

**A study of Chinese Free Independent travellers' motivations and  
their preferred accommodation types in New Zealand**

**Tianhong Zheng**

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**Supervisors: Pola Qi Wang and Associate Professor Peter  
BeomCheol Kim**

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## ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

“I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the qualification for any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement is made in the acknowledgements”

SIGNATURE 

DATE: 23-07-2018

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation explores whether the travel motivations of Chinese free independent travellers (FITs) affect their accommodation selection preferences on trips to New Zealand. The Chinese outbound tourism industry has developed rapidly in recent years, and tourist motivation is a significant element in understanding travellers' behaviours. Although a number of studies have explored the travel motivations of Chinese tourists, it remains unclear how Chinese FITs select their accommodation when travelling to New Zealand.

To bridge this gap in the existing literature, the 196 respondents in this quantitative study were asked to complete an anonymous questionnaire. Based on previous studies and theories, the study explores the influence of 'push' and 'pull' motivational factors. The findings indicate that accommodation selection among Chinese FITs was mainly affected by two pull factors: with delicious food and a spacious area designed for relaxing in the accommodation, but push factors exerted little influence. Demographic characteristics also affected accommodation selection. To be specific, exotic atmosphere of the accommodation may be an influence factor for Chinese FITs of different age groups and with different marital status when they select accommodations. Clean and comfortable room may be an influence factor for Chinese FITs with different level of highest qualifications and with different occupations. Chinese FITs with different occupations may care about the budget of the trip and physical resting or relaxing when they select accommodation as well.

By clarifying the role of push and pull factors in travellers' behaviours, the study contributes both to the academic literature and to industry practice, providing hospitality practitioners with practical advice on resource distribution to attract more international tourists and especially more Chinese travellers.

# CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Research background and problem statements

In the past few years, the New Zealand tourism and hospitality market has become more competitive (Statistics New Zealand, 2017). Acknowledged as one of the world's most attractive tourist destinations, the number of international travellers visiting New Zealand increased to 3,537,561 by the end of 2017 (Statistics New Zealand, 2017). In recent years, there has been steady growth in the number of tourists entering New Zealand, with international tourist numbers experiencing a 9% increase in the year 2017 (New Zealand Tourism Report, 2017). Of these, 422,256 were Chinese, accounting for about 12% of the total.

As the growth in Chinese tourism to New Zealand has continued to accelerate, it seems important to explore what kinds of accommodation Chinese travellers prefer when visiting. As FITs constitute an important segment of Chinese outbound travellers, this research concentrates on their preferences (Zhang & Cai, 2017). FITs differ from general travellers in that they do little or no planning for their trips (Parr, 1989). This kind of travel has long been popular in Western countries; it has become increasingly popular worldwide in recent years and represents a new trend in Chinese outbound travel. The acronym FIT has been assigned various related meanings, including free itinerary travel, foreign independent tourist and fully independent traveller (Clarke, 2004); for the purposes of this research, FIT refers to free independent travellers and specifically to non-package tour Chinese travellers.

A theory of tourist motivation factors was utilised as a framework for the study. The various theories of tourist motivation include Plog's (1974) travel personality, Dann's (1977) push and pull theory, and Pearce's (1988) travel career ladder (TCL). Of these, Dann's push and pull theory is commonly used to study behaviour during a trip, including accommodation selection. Previous studies have used motivation factors to investigate accommodation selection among Chinese travellers in Macao (McCartney & Ge, 2016); in European countries (Prayag, Cohen, & Yan, 2014) and in Singapore (Tham, 2017).

However, the precise motivations for such decisions are likely to differ, and no study to date has focused on New Zealand's accommodation sector.

Although some previous studies have discussed the relationship between motivation factors and travellers' accommodation decisions, few have focused on Chinese FITs. The study aims to bridge that gap by adding to knowledge of the New Zealand accommodation market and travellers' motivations. The study will also provide practical advice to accommodation operators on how to distribute operational resources to attract more customers.

## **1.2 Aims of the study**

To achieve the aim of the study, the three following questions must be answered:

- 1) Are there relationships between push/pull factors and Chinese FITs' selections of accommodations in New Zealand?
- 2) Are there relationships between Chinese FITs' demographic characteristics such as age, gender, educational level, marital status and occupation, and motivation factors in New Zealand?
- 3) Are there relationships between Chinese FITs' demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, educational level, marital status and occupation, and their accommodation selections in New Zealand?

New Zealand's picturesque scenery and accessibility makes it one of the most attractive destinations to Chinese tourists. Research question 1 addresses the general relationship between push and pull motivation factors and accommodation selection among Chinese FITs. Research question 2 explores the relationship between push and pull factors and Chinese FITs' demographic characteristics. Research question 3 focuses on the relationship between Chinese FITs' demographic characteristics and accommodation selections.

## **1.3 Significance of the study**

It is crucial for accommodation operators to understand the reasons for travellers' choice of accommodation and how motivational factors can influence these decisions. The present study will contribute to the literature and to industry practice in the following ways:

- 1) As there are few existing studies of the accommodation sector for Chinese FITs in New Zealand, the present findings can enhance practitioners' understanding of the tourist motivation theory literature.
- 2) The study applies push and pull factors to explain how they may affect specific behaviours for Chinese FITs.
- 3) As tourists' accommodation decisions are among the most significant behaviours influencing the development of New Zealand's hospitality industry, the present findings may clarify the influence of motivation factors on this decision among specific groups of travellers, especially for Chinese FITs.
- 4) As New Zealand's tourism industry develops, more Chinese FITs are likely to select New Zealand as their destination. The present findings may help accommodation operators to choose appropriate strategies to match the preferences of Chinese FITs.
- 5) The development of the hospitality industry in New Zealand has attracted increasing interest from entrepreneurs and investors, and the present findings may help to clarify the potential of different types of accommodation to attract more Chinese FITs.

## **1.4 Dissertation structure**

The in-depth literature review in Chapter 2 provides the background information on New Zealand's hospitality industry and accommodation sector, FITs and Chinese FITs and the three theories of tourist motivation, and goes on to explore how each theory relates to accommodation selection. Chapter 3 explains the study methodology, including research paradigm, sampling, instruments and data analysis. Chapter 4 describes the findings, including respondents' demographic information and accommodation selection, followed by analysis of data related to push and pull factors and accommodation selection, push

and pull factors and demographic characteristics, and accommodation selection and demographic characteristics. Chapter 5 discusses possible interpretations of the results and goes on to consider the theoretical and practical implications. Finally, the study's limitations are discussed, along with some implications for future studies of the relationship between tourist motivation and accommodation selection among Chinese FITs in New Zealand.

## **CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Accommodation options for travellers in New Zealand**

The hospitality industry is “a broad category of fields within the service industry that includes lodging, restaurants, event planning, theme parks, transportation, cruise line, and additional fields within the tourism industry” (Lynch, Molz, McIntosh, Lugosi, & Lashley, 2011, p. 14). When staying overnight, travellers must select from the available accommodation options (Lockyer & Roberts, 2009). According to Tussyadiah and Pesonen (2016), a journey that includes suitable accommodation has become a goal for many travellers, especially among international tourists who travel to New Zealand.

As one of the most significant tourism products (Morrison, 2010), the accommodation sector is regarded as one of the main contributors to employment and economic revenue within the hospitality industry (Statistics New Zealand, 2011), bringing significant economic and socio-economic benefits to rural and urban locations (Milne, Mason, & Hasse, 2004). The style, extent and nature of available accommodation options indicate potential tourism volume and value at a given destination (Nuntsu, Tassiopoulos, & Haydam, 2004), and as these products are mainly service based, hospitality marketers and scholars know that their characteristics must be marketed in a particular way.

New Zealand’s commercial accommodation sector comprises an estimated 3,852 establishments, directly employing more than 38,600 full-time staff (Statistics New Zealand, 2017). The accommodation sector itself is also very diverse, as establishments vary widely in terms of size, organisational structure, facilities and classification. The Ministry of Tourism (2017) identified five categories of tourist accommodation: hotels (including resorts); motels (motor inns, apartments and motels); hosted accommodation places (private hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfasts and farm stays); hostels; and caravan parks/camping grounds. While the backpacker trend has declined, the popularity of holiday parks continues to rise; the 39,464,000 accumulated guest nights to end December 2017 represented an increase of 964,000 (2.5%) from September 2016 (Statistics New Zealand, 2017).

## **2.2 Chinese Free Independent Travellers**

FITs are so described because they commonly travel independently rather than as part of a group, using rental cars or public transportation (Parr, 1989). FITs are an important and rapidly growing sector in the overseas tourism market. According to a 2018 survey conducted by Independent Traveller's World (ITW), the independent travel trend continues to increase in popularity, with 44% of travellers preferring to customise their holiday to ensure a flexible journey. Additionally, 23% of travellers intended to travel to Australia or New Zealand. Nearly half of the survey respondents indicated a willingness to travel independently, with only 28% insisting on utilising travel agencies. According to the New Zealand Tourist Report (2018), 11% of current international tourists are from China, making them the second largest group of international tourists as more Chinese begin to travel independently.

According to Tsaur, Yen, and Chen (2010), overseas independent travel became popular among European and American tourists in the mid-twentieth century. By the end of the twentieth century, independent travel had attracted more attention among travellers from other developed and developing countries, but it is a relatively recent trend among Chinese tourists. Hyde and Lawson (2003) noted the growth in independent travel and an accompanying decrease in package travel—that is, trips where airline tickets, accommodation and other vacation elements are booked together. In contrast, independent travellers do not book such packages from a travel retailer. In a survey focusing on mainland Chinese travellers, the Chinese International Travel Monitor (2017) reported that independent travel had become more widespread than group travel in China's inbound tourism market; of these, 62% stated that they preferred to travel independently. Similarly, the CEO of China Elite Focus, Pierre Gervois, stated that group or package tours were now less popular than independent tours (Nayak, 2014).

FITs like to design their own vacation by searching for information on the web. With the development of the Internet, more Chinese travellers now refer to an increasing range of sources to support their independent overseas travel. Online booking of airlines,

accommodation and tickets for attractions is also very convenient. Chinese FITs search websites such as Qunar.com and Tuniu.com for information about trips, including experiences shared by other travellers. The popularity of social media and online travelling applications means that more travellers can conveniently plan their trips using these resources.

Although few studies have focused specifically on the characteristics of Chinese FITs, they tend to be young, well-educated and experienced. According to the SKIFT Report (2013), Chinese FITs are usually under 40 years old. To make their trip more interesting and affordable, younger travellers are likely to use online resources before travelling to explore issues like food, local attractions and accommodation (Wu, Law, & Zhang, 2012). Secondly, because Chinese FITs are mostly well-educated, they can usually grasp at least a few everyday words in a foreign language, enabling them to understand indigenous cultures and communicate with local people on reaching their destination (Arlt, 2013). This allows Chinese FITs to enjoy a richer experience, especially when travelling independently, as they can adapt more quickly to unfamiliar environments and cope better with problems arising (Qun & Jie, 2001). Among those travelling independently, economic factors tend to divide Chinese FITs into two main types: those who are focused on doing more things with less money and those who want to enjoy a comfortable trip. One factor that differentiates these two types is their choice of accommodation.

As the rapid development of Chinese outbound tourism, more information on Chinese travellers came to be important for the study of the relevant industry. Package tours used to be the most popular method that Chinese travelling overseas, however, in current years, the number of independent travellers is increasing obviously (Caruana, Crane, & Fitchett, 2008). Independent traveller is either still in the stage of early development in China. They also make varied choices of vacation elements. On the supply side, New Zealand is a popular destination for China's outbound tourists. In that case, there is significant value to analyse how Chinese outbound travellers' motivation affects their accommodation selections. The New Zealand Government has seen China as an important source market.

## **2.3 Tourist motivation theories**

Tourist motivation theories attempt to explain the factors that prompt someone to travel. Although Crompton (1979) asserted that motivation is only one of many contributory factors that explain tourist behaviour, it is considered critical factor as the “impelling and compelling force behind all behaviour” (Barry, Berkman, & Gilson, 1978, cited in Crompton, 1979, p. 409). Motivation is central to understanding tourist behaviour in terms of their needs, goals and preferences (Chan & Baum, 2007). Kim, Lee and Klenosky (2003) argued that tourists’ motivations are likely to influence specific behaviours while travelling. It follows that service providers who can identify those motivations will be better able to assign tourists to the appropriate market segment by understanding their behaviours and targeting their services and operations accordingly (Kinley, Forney, & Kim, 2012).

According to Kim (2008), motivation influences behaviours and activities. Based on the consumer behaviour literature (Farmaki, 2012), tourists’ motivations provide a holistic sense of the relationship between their emotions and their behaviours (Getz, 1986). Hill (1965) stated that, in many cases, travellers’ motivations are an expression of psychological fatigue and a need to reflect and renew; if travellers realise what they need, they will return enriched, regenerated and recharged. Crompton (1979) suggested that the essence of a holiday is a mental and physical break for the individual. According to the theory of tourist motivation, the concept of stable equilibrium is either stated or implied (McNeal, 1973); that is, reported equilibrium at the end of a vacation indicates that the traveller’s mental and psychological requirements have been satisfied (Howard & Sheth, 1968).

However, Dann (1977) argued that travel provides opportunities for ego enhancement and self-recognition, allowing people to achieve a sense of fulfilment. In his study ‘What Makes Tourist Travel’, Dann (1997) concluded that the answer lay in the socio-psychological concepts of anomie (‘the need that man has for love and affection and the

desire to communicate with his fellow man') and ego enhancement. Dann (1977) also suggested that, by going away on vacation, an individual can deal with suppressed feelings of isolation in everyday life by getting away from prevailing norms and seeking social interaction.

Among existing studies in various fields that address the wide-ranging issue of motivation, psychological theories of motivation have contributed most to the tourism industry. These include Plog's (1974) travel personality, Dann's (1977) push and pull theory, and Pearce's (1988) travel career ladder (TCL). The following section outlines these three main paradigms of travel motivation research.

### **2.3.1 Travel Personality and Travel Career Ladder Models**

Stanley Plog's (1974) model of tourist motivation is based on an individual's psychological characteristics. Also known as the heliocentric/psychometric model, Plog's account focuses on the psychological aspects of why people travel. As shown in Figure 1, Plog (2001) divided all travellers into five psychotropic types: dependable, near dependable, mid-centric, near venturer and venturer. However, some researchers have criticised Plog's model because it exhibits little understanding of tourists' motivation or ability to predict their behaviour (Hsu & Huang, 2008). Others have criticised Plog's theory on the grounds that travel motivation varies across different contexts (Murphy, Benckendorff, & Moscardo, 2007).

In general, the travel personality model explains travellers' motivation in terms of their sense of adventure. In this regard, Schneider and Vogt (2012) found that the personality traits of each traveller in relation to different aspects of the trip may be significant predictors of what causes them to pursue an adventure. This model focuses exclusively on travellers' psychology in relation to adventure trips and predictors of behaviour during those trips. For that reason, this model did not align with the scope of the present research and was not considered immediately relevant.

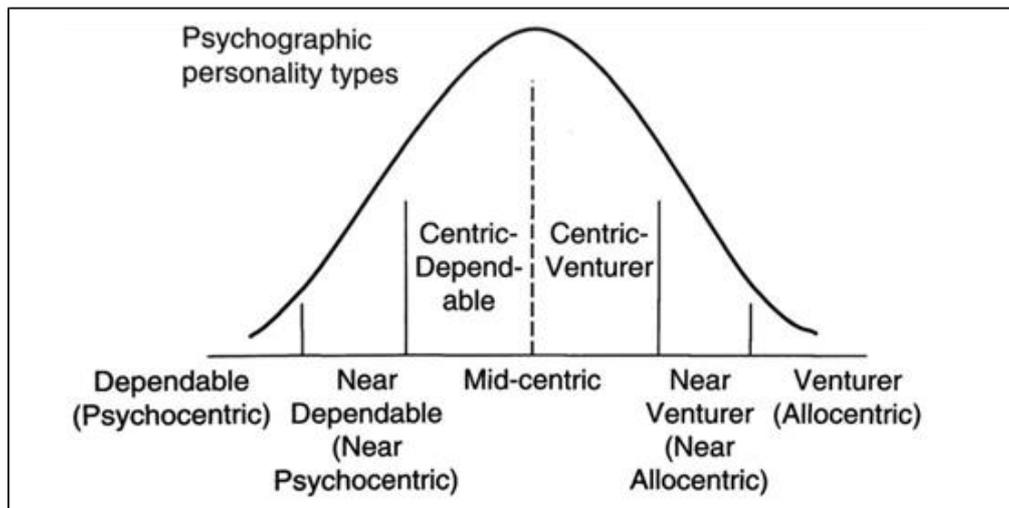
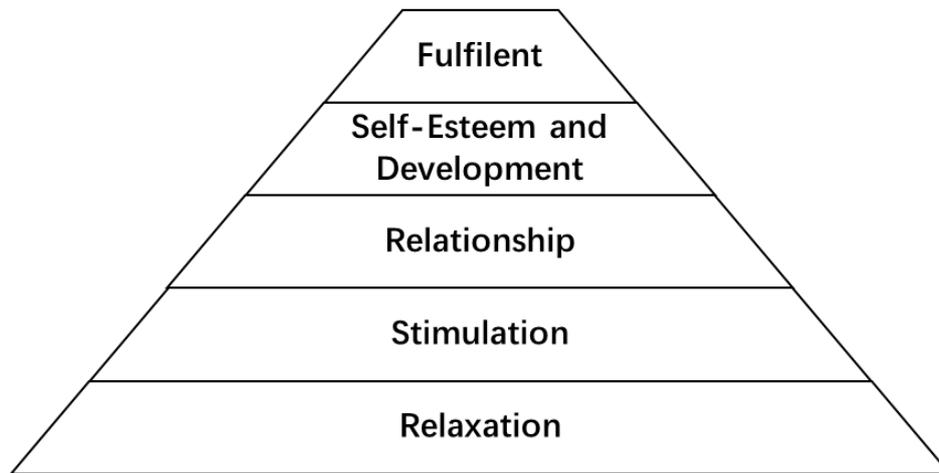


Figure 1. Travel Personality (Plog, 2001, p.18)

The TCL was first outlined by Pearce (1988). Based on Maslow’s needs hierarchy, he identified five distinct steps that affect the traveller’s motivation (Ryan, 1998) on a ladder that includes relaxation, stimulation, relationship, self-esteem and development and fulfilment (see Figure 2). Although TCL seems appealing as a conceptual framework, Ryan (1998) noted that there is no strong empirical evidence to support this theory. Likewise, Hsu and Huang (2008) observed that the key idea of TCL is that tourists’ travel motivations can change with their experiences over time. As tourists accumulate more travel experiences, they demand higher standards and greater satisfaction. They also noted that the model is dynamic, in that travellers’ motivations may change and become integrated into a single level, calling the practicability of this model into question (Filep & Greenacre, 2007).

Morgan and Xu (2009) adopted the TCL model to analyse the effect of a memorable travel experience on future selection of travel destination or type. They found little evidence of links between a memorable trip and plans for future travel. As the TCL model focuses on predicting the influence of previous travel behaviour on future travel behaviour, it is not useful for present purposes as some of the respondents in this research

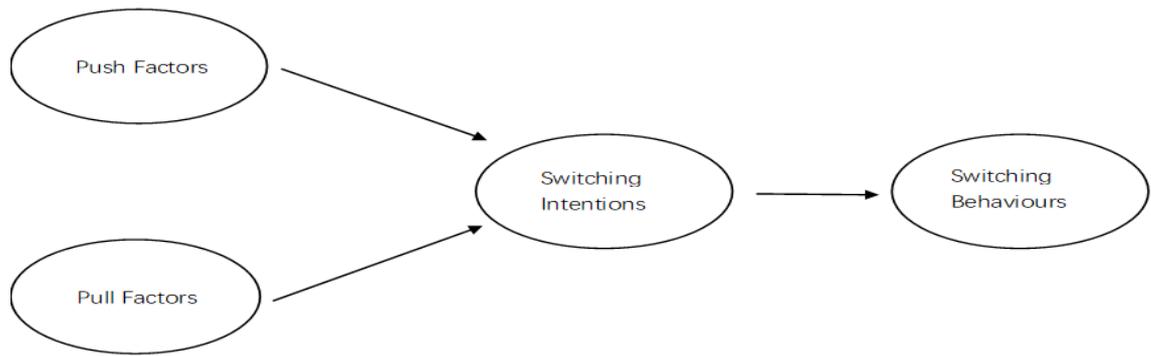
may not have had previous experience of travelling in New Zealand.



*Figure 2.* Travel Career Ladder (Ryan, 1998, p.948)

### **2.3.2 Push and pull factors of motivation**

In Crompton's (1979) concept of 'push and pull', push factors drive tourists to make a journey while pull factors drives tourists towards the destination. Kim, Jogaratham and Noh (2006) explained push and pull in the following terms: push factors address the question of whether to go while pull factors address the question of where to go. In Figure 3, push and pull motivation factors affect intention to travel, and intention to travel affects behaviours during the trip. Understanding these two factors can help to clarify tourists' reasons for selecting certain types of accommodation. Push factors identified in previous studies included psychological forces such as social interaction, escape, adventure, relaxation and self-exploration. Pull factors included environmental qualities that attract people to specific destinations, including weather (sunny, snowy, tropical, etc.), historic monuments, sports facilities and cheap air fares (Dann, 1977; Klenosky, 2002).



*Figure 3. Push and Pull Factors (Ryan, 1998, p.949)*

According to this framework, push factors drive tourists to travel while pull factors influence the choices that tourists make during their trip (Chen & Chen, 2015). Kim et al. (2003) explained that external pull factors influence tourists' behaviours during their trip while push factors are factors internal to the individual that influence destination preferences, including accommodation selection (Jang & Cai, 2002; Wong, Musa, & Taha, 2017). Prayag and Ryan (2011) utilised this theory to analyse the influence of push and pull motivation factors in Chinese FITs' destination selections, and Chan and Quah (2012) applied the theory to explain some specific issues when selecting accommodation. Prayag and Ryan (2011) found that the typical attitudes and behaviours of Chinese FITs differed from those of Western independent travellers.

Internal motivators that influence tourists' accommodation selection relate to personal or internal requirements such as budget, transportation and entourage (Hollensen & Schimmelpfennig, 2013). According to Wilkins, Merrilees and Herington (2007), basic issues such as purpose of travel and trip duration and frequency also contribute to tourists' internal motivation when selecting accommodation. Chu and Choi (2000) further suggested that most tourists consider attributes such as price, location, room rate, security, service quality and hotel reputation before making a booking decision.

To sum up, then, Plog's travel personality focuses on psychological aspects of traveller

motivation while Pearce's TCL addresses its dynamic aspects (Chen, Mak, & McKercher, 2011). TCL also holds that travel motivation changes in relation to travel experience. However, the push and pull theory is more commonly used to study travel motivation and is considered more relevant when studying tourist behaviour during a trip. In particular, push and pull effects will be used here to explore accommodation selection.

## **2.4 Tourists' motivations and accommodation selections**

Historically, a majority of studies of tourist motivation factors have tended to adopt a geographic perspective (Lau & McKercher, 2006); in other words, most of these studies applied tourist motivation theory to understand why tourists selected one or several specific destinations. As noted above, although international tourists are vital to New Zealand's economy, few studies have explored their motivations in selecting accommodation.

Chan and Baum (2007) demonstrated the effect of push and pull motivation factors among international tourists when selecting economy accommodation. However, their research did not clearly establish the effects of tourist motivation in relation to specific types of accommodation such as economy hotels, motels, bed and breakfasts and hostels. Yoon and Uysal (2005) investigated international tourists' destination loyalty based on the effects of push and pull motivation factors. However, their study targeted luxury hotel patrons, and there was no focus on the specifics of the accommodation selection process during the trip.

Al-Haj Mohammad and Mat Som (2010) explored pull and push factors in the international tourist market to determine whether these factors might affect the behaviour of foreign travellers during their trip. Their findings show that foreign travellers' behaviour was driven by both internal and external factors that can be characterised as push and pull aspects of motivation. These factors contributed to psychological changes that drove travellers to make various decisions during their trip, indicating that tourists' motivations may affect behaviour during the trip, including accommodation selection.

Travellers' accommodation selections are influenced by diverse factors. Gunasekaran and Anandkumar (2012) reviewed accommodation choices in Pondicherry, a coastal heritage town in India. In their literature review, they noted that both internal and external factors could affect such decisions. Using a quantitative survey, they found that accommodation environment was the most significant determinant of tourists' accommodation choices. The second significant factor was the prepared availability and whether the accommodation was exorbitantly priced. Their results suggested that specific factors influence tourists' accommodation decisions during trips. These are mostly external factors such as homely atmosphere and value for money. Other factors such as local touch and guest-host relationship were also found to impact tourists' choices.

For tourists of different genders and from different countries, push and pull motivation factors can have varying impacts. Examining the effects of nationality and ethnicity of women travellers, Khoo-Lattimore and Prayag (2017) identified a relationship between motivation factors and accommodation selection among both Western and Asian female travellers during girlfriend getaways (GGAs). They noted that the unique travel motives associated with GGAs (Berdychevsky, Gibson, & Bell, 2013) meant that travel frequency was low (Friesen, 2013), and accommodation was a high-involvement purchase (Kasanicky, 2009). This reveals some logical links between tourist motivation and accommodation selection; in particular, as respondent nationality and ethnicity influenced accommodation selection for travellers during GGAs, it seems likely that push and pull factors influence accommodation selection for certain identifiable groups of travellers or for certain types of trip.

A number of studies have concentrated on accommodation selection among Chinese outbound travellers, both package and independent. McCartney and Ge's (2016) study analysed accommodation selection in Macao using the push and pull factors framework. They reported that accommodation choices were affected by push factors internal to the travellers themselves and by external pull factors that included room, food, staff and

facilities. In general, Chinese outbound travellers' accommodation decisions were affected more by pull factors than by push factors. However, because of Macao's unique attraction (the gambling industry), travellers tended to select luxury hotels rather than other accommodation.

According to Tham (2017), highly rated accommodation is very important for Chinese outbound travellers to Singapore, and they have a preference for luxury hotels, principally because of the high service standards and relaxing environment. The same was true of Chinese travellers who travel to European countries. Prayag et al. (2014) reported that Chinese outbound travellers favour professional and efficient service and a safe and secure living environment, making them more likely to select hotels, especially those with famous brands.

Some studies (Lockyer & Roberts, 2009; Naruse, Sato, & Yaguchi, 2012) generally analysed accommodation selections of Chinese outbound travellers, including both package travellers and independent travellers, in relation to tourist motivation. Other studies provided an overall explanation of the influence of push and pull motivation factors, especially concentrating on destination selections. Therefore, this study will fill this gap and contribute to future research of the academic study of FITs' motivations, and their effect on accommodation selections. From a practical aspect, this research helps accommodation operators to understand how tourists' emotions affect their decisions for accommodation selections during trips. Thus, based on this research, accommodation operators can adjust their operational strategies to meet the customers' requirements.

Based on the understanding of the literature, few studies have focused on the relationship between push and pull motivation factors and accommodation selections. Therefore, this research focuses on this topic. To explore this area of the study, three specific research questions (RQs) were indicated:

RQ1: Are there relationships between push/pull factors and Chinese FITs' selections of accommodation in New Zealand?

RQ2: Are there relationships between Chinese FITs' demographic characteristics such as age, gender, educational level, marital status and occupation, and motivation factors in New Zealand?

RQ3: Are there relationships between Chinese FITs' demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, highest qualification, marital status and occupation, and their accommodation selections in New Zealand?

## CHAPTER 3 – METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Paradigm

Philosophical assumptions from previous studies informed the development of this research (McKennaz, 2003; Randell, 2018; Welzel, 2016), using a quantitative approach—in this case, a questionnaire-based survey—was used to address the research questions. In general, this is an appropriate means of exploring a social or human issue within a theoretical framework, investigating the statistical relationships between variables to validate predictive generalisations derived from the theory (Popping, 2012).

Previous studies (Brannen, 2005; Gray, 2014; Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012), made varying use of quantitative and qualitative methods. While quantitative methods are used to observe social phenomena, qualitative methods pursue an understanding of human behaviour from the subject's perspective. Quantitative data are measured in terms of variables while qualitative data are collected through respondent observation and interviews. Quantitative research findings derive from statistical analysis while qualitative findings are reported in the language of the informants (Brannen, 2005; Gray, 2014; Saunders et al., 2012).

The study is exploratory and adopts a quantitative approach. Primary data were collected to understand the role of tourist motivation within the sample and the impact of these factors on accommodation selection among Chinese FITs. The method and methodology were determined by the research paradigm (Crotty, 1998).

Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) noted that a theoretical framework (or paradigm) can sometimes influence how researchers interpret and analyse the evidence. Additionally, a paradigm is considered as the originating point of a study or research (Scotland, 2012; Fok, 2013). Morris and Burkett (2011) suggested that a paradigm comprises three fundamental structures: “a belief about the nature of knowledge, a methodology and criteria for validity” (p. 31). The two main paradigms utilised in the social sciences are positivism and interpretivism. In terms of philosophical assumptions, positivist

epistemologies regard rational knowledge as confined to observable phenomena. While positivism holds that researchers are separate from reality, interpretivism considers researchers and reality to be inseparable. In other words, while positivism asserts that knowledge exists objectively, interpretivism holds that knowledge is intentionally constituted through a person's life experience. A further difference is that positivism utilises statistics to complete the study while interpretivism utilises hermeneutics or phenomenology to determine truth (Heshusius & Ballard, 1996).

Positivism considered that researchers and reality are separated while interpretivism considered researchers and reality were inseparable. Otherwise, positivism referred that knowledge existed objectively while interpretivism referred that knowledge intentionally constituted through a person's life experience. The study addresses a social phenomenon: how motivational factors drive accommodation selection among Chinese FITs during trips to New Zealand. Adopting a positivist paradigm, the study can be considered objective if all the data are collected at random, with no researcher influence.

### **3.2 Sampling**

Before developing the study, it is necessary to ensure that the target group of respondents is representative for the purposes of the study (Goodwin, 2008). A representative population is defined as a group of respondents who respond to the research question and on whom the study focuses (Jackson, 2015; Lancaster, Crowther, & David, 2012). Because a sample is smaller than the entire population, the researcher can collect responses more efficiently (Foddy, 1993; Hayes, 1998). Sampling error is smaller, and findings are more accurate when the sample size is larger (Payne & Williams, 2011).

Some previous studies noted that purposive sampling, a non-probability method, can be applied when the focus is on specific respondents sharing a particular social background, knowledge or experience, based on the smallest number of survey respondents required to address the research question (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Tongco, 2007). Gray (2014) notes that convenience sampling is the most common strategy for exploratory and quantitative

research. Because of time and budget limitations, it is unrealistic to analyse and discuss every case, especially when the population is very large (Newsome, 2016). For that reason, convenience sampling was considered suitable for present purposes. To make the research scope be accurate, there are several criteria to select participants. Compared with package tourists from China who are always organized by travel agencies, the number of FITs in Chinese mainland is growing rapidly as it mentioned in the former chapter. In contrast, in previous studies, researchers are mostly emphasized the tourist motivation of Chinese package tourists instead of FITs. How tourist motivation affects their accommodation selection is worth investigating to provide available information to New Zealand tourism industry. Furthermore, FITs have more highly free trip than package travellers and they can select their accommodation following their heart. Therefore, although tourist motivation affects all Chinese tourists' accommodation selections, due to the special character of FITs, the effect of tourist motivation in accommodation selections concentrates on Chinese FITs.

The sampling frame for this project included approximately 200 respondents. All were Chinese FITs had some basic understanding of the research context. To reduce costs and increase efficiency, Qualtrics was used for data collection. Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, WeChat) and snowball sampling were employed to disseminate the online survey link.

The target population was Chinese FITs who had been to New Zealand who had visited New Zealand and had stayed in some form of accommodation (hotel, motel, hostel, hosted accommodation, caravan park or camping grounds). For greater sampling accuracy, several criteria were used to select respondents. Because of their differing cultural backgrounds, Chinese respondents may dislike or even avoid replying to questionnaires from strangers; for that reason, the link to the questionnaire was first sent to members of the researcher's personal network, who were asked to forward the link to any contacts who met the criteria. Before the formal survey questions, three screening questions were used to determine whether candidates were suitable for inclusion in the survey. If they

agreed to participate, they could choose to see the information sheet or simply reply directly to the questions. Chinese tourists who are prepared to travel independently tend to be open-minded about communication and surveys, making them the ideal target group. The final sample comprised 196 FITs from mainland China who had travelled to New Zealand and had selected accommodations by themselves.

### **3.3 Instrument**

Data collection was based on an anonymous questionnaire (see Appendix A). According to Punch (2014), the research survey is a numerical statement about the target population, based on detail-oriented and quantified questions. The questionnaire is one of the most widely used methods of data collection (Sheppard & Michael, 2004). In the present case, the self-administered online questionnaire asked about tourist motivation factors, accommodation types and demographic characteristics.

Based on extant studies, the questionnaire was written in English and consisted of four parts. Prior to the formal questions, there were three screening questions: Are you a Chinese citizen? Are you selecting a commercial accommodation place? Are you a free independent traveller?

The first part of the questionnaire related to push motivation factors. The eight push factors were adopted from McCartney and Ge (2016): number of previous visits, purpose of trip, length of stay, travelling companions, budget for the trip, physically resting/relaxing, cultural experiences and family and kinship relationships.

The second part of the survey addressed eight pull motivation factors: providing activities for the entire family, a special theme I like, clean and comfortable rooms, friendly or efficient staff service, delicious food, exotic atmosphere, safe and secure and spacious area designed for relaxing. These factors were adapted from two previous studies (Hanqin & Lam, 1999; Luo, Feng, & Cai, 2004). All push and pull factors were evaluated using a five-point Likert-type scale. Scale range is from one to five. One means 'not important at

all' and five means 'very important'. Higher number means more important to the factor. Part three of the survey asked about the five accommodation types that travellers could select from during their stay in New Zealand, adopted from Statistics New Zealand (2017): hotels (including resorts); motels (motor inns, apartments and motels); hostels; hosted (private hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfasts and farm stays); and caravan parks and camping grounds. The final part of the questionnaire related to demographic characteristics that may have influenced Chinese FITs' accommodation decisions (Yang & Wen, 2016). The questions asked about age, gender, marital status, education level and occupation. It took 8 to 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Pretesting of the questionnaire was performed before sending it to respondents. According to Potter (1976), pretesting is done prior to data collection to check for any confusions or difficulties. Babbie (2011) pointed out that the pre-test provides information about the time needed to complete the questionnaire, comprehension level and appropriateness. The questionnaire was sent to the researcher's friends and relatives, and the order of some questions was subsequently adjusted. Testing indicated that the time required to reply to all of the questions was about 10 minutes, which was considered acceptable for the intended respondents.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used to analyse the data (Judd, McClelland & Ryan, 2009). According to Maxwell and Delaney (2004), SPSS is the most widely used application for data analysis of which kind. As a first step, all the collected data were categorised, as Gray (2014) stated that the scope of statistical testing will depend on sorting of the collected data. Based on the questionnaire, the data were separated into ordinal and nominal data. Ordinal data involve "an ordering or ranking of values" (Gray, 2009, p. 452) related to degree or quality of the variable while nominal data are data with no numerical value. For instance, in this case, respondents were invited to state the importance of push and pull motivation factors using a five-point Likert-type scale; these were ordinal data. On the other hand, items that asked about specific

accommodation selections and demographic characteristics yielded nominal data.

Coding the data involves assigning an identification number to each response to each question. For example, in coding each respondent's accommodation selection, hotels (including resorts) were labelled 1, motels (motor inns, apartments and motels) were 2, hostels were 3, hosted accommodations (private hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfasts and farm stays) were 4, and caravan parks/camping grounds were labelled 5.

The validity and reliability of the data can affect the findings, with implications for future studies. To ensure the validity of the research, the tourist motivation factors included in the questionnaire were based on the relevant literature (Hanqin & Lam, 1999; Luo et al., 2004; McCartney & Ge, 2016), and accommodation types were based on Statistics New Zealand (2017). The demographic characteristics were previously established by Yang and Wen (2016). Ten members of the researcher's personal network participated in the pilot test, which confirmed that the questions were of immediate relevance. Specific measures were used to ensure the internal and external reliability of the research. Reliability testing measures the consistency of the data as a coefficient; in this case, Cronbach's alpha was utilised to assess the reliability of the data.

The two principal techniques of data analysis used here were one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and chi-square analysis. One-way ANOVA is used to 'test the difference in a single dependent variable among two or more groups constituted by a single independent or classification variable' (Gaur & Gaur, 2009, p. 71). Chi-square analysis uses two or more relevant variables to measure the relative closeness of two variable factors (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this study, the data from parts one and two and parts one and three were analysed using one-way ANOVA, and the results of this analysis were used to answer RQ1. The data for parts one and four and parts two and four were also analysed using one-way ANOVA, and the results were used to answer RQ2. The data for parts three and four were analysed using the chi-square test, and the results were used to answer RQ3.

### **3.5 Ethical issues**

As this research involved collection of primary data, ethical approval was first required. In this regard, Johnson, Russo and Schoonenboom (2017) noted the need to follow the criteria of respect for respondents, beneficence and justice. During the research process, these ethical criteria guided the researcher when recruiting respondents, collecting responses and handling the data.

According to the rules of the Auckland University of Technology, ethical approval is required from the Ethics Committee, and an application for ethical approval was submitted, accompanied by relevant materials. The study was approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on AUTEK with a reference number of 14/65.

Before respondents read the items in the questionnaire, a respondent information sheet was provided to help them to understand the study (see Appendix B). In particular, respondents were informed about key points including the purpose of the study, their rights and the expected benefits of the study. The questionnaire was anonymous, and no personal information was collected. In the process of collecting the data, respondents were advised that they could stop answering the questions at any time.

## CHAPTER 4 – FINDINGS

### 4.1 Data screening

The process of recruiting respondents and collecting responses to the questionnaire lasted about one week, from the 30th of April to the 6th of May, 2018. The total number of responses was 210. Before starting an analysis of the data, a screening procedure for the data was followed. Firstly, values of the data, including the minimum and maximum values and the means of the variables, were checked (Gray, 2014). The results showed that there were no out-of-range values, and all the mean values were plausible. Secondly, the valid data and missing data were evaluated to avoid errors in the analysis process. After inspecting outliers, there were no missing data, but there were 14 responses with strange scores. As these data were repetitive, they were regarded as meaningless data and deleted. The total number of usable responses was then 196.

After the available responses were entered into SPSS data file, responses for age were arranged. The age of the respondents was divided into three groups: under 30 years old, 30 to 50 years old and over 50 years old. In this way, the respondents could be separated into younger FITs, middle-aged FITs and elder FITs. Therefore, the differences between various age groups of Chinese FITs could be further analysed.

### 4.2 Reliability of measures

The Cronbach's alpha of the two measures (push and pull factors) was close to 1 (Table 1), which indicated that both scales adopted high internal consistency. The alpha value of the pull factors (PUL) was higher than push factors (PUS), and both values were higher than .80, which verified high consistent reliability with previous studies

Table 1  
*Reliability Scores of the Instruments*

	<b>Scale</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>
1	PUS	.84
2	PUL	.86

### 4.3 Descriptive statistics

Part 4 of the questionnaire collected the respondents' demographic information (Table 2). More than half of the respondents were under 30 years old (56.1%), followed by respondents whose ages were between 30 and 50 years old (22.4%) and respondents over 50 years old (21.4%). Most respondents were female travellers (58.7% of the sample), and the rest (41.3%) were male travellers. According to the Statistics New Zealand (2017), the number of Chinese female travellers was higher than male travellers. The gender data of this study reflected this situation.

For the responses regarding marital status, nearly half of the respondents were single (49.5%), while 50.5% of respondents were married. The respondents were mostly well educated, with 46 respondents having a bachelor's degree, 39 having a postgraduate degree or above, 100 having an undergraduate certificate or diploma and 11 having a secondary school education or below. Regarding respondents' occupations, 69 (35.2%) were students, 65 (33.2%) did professional work, 37 (18.9%) were clerical employees and 25 (12.8%) were business people.

Table 2  
*Demographic Profiles of Respondents*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b>Age</b>			<b>Highest qualification</b>		
Under 30	110	56.1	Secondary school	11	5.6
30-50	44	22.4	Undergraduate certificate / diploma	100	51.0
Above 50	42	21.4	Bachelor's degree	46	23.5
Total	196	100.0	Postgraduate qualifications	39	19.9
<b>Gender</b>			Total	196	100.0
Female	115	58.7	<b>Occupation</b>		
Male	81	41.3	Clerical employee	37	18.9

Total	196	100.0	Business person	25	12.8
<b>Marital Status</b>			Professional	65	33.2
Single	97	49.5	Student	69	35.2
Married	99	50.5	Total	196	100.0
Total	196	100.0			

#### 4.4 Motivation factors and accommodation selections

Firstly, the mean scores of push and pull motivation factors were calculated. Next, a one-way ANOVA was adopted to examine the relationships between push and pull motivation factors. Then, the relationship between each specific factor and accommodation selections was tested. The results reflect how push and pull motivation factors affect Chinese FITs' accommodation selections.

Table 3 shows the accommodation selections of respondents. More than half of the respondents (n = 116; 59.2%) selected hotels (including resorts), 26 respondents (13.3%) selected hostels, 43 respondents (21.9%) preferred hosted accommodations (private hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfasts and farm stays), and just 7 (3.6%) and 4 (2.0%) respondents selected motels (motor inns, apartments and motels) or caravan parks/camping grounds, respectively.

Table 3  
*Accommodation Selections in New Zealand*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
Hotels (including resorts)	116	59.2
Motels (motor inns, apartments and motels)	7	3.6
Hostels	26	13.3
Hosted (private hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfast and farm stays)	43	21.9
Caravan parks/camping grounds	4	2.0
Total	196	100.0

Table 4 shows that there were no significant differences between push and pull motivation

factors and Chinese FITs' accommodation selections. This is because neither value was significant ( $p > .05$ ). Therefore, a test of the specific push and pull factors was performed.

Table 4

*Differences in Accommodation Selections by Push and Pull Factors*

	<b>Scale</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
1	PUS	.88
2	PUL	.57

A one-way ANOVA test was adopted to examine the specific relationship between accommodation selections and the importance of push/pull factors to Chinese FITs. Therefore, push and pull motivation factors were the dependent variable, while the specific accommodation selections were the independent variable. Table 5 shows the significant values and the means.

Table 5

*Differences in Accommodation Selections by Motivational Factors*

<b>Motivation factor</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Accommodation selection</b>	<b>Means</b>
With delicious food	0.010	Hotels (including resorts)	4.28
		Caravan parks/camping grounds	4.25
		Hostels	3.85
		Hosted (private hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfast and farm stays)	3.81
		Motels (motor inns, apartments and motels)	3.57
A spacious area designed for relaxing in the accommodation	0.039	Hotels (including resorts)	4.19
		Hosted (private hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfast and farm stays)	4.02
		Caravan parks/camping grounds	3.75
		Motels (motor inns, apartments and motels)	3.71
		Hostels	3.62

\*Scale range is 1-5, 1 = least important and 5 = most important.

As can be seen in Table 5, a significant relation ( $p = 0.010$ ) between accommodation selections and delicious food was found based on a one-way ANOVA analysis. Respondents who selected hotels (including resorts) felt that delicious food provided by the accommodation was important (mean = 4.28) compared to those who chose other accommodations. Respondents who preferred motels (motor inns, apartments and motels)

had less interest in food (mean = 3.57), and those who preferred hostels and hosted accommodations (private hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfasts and farm stays) had similar opinions on food.

There was also a significant relation between accommodation selections and the spaces designed for relaxing in the accommodation ( $p = 0.039$ ). Respondents who selected hotels cared the most about whether the accommodation provided a spacious area for relaxing (mean = 4.19), while those who preferred hosted accommodations were also interested in this factor (mean = 4.02). It seems that respondents who preferred motels, hostels and caravan parks/camping grounds did not care about whether the accommodation provided a spacious area for relaxing.

#### 4.5 Motivation factors and Demographic characteristics

A one-way ANOVA test was adopted to examine how tourist motivation factors affect respondents' accommodation selections. Firstly, one-way ANOVA was applied to analyse the relationships between push and pull motivation factors and Chinese FITs' demographic characteristics. Then, specific motivation factors with statistically significant relations within respondents' demographic characteristics were studied.

Table 6

*Push Factors and Chinese FITs' Demographic Characteristics*

	<b>Scale</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
1	Age	.360
2	Gender	.351
3	Highest qualification	.390
4	Marital status	.222
5	Occupation	.381

Table 7

*Pull Factors and Chinese FITs' Demographic Characteristics*

	<b>Scale</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
1	Age	.551
2	Gender	.747
3	Highest qualification	.294
4	Marital status	.163
5	Occupation	.374

Tables 6 and 7 show that there were no significant relations between push and pull motivation factors and Chinese FITs' demographic characteristics. The reason is that all significant values were greater than 0.05. Therefore, tests of relationship-specific motivation factors and Chinese FITs' demographic characteristics were conducted.

Table 8

*Significant Tourist Motivation Factors by Demographic Characteristics*

<b>Motivation factor</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Means</b>
Exotic atmosphere	0.009	Under 30	3.90
		30-50	4.11
		Above 50	4.36
<b>Motivation factor</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Highest qualification</b>	<b>Means</b>
With clean and comfortable room	0.010	Secondary school	3.73
		Undergraduate Certificate / Diploma	4.38
		Bachelor's degree	4.50
		Postgraduate qualifications	4.59
<b>Motivation factor</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Means</b>
Exotic atmosphere	0.005	Single	3.88
		Married	4.21

\*Scale range is 1-5, 1 = least important and 5 = most important.

The results in Table 8 show that the pull factor exotic atmosphere of the accommodation is significantly correlated to the age group of the respondents ( $p = 0.009$ ). It should be noted that as the age group becomes older, the value of the mean becomes higher. In other words, respondents above 50 cared most about whether the accommodation had an exotic atmosphere fitting New Zealand, and the interest in this decreased with age.

There was a significant relation between the pull factor of clean and comfortable rooms and the respondents' education level ( $p = 0.010$ ). The results reflect that respondents who possessed postgraduate qualifications were more concerned with whether their rooms were clean and comfortable. As respondents' educational levels decreased, the requirement of a clean and comfortable room became less important.

Table 8 shows a relation between the exotic atmosphere of the accommodation and respondents' marital status ( $p = 0.005$ ). Compared with single travellers, married travellers cared more about whether the accommodations had an exotic atmosphere when they decided to select accommodations.

Table 9  
*Significant Tourist Motivation Factors by Occupation*

<b>Motivation factor</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Means</b>
The budget of the trip	0.026	Clerical employee	4.46
		Student	4.28
		Business person	4.16
		Professional	3.92
Physically resting or relaxing	0.018	Business person	4.40
		Clerical employee	4.16
		Professional	4.12
		Student	3.80
With clean and comfortable room	0.032	Clerical employee	4.68
		Student	4.41
		Professional	4.40
		Business person	4.08

\*Scale range is 1-5, 1 = least important and 5 = most important.

It can be seen from Table 9 that there is a significant relation between the budget of the trip and travellers' occupations ( $p = 0.026$ ). Based on a one-way ANOVA analysis, clerical employees were shown to care the most about the budget of the trip when they decided to select accommodations (mean = 4.46). In contrast, respondents who did professional work cared the least about the budget when selecting accommodations (mean = 3.92).

Meanwhile, seeking physically resting or relaxing accommodations had a significant relation to respondents' occupations ( $p = 0.018$ ). Business people were most likely to prefer to seek physically resting or relaxing accommodations (mean = 4.40). Students, in contrast, cared the least about physically resting or relaxing accommodations (mean = 3.80).

Moreover, there was a relation between clean and comfortable rooms and respondents'

occupations as well. In general, each group of respondents felt that the accommodations they selected needed to provide clean and comfortable rooms. Among them, clerical employees cared about this factor the most (mean = 4.68), and business people care about this factor the least (mean = 4.08).

## 4.6 Demographic characteristics and accommodation selections

A Chi-square test was applied to explore the relationship between Chinese FITs' demographic characteristics and their accommodation selections. Tables 10 and 11 show significant relations between these two variables.

Table 10  
*Significant Accommodation Selections by Marital Status*

	<b>Asymptotic Significance</b>	<b>Accommodation type</b>	<b>Single</b>	<b>Married</b>
Marital status	0.021	Hotels (including resorts)	50	66
		Motels (motor inns, apartments and motels)	2	5
		Hostels	18	8
		Hosted (private hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfast and farm stays)	23	20
		Caravan parks/camping grounds	4	0

Table 10 reflects that there is a significant relation between Chinese FITs' marital status and their accommodation selections ( $p = 0.021$ ). Married respondents were more likely to choose hotels (including resorts) and motels (motor inns, apartments and motels) than single respondents. Single respondents were more likely to choose hostels, hosted accommodations (private hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfasts and farm stays) and caravan parks or camping grounds than married respondents.

Table 11  
*Significant Accommodation Selections by Occupation*

	<b>Asymptotic Significance</b>	<b>Accommodation type</b>	<b>Clerical employee</b>	<b>Business person</b>	<b>Professional</b>	<b>Student</b>
Occupation	0.036	Hotels (including resorts)	26	14	44	32
		Motels (motor inns, apartments and motels)	1	2	1	3
		Hostels	3	1	5	17
		Hosted (private hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfast and farm stays)	5	7	15	16
		Caravan parks/camping grounds	2	1	0	1

Table 11 shows that there is a significant relation between Chinese FITs' occupations and their accommodation selections ( $p = 0.036$ ). Respondents who do professional work were the most likely to select hotels (including resorts). Meanwhile, respondents who selected hostels and hosted accommodations (private hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfasts and farm stays) were most likely to be students.

## **CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 Discussion on the key findings**

#### **5.1.1 Motivation factors and accommodation selections**

Chinese FITs have three conspicuous characteristics: being younger, well-educated and having greater experiences. Timea, Gabriel and Alexandra (2015) stated that youth travellers were easily attracted to something new during the trip. Food is one of the most symbolic factors that travellers might focus on (Mohsin & Lockyer, 2010). Findings indicated that delicious food was a significant factor that influenced Chinese FITs' accommodation selections. For respondents who select hotels, they cared about whether there was delicious food in the hotels. To contrast, respondents who select motels care about delicious food less.

However, certain types of accommodation could not provide delicious foods . A motel is a hotel designed for motorists, and usually has a parking area for motor vehicles (Hsu, Tsai, & Wang, 2013). A hostel refers to an accommodation in which operators provide budget-oriented, sociable quarters where guests can rent a bed (usually a bunk bed in a dormitory), and share a bathroom, lounge and often, a kitchen or cooking facilities (Brochado, Rita, & Gameiro, 2015). According to Crawford and Naar (2016), a hosted accommodation is a private home where the host provides a room, an apartment or even the entire house for a night's stay. These three kinds of accommodations had one similarity in that they could not provide food. Therefore, the findings showed that FITs preferred to select hotels (including resorts) because food is provided.

A spacious area designed for relaxing in the accommodation is another factor that influenced Chinese FITs' accommodation decisions in New Zealand. Sun, Ryan and Pan (2014) pointed out that the main motivations of Chinese outbound travellers to New Zealand were to visit highly protected ecological environments and join in various traditional and cultural activities. One specific characteristic of Chinese FITs is that they are young. Toh, Khan and Lim (2004) have discussed that a typical behaviour of young

travellers is to share their experiences from their trips. Therefore, they need a spacious relaxing area to speak their minds freely to the people around about what they have experienced. Furthermore, visiting ecological environments and participating in traditional activities are both behaviours that easily make travellers exhausted. Therefore, after returning to their accommodations, they might require an area for relaxing before going to bed. The collected data showed that Chinese FITs who selected hotels cared about this reason the most. Due to the size of the accommodation, hotels could provide enough available space for relaxation. In contrast, motels and hostels provide limited space for relaxation.

Furthermore, the results of the findings showed that no push motivation factors had significant impact on Chinese FITs' accommodation selections. Smith, Costello, and Muenchen (2010) discussed that push factors might not affect the behaviours of travellers under specific circumstances. According to Klenosky (2002), push and pull motivation factors might not be considered as independent factors because they might be related to each other. Therefore, although no push factors listed in this research were shown to have an effect on Chinese FITs' accommodation selections, it could still be possible that push factors could affect Chinese FITs' accommodation selections.

### **5.1.2 Motivation factors and demographic characteristics**

One of the typical characteristics of Chinese FITs is being well-educated. The data showed that as the respondents' educational levels increased, the preference of having a clean and comfortable room increased. The findings were similar for the relationship between clean and comfortable rooms and occupation. The respondents who were clerical employees cared the most about having clean and comfortable rooms. Li, Tian and Chiong (2014) claim that clerical employees in China generally have high qualifications. People who work in professional roles normally have a degree from a college, institution or university in China. According to Pearce and Lee (2005), one influential factor that affected the psychological expectations of travellers was their qualifications. In other words, travellers' requirements of services were different depending on their education

levels. Thus, respondents who had higher education levels might care more about clean and comfortable rooms when selecting accommodations.

The relationship between the budget of the trip and occupation was significant as well. The findings showed that clerical employees and students selected suitable accommodations based on their budgets. Qiu (2011) discussed that in China, the level of salary for clerical employees was just enough to afford the expenses of daily life in first-tier cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. Therefore, they concentrated more on the budget when selecting accommodations for a trip. Similar to clerical employees, student travellers also cared about the budget for the trip. Chen, Dwyer and Firth (2015) noted that most Chinese student travellers cannot completely pay for their outbound travels by themselves. They require financial support from their parents or complete their trips during a working holiday (Xu, Morgan, & Song, 2009). Therefore, the budget for the trip was one of the significant factors which affected travellers in different occupations when selecting accommodations.

Physically resting or relaxing was also a significant factor that influenced Chinese FITs based on occupation when selecting accommodations. From the findings, travellers who were clerical employees, business people and professionals sought physically resting or relaxing accommodations. Friedman (2009) stated that people in the working-class are under internal and external pressures. Internal pressures come from the psychological level. For example, they need to balance the relationship between work and life and understand the thoughts of surrounding people. External pressures are material, such as living conditions, the education of children, household income and health conditions of family members. Ringle, Sarstedt, and Zimmermann (2011) stated that one of the important purposes of travel was to get relief from the pressures of daily life. In contrast, students might have a much lower level of life pressure comparing to full-time employees. In this line of reasoning, their purposes of travel should not focus on releasing pressure. Thus, the importance of physical rest and relaxation would not influence their accommodation selections.

### **5.1.3 Demographic characteristics and accommodation selections**

The findings showed that Chinese FITs' marital statuses and occupations affected their accommodation selections. The number of married Chinese FITs who selected hotels was higher than the number of single Chinese FITs. According to Simpson and Siguaw (2008), marital status is one of the significant concerns when travelling. Travel may be an important way to develop the relationship between couples. Therefore, accommodations that offer privacy are preferred among married FITs. Dominici and Guzzo (2010) point out that one of the core values of hotels is to protect the privacy of customers. This means that customers can enjoy their private space. In contrast, single travellers may prefer meeting people instead of staying alone (Bieger & Laesser, 2000). Therefore, married respondents were more likely to select hotels than single respondents.

Clerical employees were more likely to select hotels while students were more likely to select hostels and hosted accommodations. The travel expenditure could be the main reason to explain that. A report of Statistics New Zealand (2017) showed that the average price of a standard room in an economy hotel is about NZ\$200–250 per night. When compared with the average price of hostels (about NZ\$20–30 per dorm bed per night) and hosted accommodations (about NZ\$120–150 per room per night) with the same conditions, the expenditure of staying in a hotel room is much higher. Clerical employees may be able to afford the cost of a hotel, but it could be too much for students.

## **5.2 Implications**

This exploratory study analysed the relationships between Chinese FITs' motivation factors and their choice of accommodations in New Zealand. The results showed that Chinese FITs have their own preferences when selecting accommodations. The findings provide implications for accommodation operators, travel agents and investors in the hospitality industry of New Zealand. In addition, this study was an attempt to investigate

the relationship between motivational factors and Chinese FITs' accommodation selections in New Zealand. According to Klenosky (2002), several specific behaviours during the trip can be affected by tourist motivation factors. The results of the study conducted that there were some relationships between some motivational factors and Chinese FITs' accommodation selections. Therefore, motivational factors could be applied in the area of accommodation sections This study increased knowledge of the travel motivations of FITs in their accommodation selections during their trip.

The findings of the study have implications for accommodation operators, travel agents and potential investors in the hospitality industry. For accommodation operators, they can separate their services for specific groups of travellers. For example, the exotic atmosphere of the accommodation influences Chinese FITs of different age groups. With older travellers, the exotic atmosphere is more important. Therefore, the operators can consider the target group of customers and establish the atmosphere to be more attractive to them.

Respondents with different marital statuses and occupations had different preferences for accommodations. Hospitality practitioners can focus on personal services for different groups of travellers. For travel agents, although FITs may not choose all of the services in a travel package, they may accept advice or ask for help in booking accommodations. In that case, travel agents need to understand the preferences for accommodations for FITs and recommend them available places. For instance, clerical employees and students focus on the budget of the trip when they select accommodations. When this group seeks recommendations for accommodations, the travel agent needs to suggest economical accommodations instead of luxury accommodations. This is a method to improve the public praise of travel agents.

For investors in the hospitality industry, the findings of the research show that hotels are still the first choice for Chinese FITs when choosing accommodations. Thus, the hotel industry may be the key area in need of development. Meanwhile, there may be potential

for developing hostels and hosted accommodations in New Zealand as well.

### **5.3 Limitations and recommendations for future research**

While conducting the study, there were several limitations that needed to be addressed. Firstly, the scope of the study was limited. Respondents of this research were FITs from China. It is undeniable that independent travel has increased rapidly in recent years. However, package travel is still a significant part of the Chinese outbound tourism industry (Arlt, 2011). Therefore, the findings of the study might only be relevant to certain Chinese outbound travellers and might not summarise all Chinese outbound travellers' attitudes of accommodation selections. Therefore, further studies in this area can explore a wider range of accommodation selections. For instance, it is possible to explore how all Chinese outbound travellers' accommodation selections are affected by tourist motivation factors; meanwhile, further studies can compare the differences between independent travellers' and package travellers' motivation factors in selecting accommodations.

Secondly, the sample was limited. The data was collected from Chinese FITs in Auckland during a one-week period. The total number of available respondents was 196. The process of collecting data was limited by time and costs. Compared with some previous studies of accommodation selections affected by tourist motivation factors (Khoo-Lattimore & Prayag, 2017; McCartney & Ge, 2016; Tsai, Yeung, & Yim, 2011), the sample size of this research was small. Meanwhile, all the data were collected in Auckland. There might be some different characteristics in accommodation selections of Chinese FITs who visited other cities. Therefore, in future studies, the sample size can be larger if the limitations of time and cost are decreased. Otherwise, the respondents could be recruited from several cities in New Zealand, such as Queenstown, Wellington and Rotorua.

Thirdly, the accommodation types in China are different from those in Western countries. As the collected data showed, the number of respondents who selected motels (motor inns, apartments and motels) and caravan parks/camping grounds was less than 10. It seems

that the reason for this was not a lack of interest in these two accommodation types. Instead, there is not a clear difference between motels, hostels and hosted accommodations in China, and a few Chinese people have experienced caravan parks or camping grounds. In future researches, there could be some qualitative studies to interview the respondent about the accommodation selections to explain the details of the accommodations.

In addition, this research adopted eight push motivation factors and eight pull motivation factors. Some other factors are the culture and specific heritages in New Zealand and the different cultural backgrounds of travellers from different regions in China. Therefore, in future studies, more specific motivation factors of travellers might be examined to analyse the relationship between tourist motivation factors and accommodation selections of Chinese FITs.

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## APPENDIX A: Questionnaire



### **A study of Chinese Free Independent travellers' motivations and their preference accommodation types in New Zealand**

**Hi all,**

This research is being undertaken as part of a Master of International Hospitality Management degree, and you are invited to participate in the project. I would appreciate any assistance you can offer to me for this research. I would like you to fill in a questionnaire, however, you are under no obligation to answer any or all the questions. The questionnaire will last about 8-10 minutes and would be terminated at any time, should you wish to do so.

#### **What is the purpose of this study?**

This study aims to identify and measure the effect of tourist motivation of Chinese Free Independent travellers when they decide to select an accommodation and how do tourist motivation factors affect their accommodation selection in New Zealand.

The findings of this study could be used to help accommodation operators to understand the travellers' emotion when they make selections during the trip and accommodation operators can fix the operating strategy to satisfy the customers' requirements.

#### **What will be involved?**

You will be asked to fill out an online questionnaire. The questions asked in the online questionnaire are all general and non-sensitive questions, which are mainly relating to

your accommodation selection when you travel in New Zealand. All answers will be anonymous and will not be linked to your details. If there is a question that makes you feel uncomfortable, you can leave the questionnaire.

Ask before. If you agree to participate, please press the yes button at the bottom of the screen otherwise click no or use the X at the upper right corner to close this window and disconnect. If you want to read the Participant Information Sheet, please press the button "I want to read the Participant Information Sheet".

- Yes
- I want to read the Participant Information Sheet
- No

### **Screening questions**

Q1. Are you a Chinese citizen?

- Yes
- No

Q2. Did you select any kind of accommodation during your trip?

- Yes
- No

Q3. Have you ever travelled independently to New Zealand?

- Yes
- No

### ***Part One. Push factors for choosing accommodation***

***Q4. The importance of following push factors which influence your accommodation selection:***

	Not important at all	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important
Number of previous visits					
Trip purpose					
Length of stay					
Travelling companions					
The budget of the trip					
Physically resting/relaxing					
Various culture experience					
Facilitating family and kinship relationship					

***Part Two. Pull factors for choosing accommodation***

***Q5. The importance of following pull factors which influence your accommodation selection:***

	Not important at all	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important
Provides activities for the entire family					
With a special theme I like					
With clean and comfortable room					
Provides Friendly / Efficient staff service					
With delicious food					
Exotic atmosphere					
Safe and secure					
A spacious area designed for relaxing in the accommodation					

***Part Three. Accommodation type selection***

***Q6. Which one of the following accommodation types will you most likely to choose during your stay in New Zealand?***

- Hotels (including resorts)
- Motels (motor inns, apartments and motels)
- Hostels

- Hosted (private hotels, guesthouses, bed and breakfast and farm stays)
- Caravan parks/camping grounds

### ***Part Four. Demographic questions***

***Q7. Which year were you born in***

***Q8 . What is your gender?***

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say.

***Q9. What is your highest qualification?***

- Secondary school
- Undergraduate Certificate / Diploma
- Bachelor's degree
- Postgraduate qualifications

***Q10. Marital status***

- Single
- Married
- Prefer not to say.

***Q11. Occupation***

- Clerical employee
- Business person
- Professional
- Student

## APPENDIX B: Participant information sheet



### **Participant Information**

Date Information Sheet Produced: 06.03.2018

### **Project Title**

A study of Chinese Free Independent travellers' motivations and their preference accommodation types in New Zealand

### **An Invitation**

This research is being undertaken as part of a Master of International Hospitality Management degree, and you are invited to participate in the project. I would appreciate any assistance you can offer to me for this research. I would like you to fill in a questionnaire, however, you are under no obligation to answer any or all the questions. The questionnaire will last about 8-10 minutes and would be terminated at any time, should you wish to do so.

### **What is the purpose of this research?**

The completion of this study enables the researcher to fulfil the requirement of his master's dissertation. It also provides the researcher with an opportunity to develop his research skills by applying theories learnt from AUT to practices in the hospitality industry.

### **How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

Data will be collected from Chinese Free Independent Travellers (FITs) who come to New Zealand and choose one type of accommodation in which to stay. The participants will be screened before the research with the questions whether the participants come

from China and whether they are FITs in New Zealand. In the process of referral, the participants will be ensured to possess available tourist visa.

Specifically, participants should meet the following criteria,

Ø They should be FITs and have valid visas to travel in New Zealand,

Ø and should currently stay in an accommodation or will select an accommodation when they travel in New Zealand

### **What will happen in this research?**

Participants will fill in a questionnaire. It may take participants about 8-10 minutes.

### **How will my privacy be protected?**

All the questions will be general and not expected to bring physical or psychological harm to the participants. The participant information sheet will inform the participants of the purpose and process of this study. Responses are anonymous, and the researcher will not collect any identifiable information from individual participants. During data collection and analysis, all the collected digital data will be kept in a password-protected external hard drive.

### **What are the costs of participating in this research?**

There are no costs of participating apart from the participants' time (about 8-10 minutes).

### **What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

Participants will be voluntary to be involved in the survey.

### **How do I agree to participate in this research?**

By confirming you want to participate.

### **Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

Every participant who wants to know the results of the research can search under the researcher's name in AUT Thesislink (<https://thesislink.aut.ac.nz/>)

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

If you have any concerns about this project, please contact the supervisors of the study:

Primary supervisor Pola Wang

Phone: +64 9 921 9999 ext 6544

Email: pola.wang@aut.ac.nz

Secondary supervisor Associate Professor Peter B Kim

Phone: +64 9 921 9999 ext 6105

Email: pkim@aut.ac.nz

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEK, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext. 6038.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Researcher Contact Details:

Tianhong Zheng, Auckland University of Technology, ph: 0221092257, Email: prince142857@gmail.com

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Pola Wang, Auckland University of Technology, ph: +64 9 921 9999 ext 6544, Email: pola.wang@aut.ac.nz

Associate Professor

Peter B Kim, Auckland University of Technology, ph: +64 9 921 9999 ext 6105, Email: pkim@aut.ac.nz

*Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on AUTEK  
Reference number 14/65*

