“I have met Jack Ma once in Hangzhou, they all take first class...Most rich people will take first class.”* The service attitude is appreciated by Ying.

“I always like places with a good service attitude. It provides a person sense of achievement. When you arrive a hotel, they will give you a warm smile. If you carry some stuff and walk to the door, the server will come and help you to carry. You will feel a sense of achievement, and at the same time, you feel warm...A person must have some vanity” (Participant Ying).

Comparing with Always Luxury travelers who are mainly pleasure driven, Achievers consider more about the status meaning attached to luxury travel product. Zhang simply identified luxury travel as something for snob value: *“Luxury travel’s definition, it is not a good word to say, is to satisfy your snob value.”*

The description about their past hard work and the current achievement is similar to what Yu (2014) referred as “conspicuous accomplishment” and luxury travel seems a way to display the accomplishment. Pei mentioned that *“when we visit overseas countries, we also need to let foreigners know that Chinese also know how to enjoy life.”* They are proud of the current development in China, and still, would like to learn from developed countries. *“Our great Mao, he only stayed in China...he did not understand culture and advance of Europe...Deng Xiaoping had seen the western civilization and so his made the reform and opening-up policy...Indeed, we have caught up many countries.”* Many travelers in this segment show stronger concern about status, probably because they had the experience of difficult time in China when they were young. People who are associated with lower social status may have a stronger desire for high-status products (Mazzocco et al., 2012).

Tan shows little concern about the status meaning of luxury travel product, but show strong concern about the group of people who choose the same type of travel products. One reason for her to choose business class during short haul flight is that she wanted to escape from the travelers with the poor manner in economy class.

“Years before, you know in our country, people still practice thrift, many people will not choose airplane...I had been choosing economy class for a long time for domestic flights...But now, I don’t know why, the manner (of economy class passengers) is getting poor...I am trying to avoid.” (Participant Tan).

Pei may consider business class more prestigious and healthy when he describes the reason he wanted his children to take business class: *“I emphasizes the health...The oxygen in first class is the first-hand oxygen...the oxygen is sent from first class and then gradually to the end. So the person sits at the back got the oxygen that many people in the front already filtered.”* Although travelers in this segment show status concern, they are also attracted by the quality of the travel product, e.g air quality, the facility quality. Thus, it is difficult to segment a group of travelers into quality focused or status focused, as some studies conducted among Chinese consumers (Gao et al., 2009; Lu, 2008; McKinsey & Company, 2011; Ngai & Cho, 2012). And he is also the person who values being respected (V12) very important and he believes that he can feel being respected when his need for smoking-area was well addressed during the travel: *“I think we, people who smoke should also be respected.”*

8.5.5 Reward Seeker

The Reward Seeker segment is similar to Achiever but they have little status motivation in choosing luxury travel product. This segment is named as Reward Seeker since they consider travel as a reward for their busy work in past years or the reward of their frequent business travel. They would like to travel with friends or families and enjoy the time together. Hua is a mother of teenager child and will travel with her family during festival and travel with her female friends more often. Shen and Ming are fathers of adult children and enjoys travel with his family. Fa is the youngest travelers in this group and he started to take business class at an earlier age since high school when he found the price difference between business class and economy class is not so big: *“The first time flight was between London and Shanghai... I was checking air ticket price and I found the price difference between economy class and business class was not big. Then I decided to book a business class and have a try.”* He has not accumulated as much wealth as the other three, thus, he will usually make a budget plan for travel every time. The influence of budget in his travel is limited at the dining aspect.

“Before departure, I will make a budget plan. Usually, I will make a budget for transportation and accommodation, this is a big part of the budget. The rest is flexible. If I have more budget left, I will eat better. If there is no budget left, I will eat cheaper. But the budgeting must be done” (Participant Fa).

The budget has a little influence on his travel choices and the rest three participants in this group will not set a budget for travel. Similar to the Achievers, the financial ability does not limit the travel choice of Reward Seekers.

Hua just started to choose business class for two to three years and only takes business class for long-haul trips. Different from Gen (categorized into Achiever) who found it difficult to say whether business class is worth the money, Hua found it value for money: *“I think it is value for money, although the price is higher, the service is especially good.”* Similar to many travelers in Achiever segment, Hua also found it natural to choose the best product she can afford: *“I will choose the best option within the range I can afford.”* She is still working, so saving energy for work after travel is also a reason she used to confirm her choice of business class: *“The work is so busy during the daily life. I would like to travel around. If you take the flight and become so tired, and there is no much energy after the trip, and I think it is not worth ”* Although she also found the passengers in a poor manner sometimes, she will not try to escape like Tan does. Similar to Achiever, she does not have a particular preference on airlines or hotel brands.

Similar to Hua, Ming also found the business class value for money and he started to take business class much earlier than Hua. Ming has been taking business class for more than ten years and can accept economy class if the flight is short around one hour.

“Long time ago, it was the 90s, in many flights, the seats do not allow you to lie down, even in the business class, passengers can only sit. It was not comfortable, even if there is more space, I still feel not comfortable. Latter the hardware has been upgraded and you can lie down and sleep. Then I feel it’s worth (the money)” (Participant Ming).

The reason why he started to take business class much earlier is probably due to the fact that he is a frequent business traveler and needs to travel for long distance often, thus having a seat allowing the passenger to lie down and sleep well become the motivation of choosing business class.

The motivation for choosing a particular travel product may change. Hua firstly chooses helicopter between Macau and HK for novelty but latter for efficiency: *“The first time...I would like to try helicopter since I never tried before. Latter I*

found...ferry...I would rather take a helicopter because it's much faster." Travelers under Aspire to Luxury often consider every element of travel as a new experience, e.g. first time to take an airline, but latter they may be motivated by other values.

As the only female traveler in this group, Hua also shared an interesting point of view which may not found among male travelers: travel to escape from housework. She described how she decided to travel during holidays when her husband would like to stay at home. She is independent and would like to escape from the family burden.

"I think it is a holiday...how can you stay at home and do nothing or maybe just have some tea and play cards when you have a holiday for a week or during spring festival? When we have a holiday, we don't have a domestic helper at home, will I stay at home to be your domestic helper? No. It is better to go out and travel. It is the best and effortless. I don't have to take care of anything" (Participant Hua).

Shen started to take business class more than ten years ago and would like to stay in the best hotel in the destination. He would like to have a more comfortable option now to reward his hard work in the old days. He believes that it is the time for him to reward himself with the comfort travel experience.

"We are born in the 60s. Look back the past 40 years, since school time to work in the society, it was really hard in the 40 years. Now, it's not like I have made a lot of money, but I do have some small money enough for me to spend. I also wanted to enjoy some comfort...We, people from the countryside, want some tangible benefits. I do not want those intangible honor...I am a simple person...For child...I pay your school fee and then you go to work, I will buy you a house and a car, then you should go venture into the world by yourself. No need to take extra care... The money I spent on travel will not influence on daily life. This is extra money...I travel and I feel comfortable, the money was gone. Even if I save the money, the money is just saved there...As parents, whether you pass one million more wealth to the son does not matter. In the end, he still need to rely on himself" (Participant Shen).

Interestingly, when Hua travels with her friends, sometimes she took economy class because some friends may not be able to afford business class. *"Because we are all friends, there are must be someone who cannot afford and will think it is too expensive and want to save money, so we usually will not take first class as a group,"* Hua said. This probably relates to the group orientation of Chinese. But in this

situation, the influence of group orientation seems opposite to what happens in luxury consumption (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). Otherwise, the other friends should follow Hua and take business class. The group orientation shows collectivism which is often associated with Chinese society. However, there are also travelers in Achiever segment who will take business class or first class no matter which class the travel partner take, revealing the coexistence of individualistic and collectivist value systems (Weber, 2009).

Travel is an important part of their life. Hua mentioned that *“life should be...When it is the time to work, you work, when it is the time to have a holiday, you should relax, should go out for travel, should not stay at home.”* Among them, two participants Ming and Fa travel extremely frequently as their job nature requires extensive travel during a year. Both of them spend one-third of a year on travel for work. But they enjoy travel and will still spend a significant amount on leisure trips. Ming chooses the current job because he enjoys travel: *“I need to have business trip very often but I enjoy travel. Because I cannot stay in one place for long, and love moving around, so I picked a job suitable for me.”* Fa expressed his strong interest in travel: *“Oh I love travel. Visiting different places, different countries, different culture, I like it very much.”* They both choose their career according to their own interests and believe that maximizing the pleasure and happiness during lifetime is important. Ming mentioned that: *“Whatever I do, I have one criterion: if this can bring me happiness.”* Fa would like to spend money to exchange pleasure: *“Within the range of (financial) ability, if you have, just spend it, if there is no, then spend less. I think we should enjoy the pleasure as a human being.”*

Although they generally enjoy travel, leisure trip is different from business trip because it is more relaxing. Upon the extra leisure travel they undertake separately, sometimes they also extend their business trip to have leisure activities, which can be an immediate reward for their pressure business trip. The extended part of leisure time is varied from one extra weekend to even a week. Ming mentioned that: *“the leisure travel is together with business travel, after you have completed the task at the destination, you can stay for one or two days.”* Fa’s extended leisure time is longer: *“After I have completed the work at the London fashion show...I flew from London to Spain, and my friend flew from China to Spain, and we met at Barcelona. Then we stayed in Barcelona for 5 days.”*

Since they are frequent travelers, they will look for benefits of membership programs. When they choose airlines or hotels, the reward of a loyalty program can be one reason for their choice. Ming would like to have some actual benefits from the loyalty program: *“Sometimes, they will provide you some free upgrade card but with many restrictions...Latter, many of these cards, free upgrade cards are wasted.”* Fa will choose big hotel brands for quality guarantee and reward: *“The will give you some rewards, similar to miles from the airlines, when you have some consumption in the hotel...Then you can use those points to upgrade room type, or redeem a free room.”* This is a distinctive feature of these two travelers because the actual money they have to spend for their leisure trip is less than others. Although they still pay for their own leisure trips, they seldom need to pay the full price of the products they have. Fa explains how he decides whether to choose first class or business class.

“It depends on the ticket price. If the price difference between first class and business class is very little, I will choose first class for sure. Another situation is to use miles, I can use miles and then pay extra money...or purchase a business class ticket and use miles to upgrade it...If the price difference between first class and business class is less than CNY 20,000 (USD2,900) for a return ticket, I think it is a normal price difference” (Participant Fa).

Since all the participants travel regularly every year and people who are working will also travel for business, many of them would also be members of different loyalty programs, but these two travelers mentioned the benefits of loyalty program in details probably because they have enjoyed substantial benefits from these programs as they spend one third of their life on travel. The actual cost for the same products for Fa and Ming is less than the amount other travelers need to pay.

Similar to Always Luxury travelers, travelers in this group have been travel in their desired way with little budget limitation. The two frequent business travelers prefer to arrange the trip by themselves and have more travel related knowledge. The other two travelers have less ability to arrange a travel by themselves and have less travel-related knowledge. Shen’s trips are always arranged by his son and Hua’s trips are arranged by her female friend who is working in travel agent.

8.5.6 Status Pursuer

Similar to Achiever segment, this group is also status concerned. But Status Pursuer has not accumulated as much wealth as Achiever, and that is the reason why they are named as Status Pursuers. Business class is already on their wish list before they can afford it. Thus, once their income can support the expense of luxury travel, they started to purchase.

Both Wei and Liang consider the first class as status symbol. Although they started to take first class recently, they always take first class for any flights. Unlike some Always Luxury travelers who would also accept economy class for short haul, Wei insists to take first class for any trips: *“If there is no first class, I can only change a flight.”* But his experience in first class is relatively short: *“After my 30s, in recent two years.”* He links first class to achievement.

“I am a person who would like to enjoy pleasure. At the beginning, I did not have the financial support. Because I am an independent person, I will feel like I am a Boomerang kid if I use my parents’ money to take first class. I can have the sense of achievement when I enjoy the pleasure via my own effort” (Participant Wei).

Wei also collects watches and considers watches as a status symbol: *“Watch can represent one’s status... Show off in a subtle way.”* Similar to Wei, Liang also starts to take first class in recent years but have shown strong attachment to first class: *“I will not choose very bad, like budget airlines. And I do not like economy class.”* He was influenced by his friends on the choice of first class and may use the similar point of view to influence others: *“You earn so much, the salary is not low, but you still take economy class. Do not take economy class, please take first class. It matches your status better.”* Status display or conspicuousness, as a dimension of luxury (Choo et al., 2012; Nwankwo et al., 2014; Vickers & Renand, 2003; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Wiedmann et al., 2009) and sometimes travel motivation (Thurlow & Jaworski, 2012), is found as an essential motivation of consuming luxury travel product especially among travelers in this segment.

It is interesting to find both Wei and Liang who are young and willing to join tour package. Wei is not satisfied with the package tour, but he will still join when he would like to visit some unfamiliar destinations, e.g. South American. One possible reason why he does not enjoy package tour is that he only wants to visit attractions

which are seldom visited. For example, he even does not want to visit Louvre Museum simply because it is a popular attraction. Although he desires rare travel experience, it may be different from luxury consumers' need on uniqueness or rarity (Nwankwo et al., 2014; Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Wiedmann et al., 2009) or the snob effect (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012). The reason he does not want to visit popular attractions is that he can easily obtain information about those attractions even if he does not visit a place. Similar to Wei, Liang also prefers independent travel but will still join package tour to destinations like Europe because of the language barrier.

Both of them reveal their strong desire for luxury travel and consider their current travel experience as luxury travel. Their experience, however, is less luxurious comparing with most respondents. Wei states that he would like to visit more than half of the world before age 50, and for him, that means he will visit around 30 countries. When he was asked which type of travel experience he usually prefers, he answered as comfortable and high-end experience: *“First of all, it must be comfortable and high-end. I also enjoy food, and prefer something delicate and high-end.”* But three-star hotels are also considered as good accommodation by him.

“You must stay in a spacious and comfortable place. Others may like small local owned accommodation, but I do not like it, I think the experience of staying in three-star, four-star and five-star hotels is very good...No matter train or airplane, it must be the best, most comfortable one” (Participant Wei).

Liang enjoyed his tour package and found other travelers in the same group tour polite and nice. He explained this by the high tour package rate: *“I think package tour is good and convenient. The travelers in the same group are all in a good manner. Because this package is not cheap, the travelers who can pay for this amount of money will not be low.”* Package price of a trip to Spain was 50,000 for two people including first class tickets and the price may just cover the air ticket fee if they travel as independent tourists. It is interesting to find that travelers in this segment of the Achiever segment expressed their view about how luxury travel match and display their status or achievement, considering being humble and self-effacing is encouraged in Chinese culture (Bond et al., 1982). It confirms that for some travelers, the display of wealth is “glorious” as promoted by the statement “to be wealthy is a glorious thing”.

8.5.7 Adventurer

Travelers in this group are named as Adventurers because they prefer the adventurous type of travel and love road trips. Although they choose luxury travel products mostly, they will not limit themselves with comfort. They will travel with economy class and stay in a budget hotel if the destination has no comfort accommodation. The ways they travel with family and friends can be very different. When they travel with friends to some less accessible destinations without much travel facilities, they do not have requirements on accommodation. Yu stated that: *“If it is not family related, I drive with several friends, I have no problem with camping...But if I bring my family, I will consider the accommodation facilities and whether it is safe, clean and comfortable.”* The similar situation may happen on Yi who usually cannot have good accommodation when he has self-driving trips, but will choose luxury hotel brand when he arranges family trip for quality guarantee: *“When I travel with wife, I will go to island resort, she would not want to visit (remote area).”*

They choose luxury accommodation mainly for family and choose business class mainly because they used to take business class for business trips and understand the benefit of taking business class for long-haul trips. But they do not have much requirement on the comfort during the short flights. Similar to Fa and Ming, they are also frequent business travelers. They are experienced travelers and appreciate some luxury hotels. But the difference is that Adventurers can also accept less luxurious facilities or even tough environment during their adventurous leisure trips. Similar to Family Oriented, Adventurer does not show the “no-return effect” probably means that travel has its unique characteristic different from other types of consumption.

They are well traveled in China and overseas countries. And now they prefer traveling within China. They feel that there are still much more to explore in China and do not eager to visit other countries. Yu explained the history and culture as the reasons for preferring China as a destination.

“First...I am not familiar with the history and culture in foreign countries...I don't have a strong echo on the foreign culture...Another aspect is food. I prefer Chinese food...The ethnic, the regional food and local culture in China is very complex. There is a lot I haven't understand clearly. Stuffs in foreign countries, there are no much linkages with us, so I prefer China” (Participant Yu).

Yi also prefers China as destination currently although he has visited 20 to 30 countries already. They know clearly what they would like to have from a trip.

“Because the language communication in China is convenient. And you don’t have to apply for visa, it is very complex...I found that there are many pretty places in northwestern region...Maybe you can find the similar sceneries in Yellow Stone and Xingjiang. If you haven’t been to Xinjiang, you should visit those in China first, then go to those further destinations. I think I should visit those difficult places first. Then have some comfortable journey when I get older” (Participant Yi).

Both of them are still working hard to make career achievement and the major barrier to travel more often is busy work. Yi would travel more if he has time: *“It’s mainly about time. I really want to have a road trip from the start point to the end for one or two months.”* Yu also prefer long time self-drive trip: *“I hope I can travel by self-driving. My self-driving trips are actually very limited. I really wanted to drive a car and travel for one month.”* He commented on his life stage as the time to make greater career achievement.

“I think I am still at the stage of hard working. I am not the successful person who simply enjoy the pleasure of life. I think I am not. No matter my personal experience, or my wealth, I think I have not reached that stage yet. So I need to work for ten years more” (Participant Yu).

Yi has joined a by-invitation-only tour organized by a high-end travel agent, and one motivation for joining the tour is to make friends with other young entrepreneurs. Yi believes that these tours will benefit his career.

“Our job is to look for those entrepreneurs to provide service for them in the future...First, they are our potential clients in the future...If you talk to them, what you have is the most updated information and suggestions...It helps you to understand an industry...We will hear a lot of opinions from these entrepreneurs and major players in the industry...when you talk to other people, others may think you are an expert. It’s very different” (Participant Yi).

Different from other trips he took for his own interest on self-driving and photography, this trip was taken under the motivation of self-cultivation, which has been found as an important purpose of Chinese travelers in a study of Fu et al. (2015).

It is interesting to find one male participant in this group, Yu, having a strong aesthetic need. Usually choosing a nicely designed hotel is mentioned by female participants. A hotel must look good in interior design and the outside environment, thus, can make them feel comfortable to stay in. Aesthetic value, a dimension of luxury goods (Choo et al., 2012), is also important in luxury travel, especially in luxury hotels. Yu revealed his appreciation over the pretty uniform of Singapore Airline: “*The clothes are designed so good looking. At least I am pleased...This is enjoyment, the dress, the manner...*” The attention to design details which is different from other male participants is probably because he works in fashion related area. This need for aesthetic enjoyment may play a role in travelers’ decision on which product to buy, but may not be the motivation of preferring business class over economy class or five-star hotel over four-star hotels.

8.6 Chapter Summary

The findings of the interviews with 30 Chinese luxury travelers are discussed in this chapter. The analysis of interviews with travelers further revealed a more diversified profile of luxury travelers in China compared with what has been perceived by luxury travel agents. The laddering analysis shows that pleasure (V1), happiness (V2), cleanliness (V6), safety (V7), and freedom (V14) are important values associated with travelers’ preference for luxury travel products. Based on the important luxury travel product attributes, consequence and values perceived by luxury travelers, and the way they travel, they are categorized into seven segments. The findings from luxury travelers and agents confirm each other largely while the diverse profile of luxury travelers is partially understood by luxury travel agents. Further comparison between luxury travel agents’ perception of their clients and what revealed by luxury travelers will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 9 Discussion

9.1 Introduction

Means-end theory suggests that product preference is based on certain favorite product attributes which can match customer values. Chinese luxury travelers have different favorite product attributes, exhibiting different values, and the different values indicate different motivations for choosing luxury travel product. Although they seem to prefer the same “means”, the “end” they are trying to reach is different. Some values guiding their travel choice are rooted in Chinese culture, but some Chinese traditional values are absent or weak among the luxury travelers. The different traveler segments identified show more diverse types of luxury travelers compared with what perceived by luxury travel agents and previous literature. The chapter consolidates and compares the findings from interviewing luxury travel agents and luxury travelers. Literature implies that luxury travel is a subset of luxury products but also unique as an intangible service. This study confirms that with the many distinguishing characteristics of luxury travel consumption.

9.2 Comparing the Agents’ and Travelers’ Perspectives

The findings of interviews with luxury travel agents in Phase I and interviews with luxury travelers in Phase II are discussed separately in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8. In this section, the findings from the two phases will be compared. The comparison serves two purposes: first, as discussed in methodology, the data collected from the two perspectives on the same topics can be used for triangulation; second, the observation of luxury travel agents and the interviews with luxury travelers can serve as a supplement for each other for understanding Chinese luxury travelers. What luxury travel agents revealed is summarized based on previous clients they have met. The advantage of this data source is that it allows researchers to understand a large number of luxury travelers via travel agents. The interviews with luxury travelers provide in-depth discussion with 30 travelers and allow travelers to reveal their value system and motivations which they may not necessarily inform their agents.

9.2.1 Travelers Profile

Luxury travel agents have revealed the variety of their clients and they design different types of luxury travel products to attract different travelers. Some agents can

categorize the travelers by factors such as income, and others even mentioned that every traveler is different from the rest.

Luxury travel agents tend to segment luxury travelers by their previous travel experience and their wealth. Their travel experience may be related to their ability to plan the trip by themselves and their requirements or standards on the expected service provided by travel agents, meaning “how much they expect”. Their wealth is closely related to their travel budget, meaning “how much they can pay”. These two dimensions are closely related to their business operation and used by luxury travel agents to categorize their clients. The seven segments identified in this study is mainly based on the motivations for choosing luxury travel, which provides alternative perspective to appreciate the diversification of luxury travelers.

Luxury travel agents generally believe that their clients are either riches who are not able to plan a trip, riches who do not have time to plan a trip, riches who do not want to plan a trip, and well-off persons who are experienced in travel and look for value for money in the tour package. The former three types are not price-sensitive and the last one type is. The interviews with luxury travelers have revealed one more type of non-price sensitive traveler, the Always Luxury travelers.

Always Luxury travelers are rich, know how to plan a trip, have time to plan a trip, are currently planning trips for themselves, but they are not price-sensitive. Since they enjoy service and are willing to pay for service, they could be the ideal customers of the luxury travel agents. However, they did not choose luxury travel agents because they have concern about the quality of the travel product provided by the luxury travel agents, as discussed in 7.3.2. They are not sure whether luxury travel agents can do a better job than themselves. Informant 5 mentioned hiring individuals with international exposure as one advantage of their company: “*There are more and more travel consultants who have studies or worked abroad, they will have a good understanding on those destinations they have been to.*” The travelers in Always Luxury segment have also studied abroad and traveled when they were studying, and developed their travel plan ability during the study. Travel planning, as a professional competence, is better appreciated by travelers who are not able to do so.

Luxury travel agents find that most of their clients are busy, and some housewives and seniors are rich in both time and money. This was echoed by the

interviews with luxury travelers that most of the travelers are working and busy and some female travelers do not work and have more free time. However, the profile of luxury travelers is more diverse than what agents observed. The segment Achiever and Reward Seeker are people who are not as old as those to be considered as seniors, not as free as those housewives, but not as busy as people who can only travel for a limited period of time. They are working but the company they own is operating smoothly, so their travel time can be flexible. But they are using traditional travel agents which they are familiar with or rely on their children's arrangement. The close connection and understanding between travelers and their travel agent friends or children can hardly be replaced by luxury travel agents.

Luxury travel agents mentioned family as one important segment and described several characteristics of these travelers, e.g. they would like to stay in one hotel for the whole strip instead of moving to try more hotels. Similarly, the interviews with luxury travelers show that some travelers have strong family orientation, and are named as Family Oriented. The interesting characteristics of Family Oriented segment which is not revealed by luxury travel agents is that some travelers are choosing luxury travel products temporary and they intend to travel in a less luxurious way after kids grow up.

Probably because luxury travel agents are trying to differentiate themselves by providing less accessible travel products and adventurous tours, the segment Adventurer was well identified by luxury travel agents and the motivation of making friends with other young entrepreneurs is also mentioned.

Travel agents believe that those one-time luxury travelers who only travel in luxury on special occasions can hardly become repeat customers, largely because their financial ability cannot constantly support their luxury travel activities. However, the encouraging findings based on interviews with luxury traveler indicate that those who started to travel luxury on special occasions may become luxury travelers, for example, both Lia and Jie has started to take business class around the time they got married. The non-return effect of luxury consumption is found in this situation. Luxury travel agents can learn from this finding and take these special occasions as opportunities to transform one-time luxury travelers to repeated customers.

One important characteristic of luxury travelers perceived by the luxury travel agent is that they are loyal to luxury travel agents, and this is partially echoed by luxury travelers. Among the travelers who are interviewed, some of them use travel agent service for tour arrangement and would like to always use the same one. But the reason is not because of the trust developed with that travel agent, but the trust of the contact person. Luxury travel agents have mentioned better price, better brand image, the inconvenience of switching to another travel agent as reasons of always choosing one travel agent. The most important reason is, however, the personal connection between the travelers and travel agent. Both Jim and Hua have friends who are working in travel agent, and they use travel agent service constantly.

The belief of that luxury travelers are loyal customers is only half true because some travelers use two or three travel agents at the same time. Zhe usually joins high-end tours organized by travel agents and when she was asked whether she always use the same company, she mentioned: *“No, (I will) select...I don’t remember the (company) name clearly, but I will contact their responsible person... We will add each other as friends on WeChat and they sometimes send (product information), I will have a look.”* Again, the contact person seems more important than the company name. If people have many “friends” who are working in travel agents, they may become repeat customers of different travel agents at the same time. If travelers do not inform travel agents that they are also customers of another travel agent, the travel agents will consider the customer as a loyal customer.

9.2.2 Travel Motivations

The motivations of luxury travelers perceived by luxury travel agents show a lot similarity with what revealed by travelers. Those similar findings are, thus, confirmed by triangulation of data source. Both similarities and differences between the findings from the two different parties are discussed in this section.

Overall, people choose luxury travel products not for a particular reason, but for a wide range of reasons which they sometimes cannot even realize by themselves. Luxury travel agents have revealed that the luxury travelers are willing to pay more because they try not to sacrifice any of their needs, even when travelers claim that they choose luxury travel just for certain needs, as discussed in 7.2.1. And traveler Ma revealed similar view: *“...service is a whole, it cannot be separated into details...as a service receiver, I will be okay if you can make me comfort when I receive the service.”*

Although the overall experience plays an important role and motivations often synergize the intention to undertake luxury travel, several core motivations are identified from the interviews conducted with both parties. They are comfort, pleasure, relax, relationship, status, freedom, and privacy. Luxury travelers generally require great comfort during the trip except Adventurers. It is reasonable because many of them travel for relaxation and they do feel that they can better relax when having luxury travel products. Privacy, which is rarely mentioned by luxury travelers, may still be their need since the majority of them will never travel with strangers. Thus, they may take privacy for granted and did not mention it as an important value. They are looking for pleasure during the trip and travel is a way for them to enjoy life. The relationship motivation is mainly in two aspects: making friends during the trip, and choosing luxury travel product for family and kids. The status concern is identified among travelers in Aspire to Luxury, Achiever, and Status Pursuer and is strongest among Status Pursuer. Travelers also revealed their value of freedom, and they would like to have choices during the trips and enjoy flexibility, which is also understood by luxury travel agents.

Differences between the findings from the perception of luxury travel agents and what is revealed by luxury travelers are found regarding the following motivations: safety, recognition of visiting places that others haven't been, learning, self-challenge, dream trip, and reward.

Safety was mentioned by travel agents and they believed that luxury travelers tend to choose a luxury travel agent for rarely visited destinations or adventurous tours. Although safety is also mentioned by luxury travelers as their consideration when choosing a better hotel, the travelers who have concern on safety issues in the destinations will avoid to visit any destinations with potential risks, even when they know that luxury travel agents are operating the tours. For travelers who do not have strong safety concern, adventurous tours can be undertaken by themselves even without the help of luxury travel agents. Thus, the presence of luxury travel agents has less influence on travelers' decision of having an adventure than luxury travel agents perceived. The influence is rather on which travel product to choose after they decide to visit a destination. Luxury travel agents should have noticed the strong safety concern of some luxury travelers when they design luxury travel itinerary. For

example, they may carefully choose the airline according to the safety record to gain the trust of some potential clients who have strong safety concern, like San.

Luxury travel agents consider memorable experience as an important motivation for choosing luxury travel product. Similarly, a few luxury travelers consider new and memorable experience as topics during conversations with friends, thus, motivate them to travel in luxury. However, the importance of memorable experience is perceived higher among luxury travel agents than luxury travelers. Most of the travelers enjoy the travel even if they cannot recall any unique experience.

Recognition from visiting rarely visited destination is mentioned by luxury travel agents as a motivation of luxury travelers. This finding is somewhat echoed by the fact that a few of luxury travelers would like to visit a certain number of destinations as an achievement or a goal, e.g. visiting all the provinces in China, or visiting 20-30 countries before age 50. Both visiting novel destinations and large number of destinations can bring travelers a sense of achievement.

The desire of learning local culture is discussed by luxury travel agents as one motivation, and it depends on the traveler's personal interest according to the interviews with luxury travelers. The variance between the motivation of learning can be large. Many travelers want to know more about the destination, the only exception is Gen.

“I will not try to understand...we do not need to understand many things; it is not necessary. It is just ‘having been to’...It may be related to my personality; I don't really want to understand more. I don't have anything I like very much in a particular country, so there is no necessity to understand it. That's it” (Participant Gen).

Self-challenge is identified by luxury travel agents as a motivation to undertake adventurous trips. The interviews with luxury travelers further discovered that some travelers may undertake adventurous trips even without the motivation of self-challenge. The Adventurers enjoy the adventurous trips, but they do not see it as self-challenge. It is probably because they have already get used to the difficulties during the trips and those trips are not challenging for them anymore.

Luxury travel agents have found a type of travelers who consider luxury travel as a dream to achieve, e.g. some travelers who visited the Antarctic. Among the luxury traveler who are interviewed, there are people who would like to go to the Antarctic but do not consider it as a dream to achieve. The trip is accessible for them financially

and physically, but they hesitated to visit the Antarctic because of the physical discomfort they probably will face during the trip. Those travelers who consider visiting the polar area as a dream are probably not luxury travelers as defined in this study. Luxury travel agents mainly target luxury travelers, but also have some one-time luxury travelers as clients.

9.3 Luxury Travel as Means to Achieve the End State

Previous studies, although may focus on cruise passenger, first class flight passengers or travelers who are highly engaged in luxury shopping, considered luxury travelers as a homogeneous group (Han & Hyun, 2018; Hwang & Lyu, 2018; Park, Reisinger, & Park, 2009). The results of analyzing Chinese luxury travelers indicate seven distinct segments which are summarized in Figure 5. The analysis shows that four segments have achieved their desired way of travel: Always Luxury, Achiever, Reward Seeker, and Status Pursuer. The desired way of travel of Achiever, Reward Seeker, and Status Pursuer is less luxurious than Always Luxury probably because most of them have less travel-related knowledge. In other words, they are not well informed about “what is out there”. They believe that it is not possible to spend a large amount of money on travel, but they do not know the large price difference existing in the same category of product. For example, they thought the business class or first class flight ticket cannot be more expensive than CNY 100,000 (USD 14,500), but in fact, there are many airlines providing tickets exceeding this amount. Status Pursuer already started the luxury travel they can afford and may be limited by their financial ability even if they would like to travel more luxuriously, and will probably become Aspire to Luxury.

Two segments revealed the gap between their desired and actual way of travel: Aspire to Luxury and Family Oriented. Aspire to Luxury desire a more luxury way of travel than their actual way, thus, they may become Always Luxury if they have accumulated sufficient wealth. The segment Family Oriented is interesting because they travel in luxury for their family especially kids, so this is the only segment whose current way of travel is more luxurious than their desire way of travel. The Adventurers are flexible in the way they desired to travel and actually travel. The “no-return effect” is not found among either Adventurer or Family Oriented.

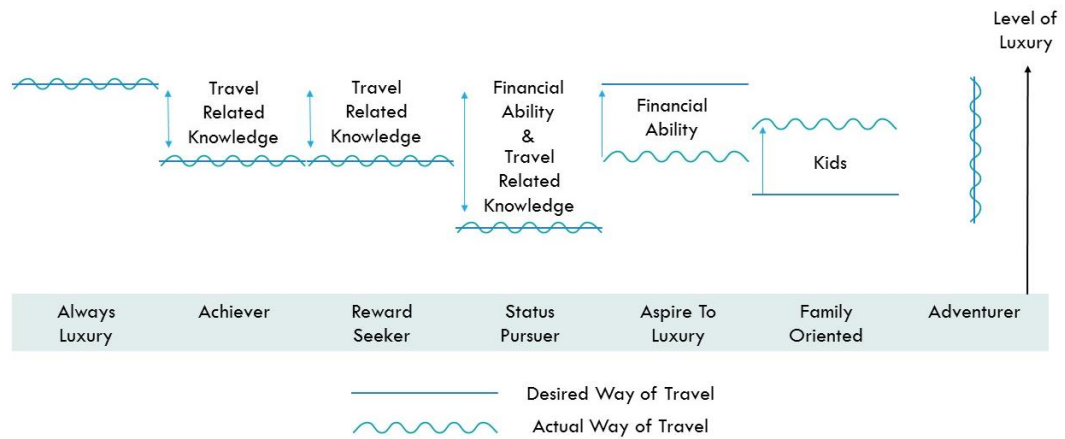


Figure 5. Seven segments of luxury travelers

Similar to Adventurers who are highly variable in terms of their desired way of travel and actual way of travel, the other six segments all have a relatively stable desired way of travel. This reflects that the human values which reveal the desired end-state is relatively stable. Although Always Luxury, Achiever, Reward Seeker, and Status Pursuer all have achieved their desired way of travel, the types of luxury travel products they are consuming have different levels of luxury. By different “means”, their different “ends” are all achieved. For Aspire to Luxury, their “means” have not fully matched their “end” yet, but the “means” are what they can afford best to match their “end”. The Family Oriented segment is giving family members especially kids the higher priority than themselves, thus the current “end” is largely influenced by family-focused value. While values are guiding people’s behavior, the conflicts between values sometimes do exist and people will have to make a choice. The Family Oriented segment considers family security as a top value, thus the “end” when they have young kids to take care of will show large influence from their family-oriented value system. The gap between their desired way of travel and actually way of travel shows that their temporary “end”, meaning their current desired state, does not match with their desired “end state”.

According to the means-end theory, customers will choose the products with attributes which can match their values (Gutman, 1982). The consumption of the same product reflects different values. Although participants experience different levels of luxury during a trip, all of them take business class or first class flights. The values associated with the choice of the cabin type differ. The Always Luxury segment looks for comfort and good rest from taking business class, Status Pursuer not only want comfort but also seek status value from the business class seat, and Family Oriented

is mainly considering their kids on the choice of business class and thus the product is associated with their value of taking care of the beloved ones. By the same “means” which is business class, they seek for different “end” which is comfort, status, or family.

As shown in Figure 5, although all participants have matched the screening criteria and are studied as luxury travelers in this study, their levels of luxury during the trip are different: Always Luxury travelers are most luxurious, e.g. they dine in Michelin star restaurant, stay in suites in top hotels, and rent car with driver in destination, and Status Pursuer is the least luxurious segment, e.g. travelers take ordinary tour package organized by travel agents but upgrade the flight to business class.

It is interesting to observe that both Status Pursuers and Achievers have a status concern in their choice of luxury travel product, however, the actual way of travel of Achiever is more luxurious than Status Pursuer. By different “means”, Status Pursuer and Achiever have achieved the same “end”. In luxury industry, the high-end luxury products without a loud logo are serving the needs of customers who only want to signal status to peers but not everyone, and the entry-level products with big logos also have its market. Status Pursuer and Achiever have different peers and daily life, thus, their requirement on status signal is different. By the “means” of Status Pursuer, Achiever is not able to match the “end”. An Achiever may need to spend one million to display the status among peer, but Status Pursuer may only need to buy a business class ticket to achieve the same purpose.

The customers who purchase entry-level products may be limited by the knowledge and financial ability. First of all, they and their peers may not be able to read the luxury product with a subtle brand image, thus purchasing a product with big logo can better serve the need for a status signal. Secondly, the entry-level product is usually more affordable. As a result, an entry-level luxury product will be preferred by entry-level luxury consumers. Similarly, Status Pursuer segment is limited by their knowledge about luxury travel products and their financial ability.

The means-end theory is often applied by asking participants to name product attributes which are important in their purchase decision. Among all product attributes, the price is a unique attribute because it is what customers need to pay and it often

reflects other product attributes. Usually, low cost would be considered as attractive product attributes. For example, Ho et al. (2014) investigated the motivations for undertaking work and travel vacations among Taiwanese by using laddering interviews, and they found that travel on a low budget is an important attribute which makes working holiday as a preferred travel style.

The cost of luxury travel is high and the price of luxury travel is usually not mentioned as a preferred attribute. Travelers have to pay for the “means” to achieve the “end”. In terms of the reason why these more expensive luxury travel products are preferred, it is found that: (1) the cost is not considered high, or (2) the benefit is considered very crucial.

The first situation when cost is not considered high is often found among Always Luxury, Achiever and Reward Seeker. As mentioned by one travel agent (Informant 10), the luxury travelers who have accumulated their wealth and the slight change of the amount of the saving in the bank they have does not mean a lot for them. The interviewed travelers revealed that the amount of money spent on travel is “extra” money and they do not have to save money from daily life for travel. Some travelers over 50 years old also mentioned that the time they can travel is limited considering their lifetime and the spending on travel is also limited. And they do not consider saving money or accumulating wealth very important, and believe that what they earned from work should be spent on themselves or their family members for enjoying their own life. They spent more money on travel because travel is a preferred leisure activity. Since the cost of luxury travel is relatively low considering their total wealth and accumulating wealth is not their major concern, they are willing to pay for the “means” to reach the “end”.

One special case in the first situation is when the actual cost is not high, and this is found among travelers who travel for about one-third of the year for business trips. The travelers can enjoy the benefits of being frequent business travelers and utilize the benefits of their loyalty programs in leisure trip. Since the actual cost of having luxury travel experience is less than other segments, they may be more likely to pay for it.

The second situation when the benefits are considered very crucial is found among Status Pursuer and Aspire to Luxury. The Status Pursuer has very strong status

needs and by purchasing business class flights their need can be satisfied, thus, they always take business class or first class once they can afford it. For Aspire to Luxury, luxury travel is a beneficial activity since they can learn about luxury travel experience, can satisfy the status need, can use the travel experience as topics during conversations for social reason, and can enjoy the pleasure and happiness during the travel. They have the knowledge to appreciate luxury travel which matches their values. Although they are less wealthy comparing with Always Luxury, they are still willing to travel as luxury as their financial ability allows. The “means” can largely match their “end”, thus, travelers are willing to pay for the “means”.

The segment Family Oriented is in between the two situations. Since they are temporarily traveling in luxury style because of the kids, their total cost of luxury travel may be less than the travel cost of other segments. At the same time, they consider taking care of family members very important and thus are willing to pay for the cost.

The means-end theory largely explains the matching between the luxury travel features as “means” and perceived benefits luxury travelers can have as the “end”. The cost, which is a deduction from the wealth, is not a benefit but goes with the benefits as a package. How strong the desire to the “end” and how little the cost means to the travelers may influence their final purchase decision. Future study can be conducted to look at the influence of price as a product attribute.

The advantage of categorizing travelers with the means-end theory as a theoretical background is that the luxury travelers are perceived diverse and dynamic. Firstly, travelers’ different “means” and “end” shape themselves into different types of luxury travelers, thus diversification of the luxury travelers is better appreciated comparing with previous segmentation of luxury travelers, for example, by Bakker (2005). The four types of luxury travelers proposed by Bakker (2005) include wealthy travelers, corporate travelers, one-off/once-in-a-lifetime, and lifestyle traveler. The segments Always Luxury, Achiever and Reward Seeker can possibly be categorized into which Bakker referred as wealthy travelers, however, the way of travel and the motivations of the three segments are different.

Corporate travelers are also found among the participants although this study focuses on leisure travelers. Those frequent business travelers also undertake luxury

trips when they travel on their own and sometime extend their business travel to have some leisure activities. Nowadays, it is difficult to clearly distinguish between leisure travel and business travel. One-off/once-in-a-lifetime luxury traveler is not considered as luxury travelers in this study. However, “one-period in lifetime luxury travelers” are found in the segment named Family Oriented.

Lifestyle travelers can be found in the segment of Aspire to Luxury, Status Pursuer, and Adventurer since they are experiencing the luxury style or adventurous travel which is not the norm in daily life, but again, the motivations and preferred way of travel of different segment are different. The advantage of having the current seven segments instead of combining them into four types is that the characteristics of each type are captured better, especially in term of interpreting the motivations of choosing luxury travel style.

Secondly, the dynamic status of luxury travel is addressed by reviewing their values motivating their choice and their desired end-state. It is possible to anticipate the transformation of some types of travelers. As shown in Figure 5, Aspire to Luxury may elevate to Always Luxury if their wealth is accumulated in the future. Achiever and Reward Seeker will probably be more luxurious if they are aware of the available options. The Adventurers probably will be Always Luxury travelers as well when they are getting old and their physical condition does not allow those adventurous trips. Status Pursuer may become Achiever if their financial ability is improved.

The children of Always Luxury, Achiever, Reward Seeker, Aspire to Luxury and Family Oriented are likely to be Always Luxury travelers since some young participants in Always Luxury segment mentioned that their parents also travel in business class, and many participants among Always Luxury, Achiever, Reward Seeker, Aspire to Luxury and Family Oriented bring their children to travel with them together in business class. For example, Pei who is an Achiever will ask his children to take business class when they go to universities in Americans, and Kim who is an Always Luxury traveler mentioned that her parents arrange business class for her: “*I studied in the US before, I will choose business class. Parents will help you to choose. Now I am married, my husband also chooses business class. We are just used to business class.*” It is likely that the next generation of Always Luxury couple will also be Always Luxury. Interestingly, the Family Oriented may shift to their desired less luxurious travel after their children grow up. Overall, different types of luxury

travelers tend to evolve to Always Luxury if their financial status is improving and travel experience and knowledge is getting rich.

9.4 Chinese Culture Influence

This study explores the motivations of luxury travelers in China, and some of their important values are found to be rooted in Chinese culture. The findings of this study echoes previous studies on the two values promoting luxury consumption including face (Chan et al., 2009; Le Monkhouse et al., 2012) and group orientation (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). A number of values including learning, frugality, respect for authority which are found influential on tourism behavior (Hsu & Huang, 2016; Park & Chesla, 2007a; Xu et al., 2009), however, has less effect on behaviors of luxury travelers. The interviewed travelers vary in age, ranging from about 20 to about 60, thus the shift of values which may be due to the rapid social change in China in recent decades can also be observed.

Face is a concept embedded in Confucianism (Jacobs et al., 1995), an important part of the traditional Chinese culture, and it may encourage luxury consumption (Chan et al., 2009; Le Monkhouse et al., 2012), for example, buying vacation house at frequently visited destinations of seasonal travel (Salazar & Zhang, 2013). The meaning of face is largely related to the need for status, and it is not unique in China. The uniqueness, however, is that the face concept is socially accepted by Chinese and people may feel comfortable to admit their status concern. Zhang and Ying all clearly stated snob value to vanity as a reason to choose luxury travel, as discussed in 8.5.4. Zhang believed status is something people should seek: *“After all, human beings are advanced animals. What human being seeks is in all aspects, spiritual things, right?”* Status is as important as that Wong hopes his children can also strive for status: *“I hope they (children) can keep their own characters and can enjoy their own life. At the same time, I hope they can be responsible and fight for their own social status. But these two are actually contradicting.”*

Although the discussion is focusing on leisure trips, Ria mentioned that face concern exists only when she has business trips but not leisure trip: *“We need to meet the clients, and we will try to book a nice hotel. It is actually adding marks on you...You will care how your clients will perceive you, how much positive impression the clients have...(Face) does not matter for leisure trips.”*

Literature suggests that self-cultivation is the fundamental principle of Confucianism (Fu et al., 2015; Jacobs et al., 1995) and lifelong process of learning is advocated (Li, 2003). The learning motivation is found in Lia who has worked in a hotel and belong to the Aspire to Luxury. Visiting different hotels is a way to enrich her knowledge about hospitality. The similar motivation is also found on San, who is categorized as Always Luxury. Although luxury is a norm for her, she can still learn knowledge about hospitality by visiting different hotels which are new to her. She is interested to learn more about the best practices in hotels because her family is investing hotel business and is going to open a new hotel soon. Other than these two travelers who have particular interests in the tourism industry, learning is not found as a motivation of having luxury travel experience. For example, Yi mentioned: *“I think travel is playing. There is no deep meaning. I go travel so frequently, but I am not so different from those who do not go travel. Probably if someone spent the time on self-learning and will improve a lot more than me...Travel is for relaxing only.”* Unlike what has been found by Xu et al. (2009) that learning is even more important than having fun as a motivation of travel for Chinese student travelers, luxury travelers mainly travel for pleasure and happiness but not for learning.

Chinese is perceived as family orientated and Confucianism advocates filiality and parenting. Filiality, the love of one’s parents (Park & Chesla, 2007b), may encourage people to arrange a luxury trip for parents and reduce unnecessary risk from adventurous activities (Sun et al., 2014). Although the linkage between safety need and filiality is not found in this study, filiality is a major value motivating some travelers to invite their parents to join luxury trips, like what Tan did.

Parenting may encourage parents to arrange family trips for education need (Fu et al., 2015). The education purpose is found among a few parent participants and it is a motivation for travel but not the motivation of choosing luxury travel. They bring kids to other countries to learn a different culture. As Chen mentioned: *“Kids can learn to communicate with foreigners, to learn the foreign culture and broaden the horizon.”* Probably because travel is largely perceived as a leisure activity for pleasure by luxury traveler themselves, the main purpose for them to have a family trip is also for the kids to have some fun. Yu shared his opinion on the purpose of traveling with kids: *“I hope they can be happy and healthy, especially mental health...I*

will let him get closer to nature and culture...Someone may bring kids to learn history (during the trip), I will not be like this.”

The parenting responsibility encourages luxury travel choices among Family Oriented travelers in two ways. Firstly, parents would like to bring their kids when they travel for kids to have fun, but the trip becomes difficult for parents to arrange or to enjoy. Thus, they choose luxury travel service to reduce the difficulties when they travel with kids. Secondly, parents would like to provide a comfortable and safe environment for kids during travel.

Frugality, rooted in Confucianism (Lau, 1979), is the reason why Chinese travelers are careful in choosing travel products (Hsu & Huang, 2016). Even among Chinese luxury travelers who spend money extravagantly, frugality is still considered as a virtue. They believe the luxury travel products are worth the money and purchasing such product is not considered as a waste of money or something against frugality. For example, Jie practices thrift during daily life but spend more during the trip for pleasure. Pei encourages his children to practice thrift but take business class: *“My daughter and son are studying abroad. I asked them to save money on other aspects. But I firmly asked them to take business class or first class because it is a long haul flight.”* Thus, the appreciation of frugality is passed to the next generation with a concept of spending money wisely instead of saving money in every aspect of life.

Group orientation, which is also rooted in Confucianism, may encourage luxury consumption which reflects the social norm (Wong & Ahuvia, 1998), visit popular destination (Hsu & Huang, 2016), and follow group decision during travel (Kwek & Lee, 2010). Liang, who is categorized as Status Pursuer, started to take first class because his friend encourages him to take. The value of group orientation is found among some luxury traveler when they will take economy class if they travel with friends who cannot afford business class. Chen mentioned: *“It is not suitable for me to sit in front (in business class) ... Since we travel together, we should, of course, follow the group decision.”* But more often, luxury travelers are individualists and will choose business class even other travel partners choose economy class. Gen commented that *“I feel it (I take business class and other friends take economy class) is very normal.”* Group orientation has influence on some luxury travelers but not everyone probably because many luxury travelers are at managerial level at working place and need to demonstrate more leadership than conformity.

The Confucianism concept respect for authority is demonstrated interestingly among luxury travelers who are usually the elites representing for the authority. As the authority, they believe that they should be respected. Pei emphasizes that he should be respected as a smoker and one time he satisfied that the hotel does not blame him for breaking the regulation: *“When I just arrived (the hotel), my son told me that I cannot smoke in the hotel because the smoking room was not available when he made the reservation. Latter, I smoked and left some tips...At the end (room attendant left a note) and draw a smiling face...Their service details are really good.”* In Confucianism, the respect for authority also means the order of family and society. For example, husband is authorized to make family decision (Park & Chesla, 2007b). In modern China, husband is not the only decision maker in the family. As discussed, Hua will travel during vacation even if her husband does not like travel. She will travel with female friends and escape from housework during long national holidays. And often time, wives make travel decisions and influence the travel style when they travel with family.

Mean is an important concept in Confucianism and it requires people to avoid extremes (Peng & Chang, 2012). This concept encourages self-effacing and humble expression (Bond et al., 1982), and discourages being boastful (Gao, 1998). It is found that many participants are proud of their achievements and stated that they travel in luxury style for status, which is not following the traditional Confucian teaching. This can probably be explained by the values promoted by Chinese government in the modern era. They may be influenced by the important statement by Deng Xiaoping during China’s reform and reopen: “to be wealthy is a glorious thing”.

Chinese is also perceived as people with a long-term orientation which could prompt quality focused luxury consumption (Broillet & Dubosson, 2008; Ngai & Cho, 2012). Although travel is different from other luxury goods which can be used for long time, long-term orientation still plays an important role in travelers’ decision on choosing luxury travel product. Several participants who have already established their career counted the amount of money they will possibly need to spend on travel for their rest of life and found luxury travel totally affordable with their wealth. But this approach of thinking rarely spotted among young participants, probably because the values change across the generation. While the older generation has considered in a long-term first and decides the travel style, the younger generation seems to believe in

enjoying life here and now, e.g. Shu as a typical example who is the youngest participant but stated that life is short and living a happy and comfortable life is important. She is more confident about the future while the older generation is more conservative

The value difference across the generations is observed. Although the exact age was not asked during the interview, there are at least two different generations interviewed according to the information they share about their life stage: the older generation who grew up during China's Reform and the younger generation Y who grew up with material wealth.

The generation who were born before 1960 are loyal to the state (Erickson, 2009), non-materialistic and they remain frugal and less likely to purchase foreign brands (Hung et al., 2007). However, this typical type of Chinese is not found during the interview. And one Achiever Tan has described her parents who may be the typical example of this generation. When Tan travels with her parents, she would not inform them about the luxury travel arrangement because their parent would like to stay frugal: *"Their generation would always want to be frugal, will save money. I will certainly buy the ticket and ask them to follow me. I will not tell them until getting on board. I will say this is the seat I bought for you...Let them feel that the money spent is not their money, they don't have to feel guilty. They can blame me (for not saving money)."*

The generation who grew up during the reforms and when Chinese government advocates entrepreneurship and individual accomplishment (Hung et al., 2007) are more influenced by traditional Chinese culture and western culture (Erickson, 2009). They are proud of China's rapid development of their own accomplishment since they run their business successfully. When Pei said that *"we also need to let foreigners know that Chinese also know how to enjoy life,"* he may perceive westerners as who knows how to enjoy life and would like to learn from them. He specifically appreciated Deng Xiaoping's reform decision and his experience of studying in France. They embrace western culture and this is probably the reason why Achievers all send their children to study overseas. The generation Y travelers, especially those Always Luxury travelers who have studied in countries like US and UK, are westernized, e.g. San admitted that the overseas study time has shaped her values and beliefs.

Literature suggests that the younger generation believes in materialism and would like to see the world (O'Hara-Devereaux, 2013), and they have stronger hedonistic value compared with older generation (Cheng & Foley, 2017). While their parent generation had put the effort in accumulating wealth (Hung et al., 2007), they are individualistic and self-centered (Cheng & Foley, 2017), and seek for good quality of life and please themselves (Wong, 2017). The stronger hedonism value of the younger generation is demonstrated by their early starting age of taking business class. The younger participants' travel experience is almost the most luxurious way they can afford. While the participants over 50 years old started to take business class much latter then they could afford it. It seems that the generation Y's behavior matches with Rokeach's value study better. Pleasure is found as an important motivation across different segments although Rokeach (1979) found that the value pleasure becomes less important after adolescence. It is interesting to find that some of the travelers at their 50-60s who were busy at work when they were young and started to travel for pleasure when they have achieved their career success.

The generation Y are portrayed as Little Emperors in the family and they are commented as enjoying the material wealth without considering their responsibilities (Feng, 2011). In some cases, it may be true since some Achievers would consider their wealth and the amount of money they would like to leave to their children and then spend the extra money for leisure, but the consideration of supporting parents is not found among younger travelers. It seems that not taking parent's money for luxury travel is already an achievement for some of them, e.g. Wei is proud of using his own money but not his parents' money for taking first class. They may not support their parents financially, but they do take responsibilities and the majority of them do work hard in their family business or other organizations.

9.5 Luxury Travel as Luxury Product

Luxury travel is often considered as a subset of luxury products, but it is also often excluded from the discussion of luxury products because of its unique nature as intangible service (Lu, 2008). The rapid development of technology, e.g. the popular use of social media is making the intangible experience more "tangible" when the experienced are recorded and shared. The luxury goods industry places more emphasis on the experience elements in their product. The boundary between luxury travel and

luxury goods seems to get blurry. The findings of this study shows that luxury travel are similar to other luxury products, and also demonstrate its unique features.

Some Chinese luxury travelers believe that luxury travel is not so different from luxury products, but some stated that these two are totally different. Hua, who is a female traveler, considered luxury travel and luxury goods as necessities: *“I think I buy luxury goods because everyone has a desire of shopping. I will feel happy and feel good if I buy this today. Ah, I bought a handbag, I bought a new handbag and I feel so happy, this is from which brand. It’s exciting. And travel, I will feel the scenery here is so good, I have never seen. It feels so comfortable to stay here for several days. They are two concepts totally different. But I cannot live a life without these two aspects.”* Although she mentioned that luxury travel and luxury goods are very different, but the values revealed as motivations to buy a handbag or have a trip are all happiness and pleasure.

Both luxury goods shopping and luxury travel can bring people pleasure, these two luxury consumptions have slight difference since the effect of luxury shopping is more instant. Shu mentioned the similarity and difference between luxury travel and goods: *“Both (shopping and travel) are what I want and what I love. Both can make me happy and feel pleasant...When I feel upset, I will of course want to buy a handbag. The two kinds of happiness can be considered as similar, but can also be considered as totally different. But I like both...There are a not lot uncertainties when you travel, it is not guaranteed to be good. So (when I feel upset), the immediate happiness from shopping is better.”*

Luxury travel differs from luxury goods by the importance of rarity as a motivating value. Rarity or scarcity is perceived as an important dimension of luxury consumption, and it is why limited edition luxury goods are popular. But it is not an important motivation of luxury travel. Even some participants mentioned that they would like to visit the Antarctic which is rarely visited, they are attracted by destination itself other than the fact that it is rarely visited. When Lia was asked if she would like to visit some rarely visited destination, she mentioned that *“there is no places rarely visited. I feel like there are tourist anywhere. If there are any places very special, I will also want to go. But I think nowadays, there are no special places...But if there is choice, if there is new destination...If I can visit Spratly Islands, I will not go to Sanya, I will go to Spratly Islands.”* It means that less visited destination and

new destinations are still preferred. But rarely visited destinations are limited and luxury travelers seldom consider rarity and scarcity as the reason for visiting destinations or having a trip. The less importance of rarity in motivating luxury travel is probably due to that every travel experience is unique because the trip is co-created by the traveler. Unlike luxury products which can be exactly the same, travel experience can be perceived differently by a different person.

Non-return effect which is often found in luxury consumption shows the similarity and difference between luxury travel and luxury goods. Similar to luxury goods consumption, non-return effect is found among travelers who have experienced free upgrade for flight. Ria mentioned that: *“There was one I had time free upgrade. It was a 13-hour flight. They upgraded me from premium economy to business class... I had the free experience and found it is really good to take business class for long-haul flights. Latter I have started this non-return journey (on choosing business class all the time for long hauls).”*

The non-return effect can be augmented by status concern, considering how Aspire to Luxury segment is elevating their level of luxury during trip. When they switch to more luxury option, they will observe more luxury travelers and may find more gap between themselves and those luxury travelers. They will try to fill the gap by copying the choice of luxury travelers. If Lia did not visit that Club Med and found other travelers all taking business class, she will probably not feel bad about taking economy class. It is very interesting that when she took economy class and stayed in Club Med, she mentioned peer pressure to describe the feeling when she saw other Club Med guest taking business class. She was not considering herself peers of travelers who took economy class, but peers of travelers who stayed in Club Med, similar to what was found in the study about luxury consumers by Han and Drèze (2010) that status-seeking consumers would like to be associated with high-status people.

Although non-return effect is significantly encouraging luxury travelers to stay with the current travel style and even upgrade to more luxury option, it is not always the case. Family Oriented travelers choose business class or luxury hotels temporary for their children and may choose less luxurious way of travel when their kids grow up.

Usually, luxury consumers want luxury in all aspects (Barrère et al., 2009), but few luxury traveler always want luxury service throughout the whole journey. Among three different aspects of luxury travel including accommodation, transportation, and dining, luxury travelers are most flexible in dining. Majority of the participants show interest in trying local street food although they also try fine dining restaurants. They are not demanding luxury in all aspects all the time.

There might be two reasons why luxury travelers can accept non-luxury element during travel. First, the preferred way of travel is very personal and there may be some elements that travelers desire not available in luxury travel. In this study, renting a car with a driver is considered more luxurious than car rental only, however, travelers who consider driving as a hobby will never hire a driver. Wong mentioned that *“I never found any fun in the self-driving trip, is there any fun during driving?”*, so he hires a driver. But there are also participants who really enjoy driving, e.g. Yi and Yu. *“I enjoy driving very much and I am not comfortable with driver”* said by Yu. Second, although luxury travel industry is making very hard to make it possible to have the same luxury accommodation in any destination by providing tailor built a temporary hotel (e.g. blink by black tomato), it is still not possible to make every travel product having a luxury version. Travel product is a package and it is not possible to enjoy physically comfort weather if someone would like to visit the Antarctic at least at this moment.

Probably because luxury travelers are prepared that during the travel and there might be uncertainties and discomfort, their perceived important values during the trip are different from what they consider as important at home. According to Rokeach (1973), comfortable life is perceived less important among riches because rich people take clean and comfort for granted. However, comfort during trips is found as an important value among luxury travelers, probably because travel is out of their normal environment and they have the concern, or they have experienced discomfort previous during travel, thus, consider comfort very important.

Luxury goods consumption is sometimes conspicuous consumption. Luxury travel can be considered as conspicuous consumption among Achievers and Status Pursuer. Evidence can be found among Status Pursuer who would only travel when business class and first class is available and consider business class or first class as a symbol of status and Achievers who show their status by consumption instead of bank

savings. But luxury travel is not pure conspicuous consumption even among travelers who have a very strong status concern. Even Status Pursuer who are status driven would like to travel to serve their other needs as well, for example, broadening their horizon. If there is no luxury travel product available in the market, or they could not afford luxury travel, they may still travel for other benefits as well.

9.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter summarizes how the means-end theory, which highlights the relation between product and human values and the Chinese cultural influence on values, helps to explore and interpret the motivations of Chinese luxury travelers. Luxury travel, as a subset of luxury products, shows unique features when people consume it, e.g. rarity principle and non-return effect can be applied to various situations.

Chapter 10 Conclusions and Recommendations

10.1 Introduction

This chapter recaps the research questions and states the original knowledge generated from this study as contributions. The common values and the different types of Chinese luxury travelers are summarized. The distinctive characteristics of Chinese luxury travelers are presented to show how they are different from other travelers, i.e. luxury travelers with other cultural backgrounds and other Chinese travelers. This study explores the motivations of luxury travelers and also their perceived needs from travel agents' perspective. The comparison between two perspectives offers insights on how luxury travel agents can better attract potential customers and provide adequate service to them. Hence, recommendations to travel agents who are targeting Chinese luxury travelers are provided. While this exploratory study addresses the research gap in understanding why some travelers undertake luxury trips, there are limitations. These limitations are acknowledged and explained, and future studies are suggested to further understand this segment according to the current findings.

10.2 Answers to The Research Question

The study is designed and carried out with the purpose to understand the motivations of Chinese travelers who undertake luxury trips. There are two sub-questions to answer:

Question 1. What are the values of Chinese luxury travelers motivating their preference for luxury travel?

Question 2. Are there any different types of luxury travelers based on motivations? If yes, what are the types?

Considering the limited understanding about luxury travel based on the current literature and the in-depth information needed to address these two research questions, a qualitative approach was employed. Rich information was collected via semi-structured in-depth interviews with 11 luxury travel agents and 30 luxury travelers.

The research questions are addressed by analyzing the interviews conducted. It is found that the values, which are the core belief guiding people's behavior, are directing traveler preference. Regarding Question 1, the current study found that the five core values driving them to choose luxury travel products are: happiness, pleasure, freedom, safety, and cleanliness. In order to strive for these values, they are willing to

spend more on travel product. Luxury travel agents indicate safety, pleasure, happiness and freedom as the reasons why their clients prefer luxury travel products, while cleanliness was not identified probably because it is taken for granted.

Chinese luxury travelers are willing to spend more on travel in order to have more happiness, pleasure, and freedom. These important values seem to be more related to materialism, hedonism, and individualism from the promotion of the glory of being wealthy and the western cultural influence than traditional Chinese culture like Confucianism.

Safety and cleanliness have shown their importance, and it probably indicates that travel is out of the usual space. Since luxury travelers are all well off, a safe and clean environment are taken for granted at home. Thus, these two values may not appear as the most important values in their daily life. However, in the travel setting, they happen to be important values and luxury travelers would like to choose a luxury hotel to ensure a safe and clean accommodation.

There are other values revealed by the travelers, but not as frequent as these five. The less frequently mentioned values, however, show the differences among different types of travelers. Thus, the answer to Questions 2 is “Yes, there are different types of luxury travelers based on motivations.”

Luxury travel agents have recognized the different types of luxury travelers. They tend to differentiate luxury travelers by their budget and travel experience which is linked to how much they prepare to pay and what they expect from the travel product. This is a practical way of categorization for tour operators because they need to meet the expectation with certain amount of budget. The limitation of this categorization is that the diversity of motivations and profiles is not fully captured. For example, even if the budget and travel experience is similar, the needs of Family Oriented can be very different from Status Pursuer. The diversity of Chinese luxury travelers is better shown when travelers are segmented by their motivations.

According the values motivating their luxury travel preference, the seven different types of travelers are identified as follows: Always Luxury travelers travel in luxury style as a norm, aligning with the five most frequently mentioned values as their major reasons for choosing luxury travel; Aspire to Luxury is the group of travelers who would like to keep up with the Always Luxury, see luxury travel as

novelty and have some status concern; Achievers start to undertake luxury travel after they have accomplished their career success and luxury travel is a way to enjoy and display their achievement; Status Pursuers consider luxury travel as a status symbol although they have not accumulated as much wealth as Achievers; Reward Seekers consider luxury travel as a way to reward their hard work; Adventures enjoy adventurous activities and expect minimal comfort when they travel to less developed tourism destination; Family Oriented travelers are choosing luxury travel products for the benefits of their family member or to reduce the chores of traveling with kids.

10.3 Are Chinese Luxury Travelers Different from Others?

This study aims to understand Chinese luxury travelers. The rationale behind clearly stating “Chinese luxury travelers” as the study subjects is that luxury travelers may be different from other travelers because of their excessive travel expenditure, and Chinese luxury travelers may be different from luxury travelers in other countries because of the influence of Chinese culture. Based on this study, Chinese luxury travelers are similar to other travelers but show a few unique, which will be illustrated in by comparing the findings of this study with previous empirical evidence (Guo et al., 2007; Pearce, 2011).

Comparing with the luxury travelers interviewed in the current study with other travelers, the values and motivations are similar. Although they travel in the way which majorities of travelers cannot afford, the values driving them to choose luxury travel products can also be found among other travelers. For example, Status Pursuers would like to display status from taking business class. However, status display is also a motivation of some Chinese travelers who undertake overseas trips (Guo et al., 2007). Safety is an important value that luxury travelers strive for, according to the findings of the current study. However, safety is recognized as a travel motivation of general tourists in TCP model (Pearce, 2011). The values, which represent the “end” state, are similar among luxury travelers and other travelers.

The difference is the “means” to achieve the same “end” state. Visiting overseas countries may not be sufficient for Status Pursuers to display his status, but taking first class is. A luxury traveler may need a five-star hotel room to make him feel comfortable and safe while a regular traveler may be happy with a four-star hotel room, although both of them consider comfort as an important value.

The revealed motivations seem to be applicable in other culture contexts, but there are two interesting observations which demonstrate the unique characteristics of Chinese luxury travelers. Firstly, travelers who grew up during the reform who had experienced both material shortage and material wealth and witnessed the rapid economic growth of China are proud of being Chinese. Some Achievers consider being able to enjoy luxury travel as a way to impress travelers from other countries. They would like to signal their status of being wealthy which thanks to China's reopen and knowing how to enjoy life which they learn from western culture. Feeling proud to be Chinese and appreciating western culture at the same time is unique characteristic of these luxury travelers in China, a country undergoing rapid development.

Second, the Family Oriented travelers may be a unique segment in China. Since parenting responsibility is emphasized in Chinese culture, some parent travelers choose luxury travel product temporarily because of their kids, even if luxury travel is not parents' desired way of travel. This practice of Family Oriented travelers reflects the family orientation in Confucianism. However, whether this happens because of individual focus on family or the influence of culture is not clear. Similar studies in other countries can be conducted to investigate whether such luxury travelers who have strong family orientation can be found.

10.4 Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to the literature by filling the gaps in luxury travel research. Previous studies related to luxury travelers either focus on luxury shopping of travelers or specific groups of travelers such as luxury cruise passengers or airlines' first-class passengers (Han & Hyun, 2018; Hwang & Lyu, 2018; Park et al., 2009). The findings of this study are relevant to population who prefer luxury travel style but not limited to a specific travel product.

The prevailing understanding on luxury travelers treats this segment as a homogenous group. This study has identified seven distinctive types of Chinese luxury travelers and the unique characteristics of each type. Although travelers generally prefer similar type of luxury traveler products, the levels of luxuriousness demonstrate differences ranging from always selecting the high-end products among different travel product categories to upgrading the flight cabin type of a regular package group.

The findings of this study have enriched the understanding of motivations of luxury travelers. There is substantial researches on the motivations of luxury consumption and motivations of travelers. Luxury travel, as a subset, is often excluded from discussion of luxury consumption because of its unique characteristics (Lu, 2008). Studies on tourist motivations can hardly include any luxury travelers considering that they are difficult to approach. Some existing studies have focused on specific types of travelers such as backpacker travelers and package travelers (Watkins & Gnoth, 2011a). The motivations of luxury travelers are rarely explored. The current study found that the motivations of luxury travelers have shown the typical motivations of luxury consumption such as status and hedonism, and also shown tourist motivations like relax and learning, demonstrating the role of luxury travel as the high-end tourism product and experiential luxury product.

This study has also shown that means-end theory has the potential to be applied in segmentation studies. By adopting means-end theory, this study discovered different important attributes of luxury travel products and different values perceived by luxury travel, which helps to identify the different types of travelers. The segmentation based on values tends to be persistent since human core values are resistant to change.

10.5 Recommendations for Luxury Travel Agents

The luxury travel agents in China understand many common needs of luxury travelers and the difference of needs among different travelers. Thus, they offer personalized travel service to attract the potential clients. It seems that they believe: if they are willing to tailor make a tour to fit the needs of each traveler, they will be able to attract every luxury traveler. Practically, this is difficult to achieve because the branding and positioning of the company may attract a particular segment and the rest of the market will find the brand less appealing. One example is that San, an Always Luxury traveler, found that HH travel used the first class of airline with less-than-ideal safety record and cheaper tickets in one tour package, and she does not trust HH travel anymore. This package with first class flight may be able to attract Status Pursuer or Achiever, but it keeps Always Luxury away.

Luxury travel agents should carefully choose the products they post online because these products represent their target segment. Most luxury travel agents post affordable standard luxury travel products on their websites to screen out the travelers

who cannot even afford these products, and expect that travelers who need service beyond the standard will communicate with them for upgrading the travel products. Unexpectedly, the Always Luxury travelers are screened out by this standard product because the product cannot meet their expectation and they would not spend time and effort to explain their expectation to the travel agents. If a product is designed according to the high standard as what Always Luxury travelers expect, travelers with less budget will not approach the agents. The dilemma is that travel agents would like to attract all different types of travelers but it is difficult to practice, especially when most of the luxury travel agents are not well known among many potential travelers. Instead of trying to attract everyone, luxury travel agents should be more clear about their positioning and develop a brand image to target one segment.

This current study found that majority of the luxury travelers are positive to the option of using luxury travel agents other than a few who really enjoy the travel planning process. While almost of the luxury travelers can be potential clients of luxury travel agents, the issue is that not all luxury travelers can be targeted at the same time. Luxury travel agents should decide carefully on which particular segment to target. According to the characteristics of each segment identified in this study, there are three suggestions on the choice of target segment.

First, if the luxury travel agents are established by a traditional travel agent with a large customer base, they could target people who would like to upgrade their travel style by providing more affordable luxury travel products. Status Pursuers join regular package tour but would like to take business class and first class once their financial ability reaches certain high level. They may appreciate the choices of upgrading different aspects of their standard travel products. The Family Oriented travelers may also exist in the customer base of a large travel agent or online travel agent. Providing them a solution for travel with kids may encourage them to use luxury travel product and spend more.

Second, if the luxury travel agent is an independent company without the customer base from the mother company, it may be better off targeting Always Luxury travelers since travelers in this segment are most aware of the luxury travel service. Most importantly, the travel agents should be able to convince the travelers that the agents understand who luxury travelers are and what luxury travelers prefer. Always Luxury travelers would like to buy service from trustworthy brands. To gain the trust

from them, the travel agents can cooperate with established luxury brands including luxury hotel brands, luxury airlines, and even luxury furniture and luxury cars. Providing more information about the persons who work in the travel agent may also help. Some travel agents prefer to hire employees who have studied or worked overseas. Sharing the overseas background of these employees helps to build trust between travelers and agents. As many luxury travelers have worked or studied overseas and have the abilities to arrange the travel well by themselves, the luxury travel agents will need to show that the people working for the agents can at least arrange a trip as good as what travelers can perform by themselves. If the reputation of luxury travel agent is established and Always Luxury travelers do join the tours, the Aspire to Luxury may follow Always Luxury and also join the tours. The travel agent can then expand their products to more accessible categories, which is a strategy often used in luxury brand management.

Third, the Adventurers can be a niche market to target especially if a non-tourism related company would like to expand the business into tourism, e.g. financial service companies, insurance companies, business schools, or luxury car brands. Their clients of non-tourism related business may include Adventurers. The Adventurers usually travel in a group either with friends or with other travelers invited by the travel agents. Since there are a lot of less accessible destinations and arranging a trip to those destinations is difficult, the expanding of the available tours is slow. Thus, travel agent focusing on this segment can differentiate themselves by the destinations of travel products. Because some travelers would like to learn professional knowledge from other travelers and develop social connections with other travelers, the customer base of a non-tourism related company is an advantage of organizing luxury travel tours.

Reward Seekers and Achievers are more difficult to attract. Reward Seekers may not use luxury travel agents if they travel frequently for business and can be benefited a lot from loyalty programs. If they do not have considerable benefits from loyalty programs, they may choose travel agent's service because they are busy working and may want to enjoy the convenience of having the tour arranged. Similarly, the Achievers also appreciate professional travel arrangement service, but they do not know the available luxury travel agents. Usually they will find trustworthy persons to arrange the travel, e.g. children or friends who work in the travel industry. Travel agents can hardly compete with these persons who know the travelers better.

But if their children are also getting busy with work, business opportunities can be found if travel agents can gain the trust from their children and encourage the children to outsource the travel plan. Since their children are likely to be Always Luxury or Aspire to Luxury, these two segments may bring their parents to travel with the arrangement of the travel agent if the travel agent can attract these two segments first.

The most significant challenge of luxury travel agents is the shortage of persons who understand luxury travelers. Most people who work in luxury agents are not luxury travelers. The values and beliefs of Chinese luxury travelers may be different from their service providers, thus, it is very challenging for travel agents to anticipate the needs of their clients. In the foreseeable future, this issue may still exist in the development of luxury travel service in China. In the long-term, the issue can be addressed by two trends. The first trend is the growing investment in luxury travel service made by luxury travelers. The current study found one Always Luxury traveler who was planning a hotel project in her hometown. When more and more luxury travelers are investigating in the travel industry, their personal travel experience and the understanding of their own needs can benefit the development of luxury travel industry. The second trend is the growing research interest on luxury travel among industry players and in academia. The findings of these researches such as the current study can also enhance agents' understanding of their clients.

10.6 Limitations and Future Studies

The study was limited by the length of the interviews and the number of participants. Since luxury travelers gave their precious time to participate in the current study, all interviews had to be controlled around one hour and only four interviews had a length of more than 70 minutes. Considering not only the financial and time constraint but also the difficulties in inviting volunteer participants, 11 luxury travel agents and 30 travelers were interviewed in total. The number of participants becomes a major limitation in reaching the second research question on segmenting luxury travelers. Seven segments were identified according to their motivations for choosing luxury travel, however, the Adventurer segment and Status Pursuer segment only had two members probably due to the limited number of participants. With the limited sample size, this study did not aim to quantify the portion of each segment. A future study with a larger sample size can validate the segmentation and explore the sizes of the seven segments. The target of larger sample size may be achieved by adopting

alternative data collection approaches, for example, collaborating with consultancies specialized in HNWIs, research companies who have experience in luxury segment, international hospitality groups or airlines who have high-end customers.

The variety of the luxury levels during travel included in the analysis is limited due to the absence of the super riches in this study. This current study aims to explore different types of luxury travelers. Thus, the study sets criteria to screen out the travelers who do not travel luxuriously but does not set a ceiling of the most luxurious type of travel. However, the luxury travelers who are super rich such as those who take private jet or celebrities were difficult to access. The findings of the current study shown that luxury travelers share more similarities than differences with the other travelers probably due to the absence of super riches. In the future, if the top end of the luxury travelers can be invited to participate in research, the profile of luxury travelers can be more comprehensive.

Regarding the findings of this study, there are three suggestions for future research: the influence of price and personal wealth on travel preference, evolution of luxury travelers, and generalization of the findings from this study to other luxury travel source markets. Price as a product attribute may play a role in the purchase decision, however, the same price may not be perceived as same value by different consumers. The current study found that the total wealth and the perceived importance of the “end” may influence the perception of price. This finding can be further studied in a quantitative way to examine the influence of the price and the wealth on purchase decision. The relationships among amount of personal wealth, the perceived cost of luxury travel, and the perceived values of luxury travel can be explored in further research.

The travelers belonging to a segment may have linkages with members of another segment currently or in the future, and the linkages can be further studied. For example, the children of Achievers may be the members of Always Luxury, the wife of Adventurers may be Always Luxury or Aspire to Luxury, and Aspire to Luxury may become Always Luxury in the future. This finding captures the dynamic changes among the segments of luxury travelers and suggests another fruitful future research area. The value transformation and evolution of travel styles from the old to the young generation can be further explored. Luxury travel may lead the development of travel industry in the future. Understanding the elevating travel style of luxury travelers

enables industry players to anticipate the needs and wants of travelers not only today but also tomorrow.

In this study, seven types of Chinese luxury travelers are identified and the typology is likely to be valid in other countries or cultures as well. The influence of Chinese culture on the behaviors of luxury travelers is identified, for example, the face concept and group orientation. Many distinctive values among different types of travelers are not unique to Chinese culture. Even the concept “face” is specifically relevant to Confucianism, the related value “status” can be found in other culture as motivation of luxury consumption (Vickers & Renand, 2003). Future studies can be conducted among luxury travelers in other source markets to generalize the typology development in this study.

Appendixes

Phase I Interview Guideline (Industry)

Introduction of The Interview

Hello, thank you so much for participating in this research interview. First of all, let me introduce myself and the purpose of this interview. My name is Elaine, I am a current PhD student in School of Hotel and Tourism Management in the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. My research topic is about why luxury travel product is preferred. I would like to invite you to participate in this interview mainly because you are experienced in luxury travel. Basically, there are two aspects in this interview: the product provided by luxury travel agents and travelers. The interview may take more than half an hour, and please feel free to let me know if you have any urgent tasks during the time. Before I start to ask questions, I would like to firstly ask if you have any questions or concern about my research topic. If not, I will start the interview; if you do have questions, please let me know.

您好，感谢您抽空接受这次的访问。首先简单介绍我自己以及这次的访问内容。我叫章于蓝，我是香港理工大学酒店及旅游管理学院的在读博士生，我的课题内容是关于为什么高端旅游产品会受到青睐。采访您主要是因为您在高端旅游方面很有经验，简单来说，这个采访主要会涉及两方面，一个是高端旅行公司提供的产品方面，另外一个就是游客方面。访问时间可能会超过半小时，如果您临时有事需要处理的话，随时可以跟我说。在我开始问问题之前，想先问问您对这次采访或者我的课题有什么疑问吗？如果没有什么疑问的话，我就直接开始问问题了。如果有疑问的话，可以告诉我。

About the Interviewee

First of all, could you please describe your experience in luxury travel industry? When did you start? When did you start to focus on this segment?

首先，能请您大致描述一下您在高端旅游这方面的行业经历吗？是从什么时间开始接触？从什么时候开始专注于高端旅游？

How many travelers do you usually directly or indirectly contact per year?

您直接和间接接触到的高端旅游的客户一年有多少呢？

About the Travel Product

Could you please introduce the luxury travel products provided by your company? What are the features of these products? Comparing with other luxury travel companies, what are the special features of your products?

能请您介绍一下您公司提供的高端旅游产品吗？您觉得您公司旅游产品有哪些特点呢？与其他提供高端旅游产品的公司相比，您的产品特别之处体现在哪些方面呢？

What are the features making a travel product can be called luxury travel product? How luxury travel products differ from ordinary travel products?

您认为是哪些特点让一个旅游产品能被称为高端旅游产品呢？高端旅游产品和一般的旅游产品在哪些方面有很大区别？

About Travelers

Are there any travelers who talked about the reason why they would like to choose luxury travel? If any, what are the reasons?

有客人谈起说他们为什么会选择高端旅游吗？如果有的话，他们都谈到哪些原因呢？

Based on your observation, what are the top three reasons for your customers to choose luxury travel products? Any other reasons?

通过您对客人的观察，您觉得最重要的三个让客人选择高端旅游的原因是什么呢？还有什么别的原因吗？

Are there any travelers who travel because they would like to escape from the unpleasant weather in their residence place (for example, it is cold in Shanghai during winter and people would like to visit warmer places to avoid the low temperature)? If yes, could you describe an example?

会否有一些游客因为居住地天气不舒服而去别的地方度假呢？（例如上海冬天很冷，而去温度较高的地方旅行避开低温）如果有，能描述其中一个例子吗？

Are there any examples of travelers who choose luxury travel because of their partner/for the family/because luxury travel can bring them more happiness/for status display or face/for a beautiful memory in the future/for worshipping western lifestyle/for better quality/for unique experience? Could you please describe some examples?

会否有游客是为了爱人/家庭/觉得高端旅游能够让他们玩的更加开心/为了显示自己的身份地位或者面子/为了未来能留下美好的回忆/因为推崇西方的生活风格/为了品质/为了追求独一无二的体验而选择高端旅游？能举例说明吗？

Are there any examples of travelers who show that they do not mind to spend more and allow the travel agents to have more revenue? Could you please describe some examples?

会否有游客表示不介意多花费一些，让旅游行业的人可以盈利更多？能举例说明吗？

Will travelers often use social media to share their trips? If yes, what did they share?
客人会常常用社交媒体分享他们的旅程吗？如果会，它们是怎么分享的呢？

Are there any examples of travelers who would like to know the itinerary and preference of other luxury travelers, e.g. asking preference of other luxury travelers? Could you please describe some examples?

会否有游客想参考其他高端客户的线路和喜好吗？例如询问“有什么线路受欢迎的吗？”能举例说明吗？

Are there any examples of travelers who would like to join itineraries that only a few people have joined/who prefer more expensive products (e.g. they believe the more expensive products are better)/who have a limited budget and want high-end products? Could you please describe some examples?

会否有游客想参加很少有人参加过的线路/偏好挑选更贵的产品/本身预算不多，但同时希望产品有档次吗？能举例说明吗？

If the prices are the same, would overseas travel more popular than domestic travel?
价格相似的产品，出境游会比国内游更受欢迎吗？

During the trip, how important is shopping activities for luxury travelers? Could you please describe some examples?

行程中，购物活动的安排对高端旅游产品的客户来说重要吗？能举例说明吗？

Could you please try to categorize your clients into different categories? What are different types looking for? What are the different needs?

能请您尝试把客户分为几类吗？不同类别的客户分别看重些什么呢？客人需求有哪些不同呢？

Our interview ends now, thank you so much for your sharing. This contributes a lot in the research. I may need your help to clarify some statements if I have any questions latter.

我们的访问结束了，非常感谢您的分享，这对我的研究十分有帮助。之后如果有些问题不清楚，可能还需要劳烦您。

Phase II Interview Guideline (Travelers)

Introduction of The Interview

Hello, thank you so much for participating in this research interview. First of all, let me introduce myself and the purpose of this interview. My name is Elaine, I am a current PhD student in School of Hotel and Tourism Management in the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. My research topic is about why luxury travel product is preferred by luxury travelers. The concept of luxury travelers may be defined differently by different people. In this study, we will consider luxury travelers as who have certain requirement on luxury travel product, will choose best or relatively good travel product at different aspects of a trip. For example, they may choose business class and first class for flight, will stay in hotels with high star rate, and will have less budget limit on dining and other activities during the trip. Of course, one primary reason that luxury travelers will have such choice is because of their financial support, but if something is not attractive, people may not buy it even if it is affordable. So what are the reasons of luxury travel products being purchased? In this interview, I would like to explore the answer to this question from understanding your previous travel experience. Because of using an interview technique called “laddering technique”, I will repeatedly ask you some “why” questions. Probably you haven’t thought about these questions, and please take your time to think about your answer of these questions. If there are any questions you feel impossible to answer or questions you would like to skip, please feel free to let me know. This interview will take about one hour, but may be longer depending on our conversation. To avoid any influence on your schedule, may I ask when do we have to stop? Because I will need to conduct data analysis, our conversation will be recorded, and deleted after the recording being transcribed into words. Your personal information will be kept confidential. Is it okay for you? Then I will turn on the recording device.

您好，感谢您抽空接受这次的访问。首先简单介绍我自己以及这次的访问内容。我叫章于蓝，我是香港理工大学酒店及旅游管理学院的在读博士生，我的论文课题内容是关于为什么高端旅游产品会受到高端旅行者的青睐。高端旅行者这个概念，可能大家都会有不同的定义，在这个研究里面，我们会认为高端旅行者是对旅行产品有一定要求的，在旅行的方方面面会选择最好或者相对比较好的产品。比如说，坐飞机会选择商务舱头等舱，住酒店可能会选一些高星级的，然后在旅途中，玩的项目和饮食方面的选择也比较少受到预算的限制。当然，首先高端旅行者做出这样的选择是因为经济实力的支持，但如果一个东西没有吸引力，那买得起也不一定会买，所以到底是什么原因，让高端旅游产品能够被买单呢？这一次的采访中，我可以通过了解您之前的旅游经历来找一下这个问题的答案。因为使用了一个叫攀梯法的研究方法，我会在采访中重复问一些为什么，有些问题您可能没想过，您可以花一些时间来思考，假如遇到一些您觉得没法回答的问题，或者不想回答的问题，也可以直接告诉我。这个采访时间大约是一小时，但可能会因为我们的谈话内容稍微延长，为了不影响您之后的安排，循例问一下您有没有说几点一定要结束？因为我之后要做数据分析，所以我们的谈话内容我会录音，之后整理成文字以后我会删掉，您的个人信息也会严格保密的，请问可以么？那我开一下录音的设备。

General Travel Experience

Now let’s begin. First of all, I would like to know some basic information about you. May I know if you are regularly living in the city X? Could you briefly talk about yourself? What about the number of trips you take every year, the length, and travel partner? How do you like travel?

那我们正式开始。我有几个基本的信息想问一下您。请问您现在是长居在 X 市吗？您能简单的介绍一下自己吗？您每年旅行的次数多少？一般每次旅行的长度是？一般跟谁一起旅行呢？您喜欢旅行吗？

Before talking about the details like flight and hotel, I would like to know more about your travel style. Could you please describe the most worth sharing trip or your last trip? Can this trip represent your usual way of travel? Do you have any preferred theme, e.g. adventure, culture, sun and beach?

在具体聊航空啊酒店啊这些元素之前呢，首先了解一下您平时的旅行方式。

能请您描述一次您觉得最值得分享（或者是上一次旅行）的旅行经历吗？这一次旅行能代表您平时的旅行方式吗？您有特别喜欢的旅行主题吗（探险，人文，海岛等等）？

After knowing your way of travel, I would like to know about the destinations you have visited. How many countries have you visited? Could you list them? Are there any destinations which you would like to recommend to friends? Have you been to any rarely visited destinations? Why would you go there? How do you usually decide whether to visit this destination? Do you prefer destinations in overseas or in China?

了解了您的旅行方式之后呢，了解一下您去过的目的地。您曾经到访过多少国家？能列举一下吗？曾经到访的目的地中有特别想推荐给朋友的吗？您曾经去过哪些比较小众的目的地呢？当时为什么会去呢？通常您怎么样决定要不要去这个地方玩呢？选择会和旅行方式有关吗？您会更乐意选择出国还是在国内玩？

About Flight

Do you always choose business class or first class? Since when? There are many differences between business or first class and economy class, but maybe not every difference is equally important to you. What are the differences of service or facilities which make you prefer business class or first class? Why are these differences so important to you? (Laddering)

您出行会总是选择头等舱或者商务舱吗？是从什么时候开始的呢？经济舱跟商务舱和头等舱在很多方面都有差异，但是未必每一个差异对您来说都一样重要。请问是哪些服务或者硬件上的差别让您愿意选择商务舱或者头等舱呢？为什么这些差别对您来说是重要的？

Example of Laddering

(E.g. the interviewee mentions “the comfort”)

(例如，被访问者提到“舒适度”)。

Why is comfort so important?

为什么舒适度很重要呢？

(E.g. the interviewee mentions “comfort environment makes me relax”)

(例如，被访问者提到“舒适的环境可以让我放松”)

Why is relax so important?

为什么放松会很重要呢？

(E.g. the interviewee mentions “relax benefits health”/“because I am busy with work all the time”)

(例如，被访问者提到“放松有益健康”/“因为平时总是工作太忙”)

Why is health so important? / (“Because I am busy with work all the time” is not describing the values relax can bring, so question will be asked again on what’s the deeper value associated with relax.) Why will busy work during usual days make relax so important? What are the important values of relax? What important values can be achieved from relax?

为什么健康会很重要呢？/（“平时工作忙”并不是放松能带来的价值，所以需要继续追问放松能带来什么。）为什么工作忙特别需要放松呢？放松的重要价值体现在哪里呢？放松是为了什么重要的价值呢？

(E.g. interviewee mentions “health is most important value” or feels the question cannot be answered anymore.)

（例如，被访问者提到“健康最重要”或是表示无法回答。）

(Begin to ask about the second product attribute) What is another attribute that makes you prefer luxury travel product?

（开始问第二个产品特性）还有哪个高端旅游产品的特点会让你选择她呢？

... (Repeat the above procedure until there is no new product attribute mentioned.)

..... （如上，循环直到被访问者提不出新的高端旅游产品特点。）

Have you stayed in a cabin different from your travel partner?

有没有发生过您跟同行的人坐了不同舱位的情况？

Overall, do you think the person stay in business class have any difference with those in economy class? What are the differences?

您觉得整体来说，做头等舱商务舱的人和做经济舱的人比起来有什么不同吗？有什么不同？

What is your favorite airline? Why?

您最喜欢的航空公司是哪家呢？为什么？

About Hotel

Do you have any preference or consideration when you choose a hotel? Why are these aspects so important when you choose a hotel? (Laddering)

您在选择酒店上有什么考量或者偏好吗？为什么这些因素是您选择酒店时会看重的地方呢？

What is your favorite hotel brand? Why?

您最喜欢的酒店品牌是哪一个呢？为什么？

Have you stayed in a hotel which makes you feel “wow”? Why?

有没有曾经有过一个酒店让你感叹这个酒店真的非常不错？为什么呢？

Overall, do you think the person stay in a five-star hotel have any difference with those in other hotels? What are the differences?

您觉得入住五星级酒店的人和入住其他酒店的人比起来有些什么不同吗？有什么不同？

About Dining and Other Activities Arrangement during the Trip

How would you arrange your meals during the trips? Will you search and book for restaurant before the trip?

您旅行中的餐饮通常怎么安排呢？您在出发之前会查找预订餐厅吗？

How would you arrange your destination activities?

当地的一些活动怎么安排呢？

How would you arrange the destination transportation? Car rental? Tour guide?

当地的交通怎么安排呢？租车？导游？

During a trip, travelers may visit various places, someone may think eating on the street is very noisy and not comfortable, others may think the fine dining restaurants are serious and not comfortable, do you have any situations when you feel not comfortable during the trip?

在旅途中可能会去各种各样的地方，有些人可能觉得去大排档吃东西很嘈杂不舒服，有些人可能觉得一些太高级的餐厅很拘束不太舒服，您在旅途中曾经有什么情况让您觉得不太舒服吗？

What are the aspects (including flights, hotels, the local experience activities) worth allocating more budget? Will budget influence your choice?

您觉得旅行中的哪些方面（航班，酒店，在目的地的体验项目等等）值得安排更多的预算？预算会影响您的选择吗？

How would you usually arrange a trip? Have you tried to have someone helping you to arrange? How would the suggestions and needs of your family members and friend influence your choice of travel product?

您通常是怎样来安排行程的呢？有没有试过找人帮忙安排？安排旅行时，家庭成员或者朋友的需求或意见会对您选择旅行产品有什么样的影响？

Will you often use social media to share their trips? If yes, what did you share?

您会常常用社交媒体分享自己的旅程吗？如果会，分享些什么内容呢？

About Benefit and Cost of Travel

What is the role of travel in your life? Do you think travel will benefit kids? What kind of person do you expect you kids to be after grow up? How do you think about making friends during a trip? How would you define luxury travel? What is the relationship between luxury travel and quality of life?

旅行在您的生活中扮演着怎样的角色呢？你觉得选择好一点的旅行产品，对孩子来说会带来怎样的好处吗？您希望孩子以后成为怎样的人呢？您觉得在旅行中交朋友怎么样？您觉得高端旅游的定义是什么呢？高端旅游与生活品质有什么样的联系？

You don't have to answer the following question about consumption if you don't feel comfortable with it. What is your expenditure/budget of travel per year?

下面这个问题跟个人消费有关, 如果不方便, 可以不回答。您一般一年旅行的花费/预算多少？

About Dream Trip

Our interview is about to end. Today, we discussed a lot about luxury travel, may I know the dream trip in your mind? Which are the aspects to improve for the travel industry? Do you consider the current travel style as the ideal one? What limits your way of travel? Wish you can have the ideal travel style!

我们的访问就要结束了，今天聊了很多关于高端旅游的问题，想问问您心目中的一次理想旅程应该是怎样的？您觉得旅游行业需要在哪方面做一些提高吗？您觉得您现在的旅行方式是理想的吗？有些什么限制了您想要的旅行吗？祝您早日达到理想的状态！

Our interview ends now, thank you so much for your sharing. This contributes a lot in the research. I may need your help to clarify some statements if I have any questions latter.

我们的访问结束了，非常感谢您的分享，这对我的研究十分有帮助。之后如果有些问题不清楚，可能还需要劳烦您。

Content Codes

Attributes

- A1 Facilities providing physical comfort
- A2 High star rating
- A3 Business class
- A4 Spacious environment
- A5 Quiet environment
- A6 Quick service
- A7 Responsive staff
- A8 Beautiful scenery
- A9 Less other guests in surrounding
- A10 Other guests in the same area have good manner
- A11 Sound insulation
- A12 Private space
- A13 Car with driver
- A14 Flexible itinerary
- A15 Personal service
- A16 One-stop service
- A17 Suggestions from travel agent
- A18 Kids friendly facilities and entertainment
- A19 Better pilot skill
- A20 Good hotel/luxury branded/five-star hotel
- A21 More choice
- A22 Attentive service
- A23 Good service attitude (e.g. smiling)
- A24 Nice food
- A25 Business class lounge
- A26 Good hotel location
- A27 Hotel design
- A28 User-friendly facilities
- A29 Turndown service
- A30 Luxury travel
- A31 All necessary facilities/amenities
- A32 Nice dining environment
- A33 Good taste of food in fine dining
- A34 Seat arrangement of business class
- A35 Loyalty program of international hotel chains
- A36 Address guests' name
- A37 Priority of being served
- A38 Restaurant like food service in business class
- A39 Butler service
- A40 Separated first class lounge
- A41 Branded amenities
- A42 Attention to details
- A43 Large/international hotel groups
- A44 Heritage hotel with history
- A45 Socializing with other travelers
- A46 First class
- A47 Tailor made private tour
- A48 Helicopter

A49 Luxury car
A50 Exclusive service
A51 High-end restaurant
A52 Air quality
A53 Car rental
A54 Good atmosphere in hotel
A55 Service provider has more knowledge
A56 Trust the guests
A57 Service distance control
A58 Ordered environment
A59 Guests are sharing similar values
A60 Luxury package tour
A61 Guest staff ratio is low
A62 Michelin or famous restaurant
A63 New items or experience
A64 High tea
Consequence
C1 Reducing pain or discomfort
C2 Relaxing
C3 Quality guarantee
C4 Save time
C5 Good rest
C6 Being energetic and less tiring
C7 Thinking during travel
C8 Better decision
C9 Comfort
C10 Work environment
C11 More time for oneself
C12 Working better
C13 Wealth
C14 Convenience/ease/hassle free
C15 Efficient in completing a task
C16 Being effortless
C17 Reducing bad feeling
C18 Kill time
C19 Reducing jetlag
C20 Experiencing a destination
C21 Feeling of being taken care
C22 Enjoy family vacation time
C23 Enjoy food
C24 Being kind to oneself
C25 Not being disturbed
C26 Recognition
C27 Feeling of being VIP
C28 Being treated friendly
C29 Closer relationship between people, warm feeling
C30 Benefit or reward from being loyal
C31 Different personal destination experience
C32 Strong impression and memory
C33 Conversation topic

C34 Knowledge and broader horizon
C35 Career development
C36 Minimizing risk on service failure
C37 Reward for oneself
C38 More space for body movement
C39 Needs are well addressed
C40 Flexible itinerary
C41 New experience
C42 Taste
C43 Having been to best hotel
C44 Peace
C45 Can eat the food in flight
C46 Better control over time
C47 Enjoy the scenery better
C48 Kid education
C49 Less crowded
C50 Beautiful photo
C51 Feeling good match of the product and oneself

Values

V1 Pleasure
V2 Happiness
V3 Self-fulfillment
V4 Social status
V5 A Comfortable Life (A prosperous life, quality of life)
V6 Cleanliness
V7 Safety
V8 A World of Beauty
V9 Health
V10 Esteem
V11 Family Security (Taking care of beloved ones)
V12 Being Respect
V13 Security
V14 Freedom
V15 Learning
V16 Ambitious
V17 Privacy
V18 Responsibility
V19 Friendship
V20 Leadership

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