

**Exploring Chinese self-drive tourists' trip  
routes and their satisfaction in New Zealand  
– using user-generated content analysis**

Qiaochu Yang

A dissertation submitted to Auckland University of Technology  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of International Tourism Management (MITM)

## **Abstract**

Self-drive tourism differs from other types of tourism in many respects, such as the attractiveness of multiple destinations along the way and the importance of road accessibility, safety in influencing tourists' satisfaction. However, little research has investigated self-drive tourists' route selection and the factors influencing their satisfaction with self-driving experience, especially Asian tourists visiting western countries with different cultural backgrounds. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine Chinese self-drive tourists' touring route preferences and what factors influenced their satisfaction with their perceived experience in New Zealand. Existing research suggests that natural landscape strongly motivates Chinese tourists to travel overseas. The research will also explore the importance of this internal motivation factor in influencing Chinese self-drive tourists' satisfaction in New Zealand.

In this research, qualitative data was coded followed a consultative thematic approach, and segments from tourists' reviews were used to illustrate the themes. Specifically, this study collected a total of 200 online reviews (Mandarin text) on the ZUZUCHE platform, where the users shared their touring routes and comments about the experience after self-driving trips, posted from February 1 to May 1, 2019. After reading all the data, four main characteristics of nine selected popular trip routes were found to illustrate the touring route selection preference. This study also extracted 23 basic themes and seven organising themes in order to discover the factors influencing Chinese self-drive tourists' satisfaction and the importance of these factors in Chinese self-drive tourists' satisfaction.

This study found that rental car types, pick up and return location, attraction types and the relation between the travel days and travel destination selection are the four key characteristics reflecting Chinese self-drivers' route arrangements. On the other hand, the data shows that the local community hospitality and natural scenery themes have a positive influence on tourists' satisfaction. Travel-related facilities, safety, road conditions, cost and itinerary exert several negative influences on Chinese tourists' self-driving trips in New Zealand. However, because Chinese self-drive tourists' internal motivation – fun and relaxation – is achieved through the high natural scenery experience in New Zealand, Chinese self-drive tourists are less affected by these negative influences, and are very satisfied with their travel experience in New Zealand based on the findings of this research.

# Table of Contents

<b>ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP .....</b>	<b>VII</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....</b>	<b>VIII</b>
<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>II</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>VI</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1    STUDY BACKGROUND.....	1
1.2    RESEARCH BACKGROUND .....	2
1.3    METHODOLOGY .....	3
1.4    RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES.....	3
1.5    OVERVIEW OF THE DISSERTATION .....	4
<b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1    INTRODUCTION.....	5
2.2    THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SELF-DRIVE TOURISM AND SELF-DRIVE ROUTE.....	5
2.2.1    The rise of the self-drive tourism.....	5
2.2.2    The trip plan and travel route .....	6
2.2.3    The relationship between self-drive trip and travel route .....	7
2.3    SELF-DRIVE TOURISTS’ SATISFACTION .....	8
2.3.1    Satisfaction in tourism industry .....	8
2.3.2    The relationship between self-drive trip route, motivation and tourists’ satisfaction.....	8
2.4    UGC AND SELF-DRIVE TOURISM .....	10
2.4.1    eWOM and UGC.....	10
2.4.2    UGC in tourism.....	11
2.4.3    The influence of the UGC on self-drive tourism .....	12
2.5    SUMMARY .....	13
<b>CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>15</b>
3.1    INTRODUCTION.....	15

3.2	RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES .....	15
3.3	RESEARCH PARADIGM .....	16
3.3.1	Interpretive paradigm .....	16
3.3.2	Qualitative methodology .....	17
3.4	RESEARCH SAMPLING METHOD .....	18
3.5	DATA COLLECTION.....	20
3.5.1	Secondary data collection method .....	20
3.5.2	Ethical considerations .....	21
3.6	DATA ANALYSIS .....	21
3.7	THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE RESEARCH.....	24
<b>CHAPTER 4 RESULTS.....</b>		<b>27</b>
4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	27
4.2	THE TRAVEL ROUTES.....	27
4.2.1	Geographic distribution.....	27
4.2.2	Type of vehicle.....	28
4.2.3	The popular trip routes .....	28
4.2.4	The characteristics of the Chinese touring route.....	35
4.3	THEMES INFLUENCING CHINESE SELF-DRIVE TOURIST’S ROAD TRIP .....	37
4.3.1	Itinerary arrangement .....	38
4.3.2	Scenery .....	39
4.3.3	Road facilities.....	40
4.3.4	Travel-related facilities .....	41
4.3.5	Driving safety .....	42
4.3.6	Local community hospitality.....	42
4.3.7	Cost .....	43
4.3.8	Summary .....	44
4.4	THE OVERALL SATISFACTION OF CHINESE SELF-DRIVE TOURISTS IN NEW ZEALAND .....	44
4.5	CONCLUSION.....	45
<b>CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION.....</b>		<b>46</b>
5.1	INTRODUCTION.....	46
5.2	OVERVIEW OF CHINESE SELF-DRIVE TOURISTS’ TRIP ROUTE SELECTION IN NEW ZEALAND .....	46

5.3	IDENTIFYING THE FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE CHINESE SELF-DRIVE TOURISTS' EXPERIENCE IN NEW ZEALAND .....	48
5.4	TRAVEL MOTIVATION, TOURIST SATISFACTION AND THE INFLUENCE OF THE USER-GENERATED REVIEWS .....	51
5.5	SUMMARY .....	52
<b>CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION .....</b>		<b>54</b>
6.1	INTRODUCTION.....	54
6.2	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES REVISITED .....	54
6.3	PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS.....	56
6.4	LIMITATIONS .....	57
6.5	FURTHER RESEARCH DIRECTIONS .....	58
6.6	CONCLUDING REMARKS .....	59
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>		<b>61</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1: The first popular touring route.....	31
Figure 2: The second popular touring route.....	31
Figure 3: The third popular touring route .....	32
Figure 4: The fourth popular touring route .....	32
Figure 5: The fifth popular touring route .....	33
Figure 6: The sixth popular touring route .....	33
Figure 7: The seventh popular touring route.....	34
Figure 8: The eighth popular touring route .....	34
Figure 9: The ninth popular touring route.....	35
Figure 10: Themes identified in thematic networks.....	38

## List of Tables

Table 1: eWOM communication platforms .....	11
Table 2: Social research types.....	15
Table 3: Steps of doing thematic analysis based on sources (Braun & Clarke, 2006) ...	22
Table 4: The geographic distribution of Chinese tourists on road trips in New Zealand .....	28
Table 5: The top 5 rental car types.....	28
Table 6: The most popular trip routes in New Zealand .....	30
Table 7: The overall level of satisfaction of Chinese self-drive tourists in New Zealand (N=100) .....	44

## **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 (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.”

Signed: Qiaochu Yang

June 2019

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the people who supported me while I was completing my master's degree of International Tourism Management at Auckland University of Technology (AUT).

I would first like to thank my dissertation supervisor, Dr Hamish Bremner, for his constant encouragement and guidance. The door to his office was always open whenever I ran into a trouble spot or had a question about my research or writing. He has walked me through all the stages of the writing of this dissertation and spent much of his precious time in offering valuable advice and guidance in my writing, and his intellectual insights have contributed greatly to the completion of this dissertation. Without his trust and assistance, the completion of this dissertation would have been impossible.

Next, I would like to thank the programme leader of the School of Hospitality and Tourism, Dr. Heike Schänzel, who provided me with support regarding my postgraduate study and answered many questions about confirming my dissertation topic. And special thanks to David Parker for proofreading my written dissertation.

In addition, I would like to extend my thanks to my friends and classmates, who gave their time to listen to and encourage me to keep self-confidence during the problematic parts of my research.

Last, my thanks go to my beloved parents for their unconditional love, ongoing support, and encouragement. They not only offered me critical suggestions about my research study, but also gave me psychological support in continuing the dissertation. To my parents, my love and appreciation cannot be described with words alone.



# **Chapter 1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Study background**

Although the development of Chinese outbound tourism is a relatively recent phenomenon, China has quickly become a major tourist-generating market drawing worldwide awareness (Pan, Li, Zhang, & Smith, 2008). Moreover, Chinese outbound tourism has the potential to have a big influence on the marketing of tourism and destination development in the coming years (Fountain, Espiner, & Xie, 2011). In New Zealand, the Chinese visitor market now represents its second largest source of international visitors. Since 2006, the direct air links and a simplified passport application have attracted more Chinese tourists come to New Zealand. In 2018, Chinese nationals spent NZ\$ 1.63 billion with over 400,000 tourists visiting New Zealand in one year (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2019). The forecasts also suggest that tourism from China will continue to grow. By 2024, China is expected to overtake Australia as the largest source of visitor revenue (Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, 2019).

Because both economic growth and the ownership of automobiles have increased rapidly, self-drive tourism has become a popular travel style in China in the last five years (Liu, Zhang, & Nie, 2012), and Chinese self-drive tourism is considered to be one of the most popular new activities that Chinese travellers will be interested in choosing in the near future (World Tourism Cities Federation, 2016), based on a recent large-scale survey of Chinese outbound tourists. Wu (2015) mentioned that Chinese self-drive tourists are young or in the middle-aged group, and they engage actively in the trip-planning processes compared with the traditional package tours. In particular, they are more long-distance travellers who are active in exchanging their experiences online. Influenced by the fashionable and luxurious western style of travel, most Chinese self-drive tourists hire cars to explore the visited destinations. Therefore, considering the rapid growth of Chinese tourists in New Zealand and the popularity of the self-drive travel pattern, it is crucial to understand these tourists' expectations and satisfaction with their travel experiences in New Zealand.

## **1.2 Research background**

A number of studies have explored the motivations and expectations of Chinese outbound tourists from mainland China. In terms of the travel experience sought, the scenic beauty and natural wonders of the visitors' destinations are the key destination attributes that Chinese self-drive tourists seek (Fountain et al., 2010; Weiler & Yu, 2007). Similarly, research on Chinese visitors to New Zealand suggests New Zealand's natural scenery and its 'clean and green' and unpolluted environment are the primary reason for choosing to visit (Ryan & Mo, 2002; Sun, Ryan & Pan, 2015). Besides, Fountain et al. (2010) also noted that experiencing the country's unique culture, history and customs are the other important motivations for travelling to New Zealand. In addition, aside from the scenery, safety, and culture factors that have been shown to be the significant influence in Chinese tourists' travelling experience in New Zealand, other factors illustrated in the previous research include the array of activities, perceived quality of road facilities, travel-related facilities, weather, the staff and cost (e.g., Denstadli & Jacobsen, 2011; Fjelstul, Wang & Li, 2012; Hardy 2003; Wu, Pearce & Li, 2018). These might also be the perceived experiential factors that affect Chinese self-drive tourists' post-trip satisfaction with their visit to New Zealand.

On the other hand, previous research regarding self-drive tourism from Murray and Graham (1997) illustrated that the experiences obtained along the way are at least as important as the destinations themselves. Therefore, self-drive tourists who choose a good touring route could increase the perceived experience along the way and, as an important part of pre-trip planning, decisions about a self-drive touring route involve a linkage between tourists' multiple interests and their motivations. Thus, finding out the themes in touring route preferences will help in better understanding visitors' needs. According to Hardy (2003), pre-trip planning information along with an adequate route arrangement can lead to more attractions being visited, better time management and higher satisfaction with the overall journey experience. Currently, there have been several studies published related to the quality and the key influencing factors in respect of the touring routes chosen by western people. Little academic research has been undertaken to comprehend the characteristics of Chinese self-drive tourists' route selection, especially what kind of routes that they would like to choose to satisfy their expectations during a visit to a western country with a different cultural background.

### **1.3 Methodology**

Previous research has been explored the factors that affect tourists' perceived experiential satisfaction and choice of tourism routes (Becken & Wilson, 2007; Denstadli & Jacobsen, 2011; Pearce & Wu, 2018). However, there is a notable difference in data extraction methods used for this topic. The most common way data was collected in previous studies was a questionnaire or interview survey. Nowadays, with the rapid development of Web 2.0 technologies, online users share information via the internet, and this form of sharing has acquired enormous popularity. Many researchers have been more and more likely to collect online blogs about or reviews of posters' travel experience as the database of information on related research topics. For example, Wu (2015) selected 37 blogs in total from Qyer.com and Sina.com as the data sources to explore general interest and specially focused reporting on these websites about Chinese Rental Vehicle (RV) travellers in Australia, particularly in relation to safety concerns. Furthermore, Ming (2018) used 100 online customer reviews from Booking.com to find out about the particular elements that influence hotel preference in New Zealand. Similarly, this research has reviewed 200 comments which were all obtained from the ZUZUCHE online platform related to Chinese self-drive tourists' trip route selection and their road-trip experience, the main purpose being to explore the characteristics of the trip routes chosen and the factors that affect Chinese self-drive tourists' perceived experiential satisfaction during their road trip in New Zealand.

### **1.4 Research aim and objectives**

As was implied in the "Study background" section, 1.1, self-driving has played a more and more important role in the tourism industry and explored by researchers in recent years. Previous studies have looked at trip route selection and factors affecting tourists' travel satisfaction with their travel experience in a destination with a similar cultural background, especially for European tourists. However, compared to the western tourists, who have a different cultural background, the characteristics of Chinese self-drive tourists' trip route selection and the factors influencing their experiential satisfaction based on different travel motivation have not been discussed. In order to address this gap in knowledge, the aim of this study is therefore to explore the characteristics of the trip route preferences of Chinese self-drive tourists in New Zealand and their levels of satisfaction. In order to achieve the aim, the main objectives of this study is comprised of three parts:

1. To summarise Chinese self-drive tourists' preferred trip routes and discover the characteristics of their route selection.
2. To discover what factors influence Chinese self-drive tourists' satisfaction with their road trip.
3. To gain a better understanding of the importance of these factors in influencing Chinese self-drive tourists' overall satisfaction in New Zealand.

## **1.5 Overview of the dissertation**

This dissertation contains six chapters. This introduction chapter has provided the general background of and approach to the research topic. Chapter Two represents the literature review with a comprehensive explanation of the development of self-drive tourism and the relationship between self-driving and trip route selection. This is followed by a discussion of tourists' satisfaction with self-drive tourism, particularly in regard to their motivation factors. The recent development of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and UGC, and the influence of online UGC in self-drive tourism, are explained in the last section of the literature review.

Next, Chapter Three outlines the reasons for the methods and methodology adopted in this research. In particular, this chapter explains how the reviews and the secondary data collection have been used, and also discusses the choice of the thematic analysis approach for data analysis in this study.

In Chapter Four, the results of the data analysis are presented. These include the characteristics of the trip routes, the tourists' overall satisfaction with the travel experience and the factors influencing the perceived experiential quality of self-drive trip in New Zealand. A discussion of these findings in relation to the research objectives and, especially, a critical analysis of the factors affecting the satisfaction experience is presented in Chapter Five. Finally, Chapter Six draws conclusions from the study, and addresses practical implications, the limitations of the research, and recommendations for future research.

## **Chapter 2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Driving tourism has been an important component of the tourism industry in many western countries for some time (Carson & Prideaux, 2011). Currently, the research tends to feature European and American tourists; studies in this area cover different segments of the drive tourism industry, such as tourists' travel behaviour, social interaction with locals, and travel patterns. One gap in this research is Asian self-drive tourists' preferences in touring route selection and factors affecting their satisfaction, especially for Chinese self-drive tourists visiting a western country with a different cultural background.

There are three key areas of study in this dissertation: firstly, the touring route management of Chinese self-drive tourists in New Zealand; secondly, the analyses of factors in affecting their satisfaction; and, lastly, the importance of these factors to Chinese self-drive tourists who choose New Zealand as their destination. In order to be able to explore these themes, existing studies about international self-drive tourists' satisfaction and trip route preferences provide some directions for the present work. Therefore, this chapter has collected this literature together and divided it into several subsections to describe, firstly, the development of self-drive tourism and the trip route selection process. Secondly, this literature review focuses on self-drive tourists' satisfaction and motivation. Lastly, the review discusses the development of online UGC and the influence of online UGC on potential Chinese self-drive tourists.

### **2.2 The development of the self-drive tourism and self-drive route**

#### **2.2.1 The rise of the self-drive tourism**

'Driving tourism' refers to the use of private or rented automobiles for leisure and pleasure purposes, not for commuting or errands. The advantages of such tourism are that it makes the trip more flexible and allows for a pace of travel that matches people's travel performance (Prideaux, Wei & Ruys, 2001). The first appearance of driving tourism derived from the 1920s to 1930s' Sunday Drive concept in the United States (Arlt, 2013). The rapid development of self-driving tourism began in the middle and late 20<sup>th</sup> century with the increase of personal income, vehicle availability, and continuous infrastructure development (Arlt, 2013). Studies of self-drive travel first emerged in the 1960s and one

of the typical pieces of research by Wall in 1972 is related to tourists' travel patterns (self-drive frequency, duration, drive distances, etc.). Furthermore, with the growth of self-driving travel in the tourism industry, academic attention was guided to more specific or related issues in tourism research. For instance, Eby and Molnar (2001) explored American self-drive tourists' need for and preferences in travelling information. The results showed that self-drive tourists pay more attention to the actual driving route-related factors such as directness, distance, congestion and safety. Hwang and Fesenmaier (2003) also concluded that, in America, multi-destination travel needed self-drive tourists to have more information analysis in route planning.

### **2.2.2 The trip plan and travel route**

Travel planning and decision-making focuses on where tourists go, what they do and how long they stay. Hyde (2004) grouped planning and decision making into three types: 'core decisions,' 'loose plans' and 'unplanned behaviour'. Research reviewed by Hyde (2004) suggested that the majority of tourists planned their route in advance as a written 'schedule' and booked their rental cars, accommodation and attraction tickets online or offline in advance upon confirming their touring route. Slightly less than half of the tourists planned 'loosely.' The tourists who planned 'loosely' only booked the basic transportation or accommodation for the first couple of travelling days and only roughly planned the destinations that they might visit in advance. Very few tourists were judged to have made 'no plans' at all. Their travel plans were decided only after arriving at their destination. Therefore, it can be seen from the planning situations described that the travel itinerary is a necessary arrangement for tourists before travelling. In addition, according to Van Raaij (1991), extensive planning can reduce the uncertainties and perceived risk of travelling, and adds excitement through anticipation, thereby enhancing the quality of the trip, especially for the less experienced travellers.

An extensive planning process need a comprehensive information search from multiple points of view and using different channels. As part of self-drive trip planning, tourists often evaluate choices and decision making in terms of several aspects: attractions, transport, the travel route taken, accommodation and related infrastructure (Becken & Wilson, 2007). Furthermore, travellers often employ information sources with a perceived high credibility, such as word-of-mouth (Bristor, 1990), or neutral sources such as visitor centres, travel maps or travel brochures to collect travel-related information for

their planning (Becken & Wilson, 2007). In addition, the attributes of travel planning and decision making are related to how the travellers arrange their touring route. In terms of the characteristics of self-drive tourists' trip routes, the researcher March (2004) found that the distance between two destinations and the hours they spend on driving limited their plans. According to his results, most of the tourists generally dislike long-distance driving in one day, and extensive daily travel may also affect their satisfaction level. Furthermore, the length of the tourist route and the choice of tourist destination also rely on how many times the tourists have been to the country before. Becken and Wilson (2007) supported the view that, in New Zealand, first-time tourists traveled to more places and spent more time on driving, but repeat tourists spent less time in the car, visited more secondary attractions and were more likely to travel in the South Island. There are other factors that were considered for plan-making related to travel distance, such as age group, nationality, available travelling days, having relatives or friends in the travel destination country, collecting word-of-mouth information before arriving, the degree of planning (none, rough, complete), and the type of rental vehicle booked (Woodside & King, 2001).

### **2.2.3 The relationship between self-drive trip and travel route**

Trip route planning is a core external attribute of the self-driving trip which can influence self-drive tourists' itinerary making. Also, the improvement of self-driving tour routes promotes the development of local self-driving tourism. According to Gartner and Erkkila (2004), self-drive trip routes were chosen based on multiple factors such as environmental qualities, the uniqueness of the route, natural features and cultural elements. Their research also indicated that the popularity of self-drive tourism led to the expansion of long-distance touring routes to suit the group of self-drive tourists, and the development of new "branded" routes can promote the expansion of related public service facilities and, eventually, lead to the further development of local self-driving tourism.

The key tourist attraction in New Zealand is the landscape, and self-drive tourists plan their trip route because they want to know how to best "consume" this landscape (Becken & Wilson, 2007). Hence, the majority of self-drive tourists in New Zealand plan their route in advance, and make the trip route a "core decision" because they are eager to make best use of travelling time to explore the landscape in New Zealand. Becken and Wilson (2007) also showed that tourists achieving all their expectations could increase their

satisfaction with their trip plan. Therefore, tourists' satisfaction associated with self-drive behaviour is related to the choice of the trip route.

## **2.3 Self-drive tourists' satisfaction**

### **2.3.1 Satisfaction in tourism industry**

The theory of customer satisfaction and its impact on business outcomes has been studied by a number of scholars (e.g., Fornell, 1992; Szymanski & Henard, 2001). Customer satisfaction has been considered as an essential business goal because it is assumed that satisfied customers would buy more and become loyal customers. The same occurs in the tourism industry, since a high level of satisfaction and a better quality of performance is likely to increase re-visitation as well as bringing new tourists to the area (Denstadli & Jacobsen, 2011). There is a large number of tourism studies on the impact of destination attributes on tourists' overall satisfaction (e.g., Baker & Crompton, 2000; Chi & Qu, 2008; De Rojas & Camarero, 2008). According to Denstadli and Jacobsen (2011), various elements such as accommodation, attractions, weather and natural environments could increase tourists' overall satisfaction with the destination.

In terms of self-drive tourism, factors influencing tourists' satisfaction are more related to the driving conditions and the scenery. Hardy (2003) illustrated how the scenery was a key feature shaping the success of a touring route in the United States. The visual experience and the desire for outdoor activities are important tourist motivations for Norwegian tourists in choosing their self-drive trip route, and tourists' driving satisfaction was also affected by the quality of the road facilities and the weather situation (Denstadli & Jacobsen, 2011). Furthermore, Wu et al. (2018) derived nine factors that influence Chinese self-drive tourists' satisfaction in overseas travel experiences: the scenery, road facilities, travel-related facilities, connection services, on-site activities, local community hospitality, weather, air quality and costs.

### **2.3.2 The relationship between self-drive trip route, motivation and tourists' satisfaction**

#### **2.3.2.1. Self-drive trip route and motivation**

Internal and external factors determine a tourist's satisfaction with a self-drive trip route. The internal factors can also be called psychological aspects, and include, for example, expressive attributes and emotional experiences. The external factors are more related to



the visitors' evaluation of the destination's attractiveness, such as primary products and activities, scenery, etc. These internal and external factors are the core push or pull motivations to attract visitors in making a travel decision (Bramwell, 1998; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Denstadli and Jacobsen (2011) noted that people are impelled to travel by internal and emotional forces, and then external forces related to destinations and routes attract them to complete their travel plan. The choice of self-driving trip route is the result of many internal and external motivations. More specifically, the travel destinations are the push motivations for self-drive tourists to start their travel plan because internal motivations have determined the type of tourism activities that they want to visit, and external elements such as daily driving distance, road conditions, outdoor activities and accommodation arrangements motivate the visitors to consider their trip itinerary and decide upon their trip plan.

### **2.3.2.2 Chinese self-drive tourists' motivation and influences on satisfaction in New Zealand**

The push and pull theory has been widely utilised by researchers to study the motivation of Chinese outbound tourists. Z. Lu (2011) noted several push and pull factors influencing Chinese self-drive tourists' motivation to travel in Canada. The push factors include escaping routine life, leisure, exploration, family or relatives, and the prestige of the destination. The pull factors found in his research are the high quality of Canadian life, shopping activities, unique attractions and sports. Somewhat differently, Zhang and Peng (2014) noted that 'fun and self-satisfaction', 'relaxation and knowledge' and 'personal relationships' are the main push motivation factors influencing Chinese self-drive tourists' experiences in Australia; in particular, they assumed that the natural environment and the casual lifestyle were the most significant attributes influencing Chinese tourists to visit an international destination. In terms of New Zealand, Chinese self-drive tourists derive satisfaction from sightseeing in nature-based settings, such as visiting national parks, gardens, farms, enjoying boat cruises and Māori culture (Ryan & Mo, 2001). With the push and pull model, because the main reasons for Chinese travelling to New Zealand are the destination's natural scenery and clean, green image, research results showing satisfaction with the natural landscapes in New Zealand reflect the internal motivation of the majority of Chinese tourists visiting New Zealand (Zhang & Peng, 2014). Therefore, natural scenery is an important internal motivation factor affecting Chinese self-drive tourists' satisfaction during their road trip. It is also part of the 'fun and relaxation' factor

in the internal motivation and encourages tourists to choose New Zealand as their destination before starting their planning. According to Klenosky (2002), push and pull factors are not mutually exclusive or entirely independent of each other. Travellers are pushed by their own internal forces and simultaneously pulled by destination attractions and attributes, the latter may respond to and reinforce the former (Dann, 1981).

## **2.4 UGC and self-drive tourism**

### **2.4.1 eWOM and UGC**

Word-of-mouth (WOM) has been shown to have a significant influence on destination image and destination choice, based on previous tourism research, because of the good perceived credibility it has over other information sources (Brown & Getz, 2005; Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008). Nowadays, with the growing access to the internet and the development of advanced information technology, WOM has evolved to a more impersonal but more pervasive form, called electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Ismagilova, Dwivedi, Slade & Williams, 2017). eWOM communication platforms shown many ways in the Internet (see Table 1) (Cheung & Thadani 2012). These platforms can be divided into main two types, social media and other online platforms. The big difference between these two types of platforms is that social media users are internet users communicating with people who they already know, while other online platforms allow eWOM to occur between anonymous users, and include platforms such as consumer review sites, blogs and shopping websites (Sen & Lerman 2007). One of the biggest advantages of eWOM on anonymous platforms is that anonymity leads consumers to be more comfortable with sharing their opinions and brings a higher volume of eWOM (Chatterjee, 2001). UGC sites are the platform for eWOM which has this attribute of anonymity (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Users post their contents and reviews on third-party or company websites to provide useful information sources for potential customers, and these peer-generated products evaluations are what is called user-generated content (UGC) (Mudambi & Schuff, 2010). UGC often appears as blog posts, e-commerce content, videos and user comments which supply the online platforms (Akehurst, 2009). In the tourism industry, this provides information not only about the tourism-related products in question, but also aspects of the contributor's post-consumption experience, including overall evaluation, service, quality and value for

money (Li, Ye & Law, 2013). UGC helps every potential tourist to make a better decision about visiting their travel destination and influences their pre-travel plan making.

Table 1: eWOM communication platforms

<b>Platform</b>	<b>Example</b>
Social media websites	Facebook.com
Shopping websites	Amazon.com
Consumer review websites	Epinions.com
Discussion Forums	UKbusinessforums.co.uk
Blogs	Blogger.com

*Source:* Cheung and Thadani (2012).

#### **2.4.2 UGC in tourism**

With the development of Web 2.0 technology, more and more tourists began to use social media and related online platforms to share their travel experience. As a result, more and more potential tourists are willing to get their travel destination information through these UGC tourism sites. Based on the research by Law, Leung and Buhalis (2009), travellers often post their recommendation on review sites after returning home, and these posts can be used as information sources for potential tourists' travel planning. Hence, online UGC has become part of the trip planning, influencing consumers in the decision-making process. Different from the recommendations by virtual agencies or travel destination websites, UGC information, such as travel review texts, has meaning rich in personal experience, and in the characteristics of scenic spots, especially with the real photographs posted online which add to their credibility for potential tourists (S. Du, Zhang, Xu, Yang & Tu, 2018). Lu and Stepchenkova (2015) reported that almost all respondents in their research said they will access online comments while arranging their journeys, participants trust these comments because they contain details, trustworthy and up-to-date information, especially the comments and recommendations in relation to rental cars, hotels and trip routes. These effective information sources make UGC an important part of trip planning and decision making for internet users.

### **2.4.3 The influence of the UGC on self-drive tourism**

#### **2.4.3.1 The influence of UGC on trip route planning**

UGC is widely used in tourists' trip planning and decision making because visitors realise that the recommendations posted by previous tourists are easy to accept, convenient and improve the rationality of touring routes as well. S. Du et al. (2018) summarised three reasons why potential tourists like to obtain travel information from UGC. Firstly, the rich knowledge in travel review texts can provide the characteristics of scenic spots, making up for the shortcomings of traditional trip route recommendations. Secondly, a multi-level trip route made through UGC could be constructed with different themes, such as cultural travel routes and natural scenery travel routes in the same region. These different route themes are different choices and tourists can make choices based on their preferences. In other words, tourists can use UGC to find a travel route that satisfies their own travel motivations. Hence, UGC can help visitors to find their favourite theme routes and improve the quality of their travel in terms of the variety of attractions. Finally, tourism is an information-intensive industry, and potential tourists can easily access online UGC and find useful information sources in these posters' comments. According to Chung, Han, and Koo (2015), if travellers want to read experienced tourists' trip route advice about the destination that they plan to visit, then they could use any electronic device to search the related information anywhere and anytime, compared with the less-accessible traditional information sources such as travel magazines, books, travel brochures. Therefore, the UGC sites online are also time-saving and have easy access for each potential visitor.

#### **2.4.3.2 The influence of UGC on self-drive tourists**

UGC online platforms can be divided into consumer-written sources and system-aggregated sources based on different attributes, and these two types of UGC sources influence self-drive tourists' decision making differently. According to Jin and Phua (2016), consumer-written UGC on travel booking sites is defined as consumers' anecdotes about their actual experiences of travel products, such as attractions, accommodation and transportation, and their personal satisfaction ratings of the products they evaluate and recommend. System-aggregated UGC consists of website-aggregated numerical indicators of consumer input, for example, how many reservations were made within 24 hours, how many previous customers recommended this place, or the numerical

rating of the attraction, etc. A system-aggregated UGC is controlled by the retailer's channel manager or the employees of the UGC platform website, rather than consumer themselves (L. Murphy, Mascardo, & Benckendorff, 2007). According to the results from Bickart and Schindler (2001), customer-written UGC information collected by self-drive tourists would be more credible and trustworthy than market-generated information because online users believe that fellow consumers' experiences are a truer source of information than system-aggregated data sources.

In addition, the influence of negative UGC is more powerful for tourists than positive UGC. Laczniak, DeCarlo, and Ramaswami (2001) maintained that consumers are more likely to trust negative eWOM information because positive information can be self-serving. Jin and Phua (2016) explained that negative information's diagnostic value is more responsive for customers than positive information. Walther, Van Der Heide, Hamel and Shulman (2009) also found that customer-written UGC has higher influence than system-aggregated UGC on potential tourists because the individual tourists' reviews are vivid, and have greater credence and warranting value. They also emphasized that customer-written UGC is more valuable when it is negative.

## **2.5 Summary**

Overall, for self-drive tourists, the trip route as the "core decision" in trip planning could be influenced by internal and external motivators. The significant relationship between trip planning and tourists' satisfaction has been discussed in a variety of studies. The review of this literature indicates that tourists' satisfaction with their travel experience is related to internal and external travel motivations during the road trip, and the successful trip route plan and high satisfaction will increase visitor retention and loyalty. On the other hand, tourism is an information-intensive industry, and tourists' trip planning and decision making can be highly dependent on multiple pieces of information collected online or offline. With the expansion of Web 2.0 technology, the variety of UGC travel-related sites may effectively spread eWOM and influence tourists' decision making. The research results discussed in the literature review show that UGC is popular for visitors because the information is always real, acceptable and easy to access. Additionally, customer-written content is more powerful than system-aggregated content because it is more credible and trustworthy. Furthermore, negative UGC has more effect on tourists' planning than positive UGC.

However, currently, there is little literature analysing the influence of online travel UGC on Chinese self-drive tourists' trip planning or the factors that influence their satisfaction. Therefore, this research has been designed to collect effective customer-generated UGC from one of the most famous travel platforms in China, ZUZUCHE.com, to explore popular Chinese self-drive tourists' touring routes and factors affecting their road trip satisfaction in New Zealand. In addition, the research addresses how internal and external motivation factors impact these tourists' satisfaction.

## Chapter 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Introduction

Methodology is a procedure for a researcher to describe, explain, and predict phenomena (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007). It is a way of studying knowledge and gives a work plan for the research. This chapter re-states the research aims and objectives, followed by an outline of the research paradigm and the reason it was chosen. The qualitative research strategy is used in this research to ensure the detailed description of tourists' behaviour and experiences. Next, sampling and the second-hand data collection method are explained. Finally, the chapter discusses the data analysis process.

### 3.2 Explanatory social research

Veal (2018) explained the purpose of researching as making known something or a number of activities previously unknown. Tourism research differs from physics or natural science, as it is a kind of sociological research and one of the characteristics of social research is that it is rarely possible to produce accurate copies of research results at different times or in different places. People as individuals and social beings will be the research participants to be used in tourism research analysis. Social research has been divided into three types (Veal, 2018), namely descriptive research, explanatory research and evaluative research (see Table 2).

Table 2: Social research types

Descriptive research	Finding out, describing what is
Explanatory research	Explaining how and why things are as they are (and using this to predict)
Evaluative research	Evaluation of policies and programmes

*Source:* Veal (2018).

The main idea behind using explanatory research is to explore a problem which was not well researched in-depth before; it is not used to provide some conclusive evidence but helps in understanding the problem more effectively. This study is an explanatory

research investigation carried out by collecting participants' text comments to receive a deeper insight about self-drive tourist groups' travel patterns and satisfaction factors.

In summary, the aim of this research is to analyse the touring route preferences of Chinese self-drive tourists in New Zealand and the factors influencing their experiential satisfaction during the journey. The research objectives, as already stated in section 1.4, are as follows:

1. To summarise Chinese self-drive tourists' preferred trip routes and discover the characteristics of their route selection.
2. To discover what factors influence Chinese self-drive tourists' satisfaction with their road trip.
3. To gain a better understanding of the importance of these factors in influencing Chinese self-drive tourists' overall satisfaction in New Zealand.

Chinese self-drive tourists who travel in New Zealand have cultural differences; as such their trip route planning and travel behaviours are different compared with European tourists. In order to find out the touring route preferences of Chinese self-drive tourists in New Zealand and the factors that affect their satisfaction, and provide better recommendations and assistance to potential self-drive tourists for their trip planning, this study has collected and analysed sufficient self-drive tourists' reviews and comments to be able to find out the key influential elements, to reach the research goal and, hopefully, to provide academic support for further research on this topic.

### **3.3 Research paradigm**

#### **3.3.1 Interpretive paradigm**

A research paradigm plays a significant role in research design. It influences the way knowledge is studied and it is considered the starting point of any research (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Morgan (2007) described how the research questions and selection methods considered throughout the research process will be influenced by the paradigm adopted by the researchers. Gray (2014) defined a paradigm as consisting of four components: ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods. The different combinations of these four components generate four different paradigms, namely positivism, postpositivism, interpretivism and critical theory.



Interpretivism is derived from the need for culturally and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world, and often focuses on those aspects that are unique, individual and qualitative (Gray, 2014). Wahyuni (2012) explained that an interpretivist paradigm takes the position that reality is socially constructed and subjective, context-laden and inseparable from the values of the observer. The interpretive paradigm emphasises the notion that different backgrounds and experiences of individuals or groups can lead to multiple perspectives on social research results (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011). In terms of this study, the purpose is to discover the self-drive tourists' trip route preferences and the related factors affecting their satisfaction. All the data is collected from the tourists' reviews through a Chinese UGC site. All the content represents real tourists' experience and feedback. Because the perception of an experience is a complicated issue, with the consequence that a travel experience varies from person to person, the results of research into this tourism phenomena are based on participants' interpretations and perspectives. Therefore, in determining the objectives and data collection methods, an interpretive paradigm has been adopted in this study.

### **3.3.2 Qualitative methodology**

Within the interpretive paradigm, qualitative research is the preferred way for researchers to define problems or deal with problems (Lewis, 2015), and a qualitative format is often used in tourism research to gain a better understanding of tourists' basic needs (Cohen, 1988). Flick (2018) noted that qualitative research collects non-standardised text and images rather than numbers and statistics in analysing meaning or social phenomena. McCusker and Gunaydin (2015) also emphasised that research on some aspects of social life is the main feature of qualitative research, the researcher always uses words as a database for analysis, and the scope of the analysis is usually narrowed down to specific participants and their personal views and opinions. As Smith (2015) indicated, the information collected through qualitative research can include historical reviews, literature analysis, interviews, observations, and participant experiences, among other things. In addition, in order to get more accurate results, researchers would like to select as large a group of participants as possible for qualitative study, such as service providers, consumers, agency directors, etc.

Rahman (2017) summarised five main advantages of using qualitative research approaches. Firstly, qualitative research describes and explains the participants' feelings,

experiences and opinions in detail. Secondly, qualitative research holistically understands the human experience in specific settings. For example, the qualitative researchers could consider the content-related variables, such as culture, language and the demographic difference (Tsushima, 2015). Thirdly, qualitative research can study individual cases or events, as it has the ability to understand the voices, meanings and events from different people. Fourthly, studies using a qualitative approach help understand the meaning of a score or grade given by participants to what is being assessed in the research. For example, in terms of the rating stars of car rental companies in the ZUZUCHE platform, the researcher might need to understand the meaning of “one star” or “five stars” given by their customers to present the satisfaction of their experience in hiring vehicles, and then to elicit the content or text displayed in their customer scripts to explain the reasons for their decision. Lastly, qualitative research design has a flexible structure as the design can be constructed and reconstructed to a great extent (Maxwell, 2012). For example, the researcher could adjust the themes based on the data collected through the online reviews.

For this research, online UGC comments and reviews are the main data sources that have been collected and analysed. Qualitative research can achieve deeper insights into the tourists’ opinions about their touring routes and satisfaction factors by analysing individual cases or events, uploaded images, the meaning of a score or grade, etc. In addition, the data in this research have sufficient freedom of context, the data in this research can be drawn from all of updating travel comments and reviews selected from the large sample on ZUZUCHE.com. Taking a qualitative approach, researchers can extract the data from these online UGC comments and reviews to obtain themes in regard to Chinese self-drive tourists’ satisfaction and touring route preferences. Therefore, this research has adopted the advantages of qualitative research to understand the complex features of tourists’ assessments of their satisfaction.

### **3.4 Research sampling method**

According to the aims of the study, free and independent tourists who choose New Zealand as their destination and hire vehicles are the research participant group in this study. However, due to the large size of the population, this study could test every individual who belongs to this group because it would be too expensive and time-consuming, hence, this study chose a sampling method. Gray (2014) reported that a sample is chosen by researcher to be representative of the population as a whole, and the

sample's main characteristics are similar or identical to those of the population. Furthermore, the sample adequacy, data quality, and variability of relevant events are often more important than the number of the participants in the sample (Malterud, Siersma & Guassora, 2016). Therefore, this study followed the method of sample selection mentioned in the previous section, and extracted 100 reviews related to Chinese self-drive tourists' touring route selection and 100 reviews about their travel experience with hiring vehicles from three rental car companies during the period February 1, 2019, to May 1, 2019, with this set of reviews posted on ZUZUCHE.com taken as the sample representing the larger population in this research. The following paragraphs explain why selecting these samples in this way was representative of the whole population of this research.

ZUZUCHE.com is not only the most popular overseas car rental platform in China, it is also a large database of travellers' reviews. This platform combines more than 40 New Zealand car rental companies' information and offers car pre-booking or other travel-related services to all Chinese online users. Each relevant feedback comment and review represents Chinese self-drive tourists' opinion with regard to their preferences for trip route planning and their satisfaction. According to Ayeh, Au and Law (2013), more than 95% of tourists read online reviews while planning their trips. Therefore, the truthfulness of the information collected through this online platform's reviews and comments satisfy the selection principle of the sample design, and have been used as the sample for this research design.

The sample was selected from two different areas on the ZUZUCHE online platform. In order to find out the characteristics of the popular touring routes, this study found the latest 100 user comments in the general feedback section with trip routes posted by tourists who use this online platform for pre-plan making. Another 100 reviews with the textual comments related to users' road trip experiences and overall satisfaction in New Zealand were extracted from three specific rental car companies on the ZUZUCHE platform. They were Hertz, Apex and Discount car rental. There are two main reasons for choosing these three rental car companies. Firstly, these three rental car companies share a big market in both Auckland and Christchurch, which makes the comments and reviews comprehensive. Auckland and Christchurch are the main travel origins and destinations for Chinese self-drive tourists in the North and South Island respectively. Furthermore,

Hertz is a multinational company, Apex is one of the most popular rental car companies in both Australia and New Zealand, while Discount car rental is a Chinese-owned company in New Zealand with a good reputation. Comparing tourists' reviews and experiences with different managements, products and car rental service companies could also extend the breadth of study in exploring factors that affect self-drive tourists' trip plans and satisfaction.

### **3.5 Data collection**

#### **3.5.1 Secondary data collection method**

Secondary data analysis is analysis of data that was collected by someone else for another primary purpose (Johnston, 2017). Such existing data can be used if it can benefit the researcher who has limited time and resources.

The strengths of secondary data analysis for research design could be summarised into two main points: Firstly, the major advantages are the cost-effectiveness and convenience it provides (Smith, 2008). Researchers using data that has already been collected by someone else could save on the cost of the research. Furthermore, good quality larger datasets always involve large samples and contain substantial breadth, and these important databases are more representative of the target population and allow for greater validity and more generalisable findings comparing with the smaller datasets (Smith, 2008). Furthermore, using existing data sets is less time-consuming because the existing data shortens or removes the time needed for primary data collection and promotes the process of the production of findings (Doolan & Froelicher, 2009).

In terms of this study, tourists' comments and reviews on the ZUZUCHE platform are the relevant databases and quality information could be selected from this large resource. This secondary data save the data collection cost and the time needed for preparing interview and questionnaires. Furthermore, a substantial breadth of data and generalisable findings could not be achieved by questionnaires and interviews because of the limitations of the reliability and the number of participants (Brace, 2018). The comments and reviews on the ZUZUCHE platform were posted after travelling to New Zealand and cover different aspects of tourists' travel experiences.

### **3.5.2 Ethical considerations**

Ethics approval was not required in this study as only secondary data was used, and all data are based on secondary sources and publicly available online UGC that is not copyright protected. These users choose to make their reviews available to the general public and are not identified on a personal or demographic level. Also, all the collected materials from the Chinese online platform ZUZUCHE.com were translated into English and posters/reviewers will remain permanently unidentifiable.

### **3.6 Data analysis**

Thematic analysis is the data analysis method used in this study. Thematic analysis is defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) as a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. The main function of thematic analysis is to find the repeated patterns of meaning through searching the data set derived from a number of groups, personal interviews or a range of texts. Braun and Clarke (2006) summarised three key factors in using thematic analysis: Firstly, thematic analysis is usually not attempting to quantify qualitative data, which means the results in thematic analysis are not explained by calculating the proportion or quantity of the themes mentioned among the data. Secondly, the unit of analysis is macro. Thirdly, the content of thematic analysis is not limited to a word or phrases, it could be a sentence or a paragraph.

Braun and Clarke (2006) summarised six steps for carrying out a thematic analysis (see Table 3).

Table 3: Steps of doing thematic analysis based on sources (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Description of the process</b>
1. Familiarising with data	Transcribing data, reading the data, noting down the data
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collecting data relevant to each code
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes and gathering all data relevant to these themes
4. Reviewing themes	Checking if the theme work relates to the entire data set, and generating an analysis in a thematic map
5. Defining and naming themes	Deep analysis of each theme, and overall story, to refine the specifics, and generate clear definition/name for each theme
6. Producing the report	Final analysis of selected extracts in relation to the research questions and literature, and production of a scholarly report of the analysis

Firstly, the researcher starts by taking notes or making ideas for coding the basic themes. In this study, the selected reviews and content needed to be transcribed (all the Chinese was translated to English). The coding of data was done entirely by hand to avoid the computer software programs that may be too rigid in the abstraction of the constructs. The purpose of this part is to become familiar with the research data and prepare for initial ideas and concepts.

The second step involves the production of initial codes from the data. The researcher highlights the interesting and related aspects of the data, identifies the codes and collates data with each code. In this research, the frequent words or sentences were selected related to the self-drive tourist's route chosen or their satisfaction. For example, long driving distance, comfortable driving environment, secure car rental service, etc. Other potential patterns or themes such as travel problems and the trip route chosen that are reflected in different car rental companies were also recorded for further discussion.

The following two steps could be combined by using visual representations such as different charts to gather different sorts of codes into potential themes, and collecting the related codes out within the identified themes. According to Aarsal, Woosnam, Baldwin and Backman (2010), themes could be identified into basic themes, organising themes and global themes. Basic themes are the lowest-order themes emerging from the textual data. Organising themes could be explained as putting the basic themes together into a group of similar concepts. Global themes were identified by Attride-Sterling (2001) as summaries that make sense of clusters of the lower-order themes abstracted from the data. For example, 'easy to park' and 'mobile service' could be defined as basic themes, and these two basic themes also could be identified into the organising theme of 'travel-related facilities'. Then, the 'travel-related facilities' theme would be summarised into the global theme, 'the factors that affect Chinese self-drive tourists' satisfaction'.

The main task in step five is to conduct a detailed analysis of each individual theme and think about the names that need to be given to each theme in the final analysis, thereby organising them into a coherent and internally consistent account with an accompanying narrative. In other words, a detailed explanation of each theme needs to consider how it fits into the broader overall "story" and that the data collected in relation to the research question should not have too much overlap between themes. In other words, in this step researchers need to ensure each basic theme goes to the right organisational theme. In this research, road facilities and travel-related facilities are two organising themes with several similarities. Hence, the basic themes collected from the data require a research to think carefully about them, and make each basic theme fit their own organising theme well. For example, roadside facilities in this study belong to the organising theme 'travel-related facilities' instead of the 'road facilities' theme. This is because the comments collected in the 'roadside facilities' theme are mainly about the visitors' parking space design at the lookout points along the road trip or the design of warning signs on the mountain roads being convenient for driving tourists on the way to their destinations. These codes are particularly related to driving tourists' experiences, hence to belongs to 'travel-related facilities' in this research.

The last step in this research analysis is producing the report. This step is based on a full set of worked-out themes, at which point researchers need to complete the final analysis and write up the report. The key part of this step is having sufficient evidence of the

themes within the data to support the global themes. Therefore, examples and other supporting ideas from the previous literature need to be analysed. For example, driving safety issues have been mentioned very often in online UGC by Chinese self-drive tourists, especially the problem of ‘how to arrange Chinese self-drive tourists’ touring route on the first two days in a country with the left-hand driving conditions’, which influenced Chinese self-drive tourists’ planning and travel experience. According to Wilks and Pendergast (2011), tourists changing their driving habits to drive on the left is considered as one of the major causes of international tourists’ accidents. Therefore, Wilks and Pendergast’s research support the results – being unfamiliar with the local traffic rules and rental vehicle condition creates safety hazards for Chinese self-drive tourists who drive in New Zealand, and this safety issue sometimes influences their touring route plan as well.

### **3.7 The trustworthiness of the research**

The quality of qualitative research is related to the validity and reliability of the research, and the idea of trustworthiness has been used to measure the reliability and validity of the research (Golafshani, 2003). Therefore, quality of the qualitative research is related to the generalisability of the results and the trustworthiness of the data collection and analysis processes. Trustworthiness includes four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The following paragraphs explain how this study fits these criteria:

Credibility addresses the “fit” between respondents’ views and the researcher’s representation of them (Tobin & Begley, 2004). All the comments forming the data were posted on the ZUZUCHE online platform by self-drive tourists who hired rental cars, and their user experience evaluation is sufficiently credible and effective for the researcher to explore independent tourists’ satisfaction.

Transferability refers to the generalisability of inquiry (Nowell, Norris, White, & Moules, 2017). The purpose of this concept is to ensure the findings are applicable to other contexts, such as similar situations, populations and phenomena. In this study, the database was not only adopted from several selected car rental companies and the comments written by their customers, the data collection was also extended with comments from the personal reflections published on the website’s main page which



related to travellers' experiences and suggestions about their road trip in New Zealand. On the other hand, data selected from different rental companies could enrich the transferability criterion because different car types and services selected from different companies could reflect different self-drive tourist travel plans. For example, the small car hirer and campervan hirer will have different travel motivations and behaviours in their trip planning. Furthermore, because the thematic analysis was not limited to a word or phrases in the dataset, the longer comments selected from tourists' personal reflections will contain multiple themes.

To achieve dependability, researchers need to ensure the research process is logical, traceable, and clearly documented (Tobin & Begley, 2004). In other words, the data analysis and results explained need to be supported by sufficient evidence from previous reports which obtained similar findings to the present study. The themes collected in this research refer to several summarised factors that influence self-drive tourists' trip plans and satisfaction that have been illustrated in other research. Also, dependability involves using several pieces of empirical evidence to support the findings in the discussion section.

Confirmability is concerned with establishing that the researcher's interpretations and findings are clearly derived from the data, requiring the researcher to demonstrate how conclusions and interpretations have been reached (Tobin & Begley, 2004). In this study, all the results are based on real customers' reviews and comments, not the personal motivations of the researcher. The findings chapter provides the completed steps of data analysis to show how the self-drive tourists' trip preferences and satisfaction factors were generated, using tables, figures and textual contents.

### **3.8 Summary**

This chapter explained the methodology and methods used in this research. Generally speaking, the objectives of this study outlined in this section are answered by analysing data posted by real self-drive tourists and obtained from one of the biggest car rental platforms. Specifically, the second-hand data collection method was applied in the first stage to select customers' reviews from the ZUZUCHE platform to extract the popular self-drive touring routes and the content related to the self-drive tourists' satisfaction factors. Then, the thematic analysis method was used to identify, analyse and report themes relevant to the research questions, and these were confirmed in the next step of

the thematic analysis process. In addition, this chapter also illustrated five steps in using basic, organising and global themes to address the objectives related to factors affecting tourists' satisfaction. In the next chapter, the results are presented, these being the findings on self-drive tourists' trip route preferences and their satisfaction, based on their online comments.

## **Chapter 4 Results**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this study, the data used for analysing the most popular self-drive trip route and the factors influencing Chinese self-drive tourists' trip plan includes the latest 100 touring route comments from February 1, 2019, to May 1, 2019, posted on ZUZUCHE.com, and 100 selected reviews about users' travel experiences with their hiring vehicles from the Hertz, Apex and Discount rental car companies during the same period. The geographic distribution of the trip routes are collected in Table 4, the characteristics of the rental car types is listed in Table 6, and the most commonly selected routes in New Zealand are presented in Table . The purpose of these results is to find Chinese tourists' preferences in trip route planning.

The comments extracted from these 100 online UGC were sorted into seven organising themes based on the previous literature: itinerary arrangement, scenery, road facilities, travel-related facilities, driving safety, local community facilities, and cost. The basic themes under each organising theme are discussed in the following contents, and all these themes are referred in the discussion of the topic, the factors affecting visitors' perceived experience and satisfaction. The thematic network is represented in Figure 10. Moreover, visitors' overall satisfaction for their road trip in New Zealand is shown in Table 7 to discuss the impact level of these perceived experience factors on Chinese self-drive tourists' satisfaction with their travel experience. For convenience, some of the typical comments have been translated into English to better support these themes.

### **4.2 The travel routes**

#### **4.2.1 Geographic distribution**

Table 4 shows the geographic distribution of Chinese tourists on their road trips in New Zealand. According to rental cars' pick up and return location, the journey distributions are classified into three categories: North Island, South Island and both North and South Island. As shown in the results, 60% of Chinese self-drive tourists visited the South Island and stayed around 15 days during this road trip. Next, 34% Chinese self-drive tourists took their road trip in the North Island, with an average of five days for the journey. Only 6% Chinese self-drive tourists choose spent average 20 days to visit both the North and South Islands with the same vehicle. However, this result does not indicate how many

tourists visited both North and South Islands in one journey but rented vehicle separately in these two islands, as these could not be recorded by this method.

Table 4: The geographic distribution of Chinese tourists on road trips in New Zealand

<b>The regions</b>	<b>Count (N= 100)</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Average travel days</b>
North Island trip	34	34%	4.8
South Island trip	60	60%	14.5
Both North and South Islands	6	6%	20

#### **4.2.2 Type of vehicle**

Table 5 illustrates the rental car types in the selected 100 reviews, and these are categorised into six main types: Toyota Rav4, Toyota Corolla, Toyota Highlander, MPV KIA Carnival, Mazda Demio, and others. The Toyota brand made up 51% of the all rental cars compared with other brands, with the Toyota Rav4 taking one-quarter of all rental car types. The second popular car type was the Toyota Corolla with 18% of the total. Seven-seat vehicles such as the Toyota Highlander and KIA MPV took another important role in rental car types with 8%.

Table 5: The top 5 rental car types

<b>No</b>	<b>Car type</b>	<b>Car brand</b>	<b>Percent (No=100)</b>
1	Toyota Rav4	Toyota	25%
2	Toyota Corolla Hatch/ Sedan	Toyota	18%
3	Toyota Highlander (7 seats)	Toyota	8%
4	MPV KIA Carnival (7 seats)	KIA	8%
5	Mazda Demio or Similar	Mazda	6%
6	Others	Others	35%

#### **4.2.3 The popular trip routes**

Table 6 describes the nine most popular trip routes selected by Chinese self-drive tourists in New Zealand. Travel routes mainly start from Auckland in the North Island, or

Christchurch in the South Island. Most tourists chose a grand circular road trip, and dropped off the hire car at their departure point. For example, one of the most popular routes in the North Island is a circular trip, starting from Auckland, via Matamata, reaching Rotorua or Taupō, and then driving back to Auckland, via Waitomo caves (see Figure 2). On the other hand, some Chinese tourists also selected a long-distance linear route travel plan. It meant their origin and destination were not the same place. The advantage of choosing a linear trip is time-saving, as the self-drive tourists do not need to repeat their travel route; instead, they can visit attractions along a similar direction. For instance, tourists who travelled through both the North and South Islands chose this kind of trip route; they picked up rental cars in Auckland, and drove all the way down to Wellington, took the ferry to the South Island and picked up another car or bought a ferry ticket for the original vehicle, and continued their journey after reaching the South Island (see Figure 8 and Figure 9).

Table 6 The most popular trip routes in New Zealand

<b>The popular North island trip routes</b>				
<b>No</b>	<b>Days(average)</b>	<b>Pick up</b>	<b>Drop off</b>	<b>The routes</b>
1	3	Auckland	Auckland	Auckland city and surroundings (Figure 1)
2	5	Auckland	Auckland	Auckland-Matamata-Rotorua-Waitomo-Auckland (Figure 2)
3	3	Auckland	Rotorua	Auckland-Waitomo-Hamilton-Matamata-Rotorua-Taupō- Rotorua (Figure 3)
<b>The popular South Island Trip routes</b>				
<b>No</b>	<b>Days (average)</b>	<b>Pick up</b>	<b>Drop off</b>	<b>The routes</b>
1	12	Christchurch	Christchurch	Christchurch-Oamaru-Dunedin-Invercargill-Te Anau-Milford Sound-Queenstown-Lake Tekapo-Christchurch (Figure 4)
2	8	Queenstown	Christchurch	Queenstown-Milford Sound-Queenstown-Wanaka-Lake Tekapo-Christchurch (Figure 5)
3	7	Christchurch	Queenstown	Christchurch-Lake Tekapo-Oamaru-Dunedin-Queenstown (Figure 6)
4	18	Christchurch	Christchurch	Christchurch-Oamaru-Dunedin-Invercargil-Te Anau-Milford Sound-Queenstown-Lake Wanaka-Lake Tekapo- Fox Glacier-Christchurch-Kaikoura-Christchurch (Figure 7)
<b>The popular trip route for the both North and South Islands in one journey</b>				
<b>No</b>	<b>Days (average)</b>	<b>Pick up</b>	<b>Drop off</b>	<b>The route</b>
1	20	Auckland	Dunedin	Auckland-Waitomo-Matamata-Rotorua-Napier-Wellington-Nelson-Kaikoura-Christchurch-Lake Tekapo- Wanaka-Queenstown-Milford Sound-Dunedin (Figure 8)
2	25	Auckland	Christchurch	Auckland-Waitomo-Matamata-Rotorua-Wellington-Nelson-Christchurch-Dunedin-Invercargill-Bluff-Lake Te Anau-Milford Sound-Queenstown-Wanaka-Lake Tekapo- Christchurch (Figure 9)

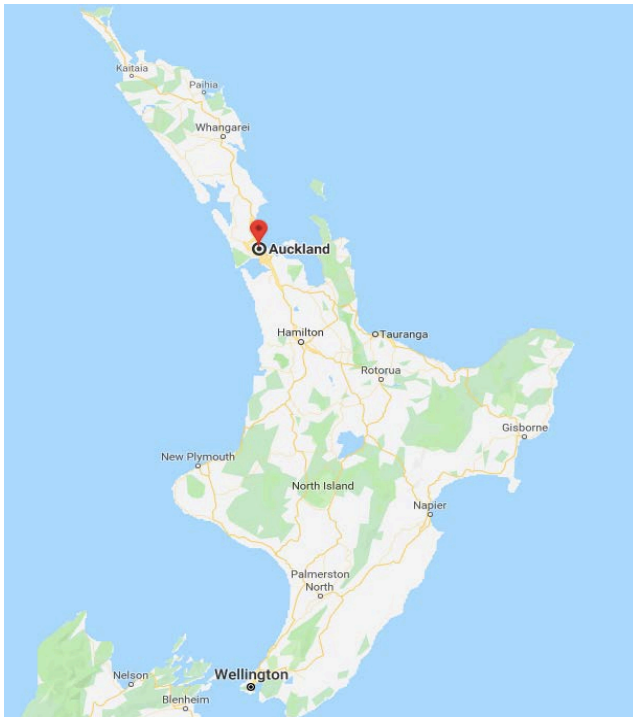


Figure 1: The first popular touring route

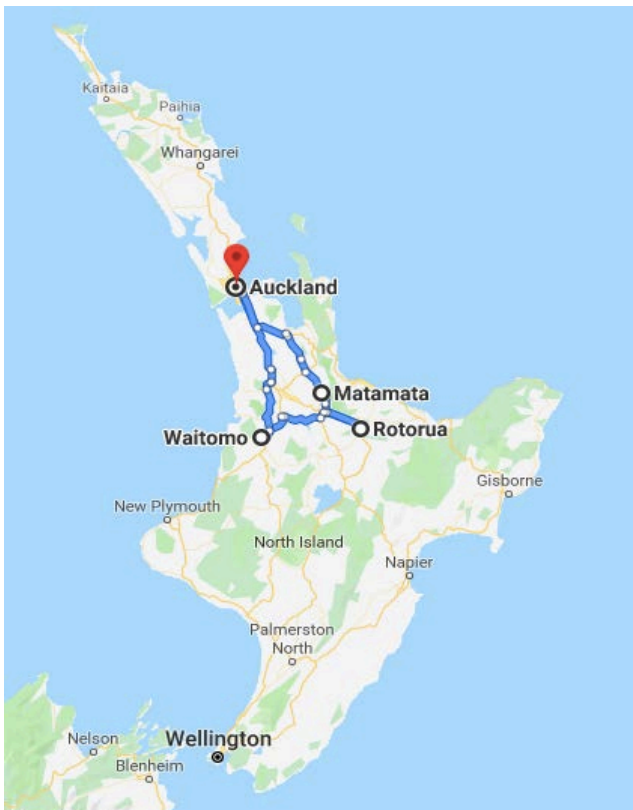


Figure 2: The second popular touring route

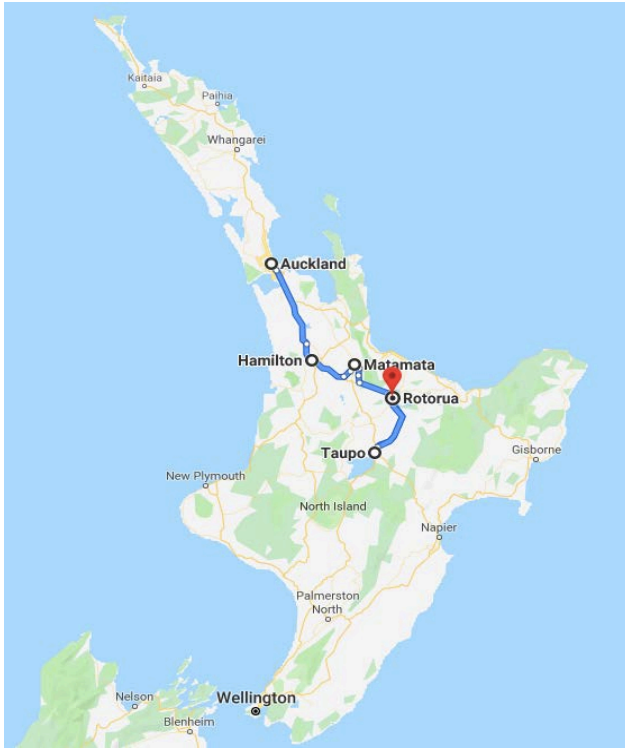


Figure 3: The third popular touring route



Figure 4: The fourth popular touring route





Figure 5: The fifth popular touring route

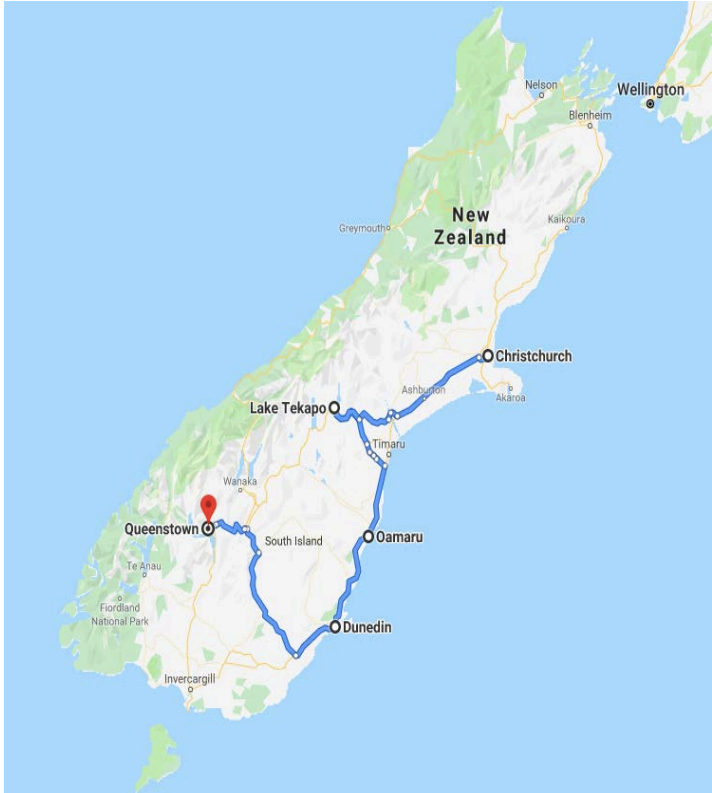


Figure 6: The sixth popular touring route



Figure 7: The seventh popular touring route

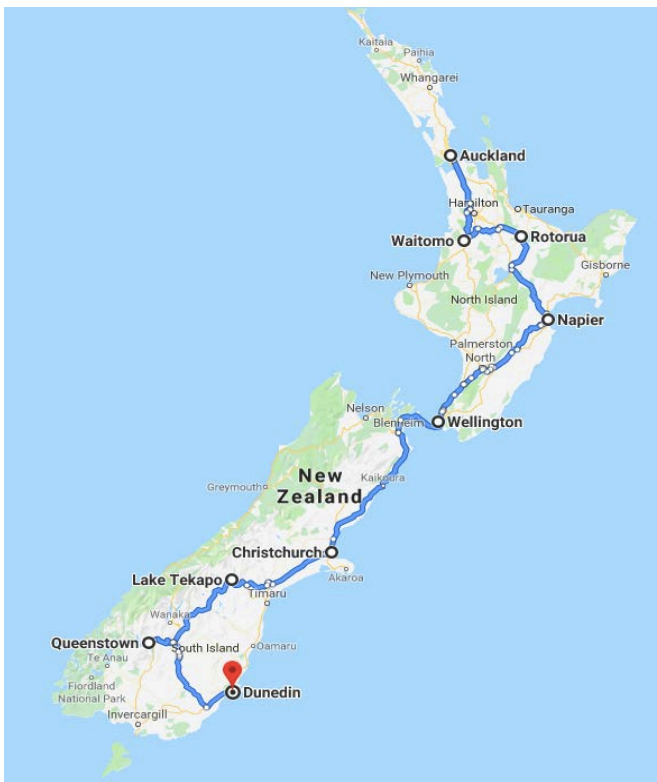


Figure 8: The eighth popular touring route

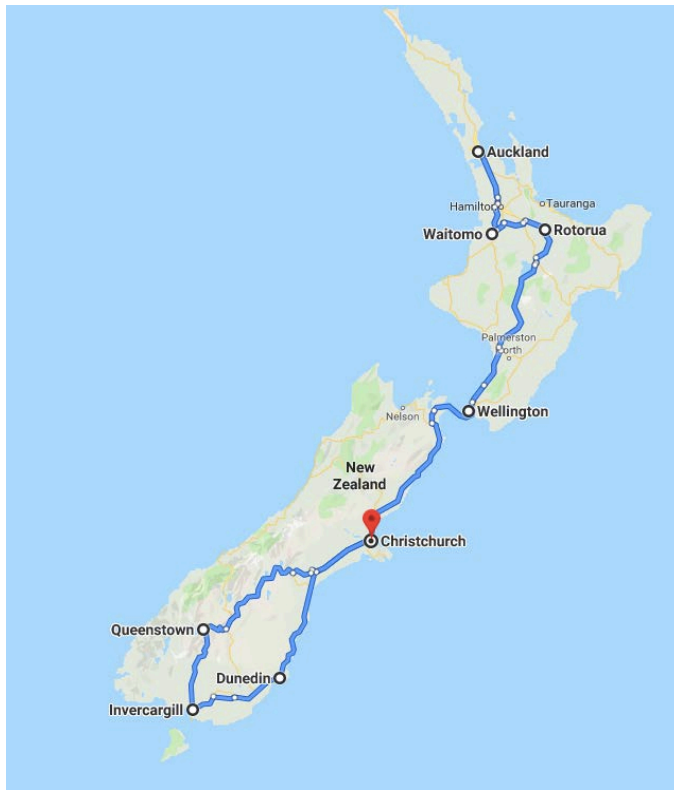


Figure 9: The ninth popular touring route

#### 4.2.4 The characteristics of the Chinese touring route

It can be seen from these routes that the impact of rental car types, the choice of the origin and destination locations, the relation between the travel days and destination, and the type of attractions visited are clear. The impact of each factor is an important element of itinerary making for Chinese tourists' road trips. These factors have been analysed in the following subsections.

Firstly, Japanese car brands are the first choice of Chinese tourists, and the car types mainly selected are economy cars or SUVs. The following example from one of the selected comments describes this phenomenon:

*Selecting a good car is very important for long-distance self-driving. There are two key things for car selection, one is the brand, the car is your fortress and a security guarantee. I recommend Toyota because the overall reliability is very high. Another thing is picking a right model. SUV is highly recommended for a long road trip, RV is a comfortable and multipurpose vehicle. A good car can greatly enhance the happiness of the journey.*

For those who travel with extended family or friends, a multipurpose vehicle such as the KIA MPV, which accommodates more people than the usual car, was a preferred choice. Meanwhile, Chinese tourists liked to hire the classic car types such as the Toyota Corolla Sedan, because they trust a car they are familiar with and consider the vehicle's comfort and safety aspects to ensure the quality of the road trip.

Secondly, the origin and destinations of Chinese self-drive tourists are concentrated on three locations: Auckland, Christchurch and Queenstown. This is because Auckland and Christchurch are destinations with direct air links between China and New Zealand, and also the origins and destinations of Chinese tourists' road trips are restricted by their rental car's pick up and return locations. Hence, Chinese tourists consider starting and finishing their trip in these two destinations after getting their rental vehicles upon arrival and plan their travel route around these two cities. In addition, the convenience of domestic air links and strong tourist attractions brings self-drive tourists' other options such as starting their trip from Queenstown. However, Auckland was the only origin point from which Chinese tourists chose to start their road trips in the North Island.

Another outcome is that Chinese tourists' road trips focused on several cities, and the attraction types are clear. As shown in the trip route table 6, the North Island travel route is particularly monotonous, only one circle trip route that is often selected by tourists from Auckland to Rotorua and return to Auckland. Most tourists continue their trip to the South Island after coming back Auckland. Visiting the Hobbiton movie set, discovering the Waitomo Caves and exploring geothermal activities and Māori culture in Rotorua are the main attractions in their touring routes. Another example of a trip route in the North island is exploring Auckland city and the surrounding areas. The main activities are shopping and enjoying the local life, such as going sightseeing on the West Coast beaches and visiting the Auckland War Memorial Museum in the Domain.

In the South Island, the tourist route is characterised by natural scenery. The attractions include lakes, mountains, glaciers and some historic towns. To be more specific, the central and eastern roads are the popular routes picked by Chinese tourists (Figure 5 and Figure 6). Some of the tourists combined these two trip routes as a circle route, making the start and finish points at the same place (Figure 4 and Figure 7). For example, the trip might start from Christchurch, going via Oamaru to see the penguin colony, and driving down to Dunedin which is famous for its cultural heritage and typical local architecture.

Then, after heading northwest to Queenstown, visiting attractions nearby and stopping in Queenstown, the trip continues north, via Lake Tekapo and Aoraki/Mt Cook, finally returning back to Christchurch.

Lastly, the itinerary decision making was also closely related to the length of travel. In this study, there is a clear tendency found in the selected sample: Chinese tourists spend more time on their road trip in the South Island than the North Island. Some of them only pick Auckland as their transit city, not a travel destination. They plan to fly direct to the South Island to start their journey as soon as they arrive in New Zealand. One of the tourists in ZUZUCHE.com who posted comments with his trip route said:

*We hired a car in North Island from Auckland to Rotorua for three days, then we went to South Island for a week from Christchurch to Queenstown, I feel that the North Island has more traffic and too much uphill and downhill than the South Island. Besides, I would say it is totally “100% pure” feeling in South Island and the natural scenery there is so incredible! I could not wait to travel in the South Island again on my next time.*

It was found that Chinese self-drive tourists’ average length of stay in the South Island is longer than in the North Island, and the travel attractions on the South Island trip routes are more varied than in the North Island. Experiencing different natural landscapes is the main focus of their road trip in the South Island. Furthermore, only a few tourists drove across the entire North Island, from Auckland to Wellington, took the ferry to the South Island with their rental car, started their exploration from the northernmost city of the South Island and drove to Queenstown or even further south. The relation between travel time and destinations shown in these popular trip routes is that Chinese tourists were more likely to choose the South Island as their travel destination, because of the perceived superior natural scenery in the South Island which could be more representative of Chinese self-driving travel motivation in New Zealand.

### **4.3 Themes influencing Chinese self-drive tourist’s road trip**

The analysis resulted in 23 basic themes or topic areas, seven organising themes and two global themes, and all these results are presented in Figure 10. The subsections which

follow describe each organising theme in detail, in order to justify the global themes related to the research questions.

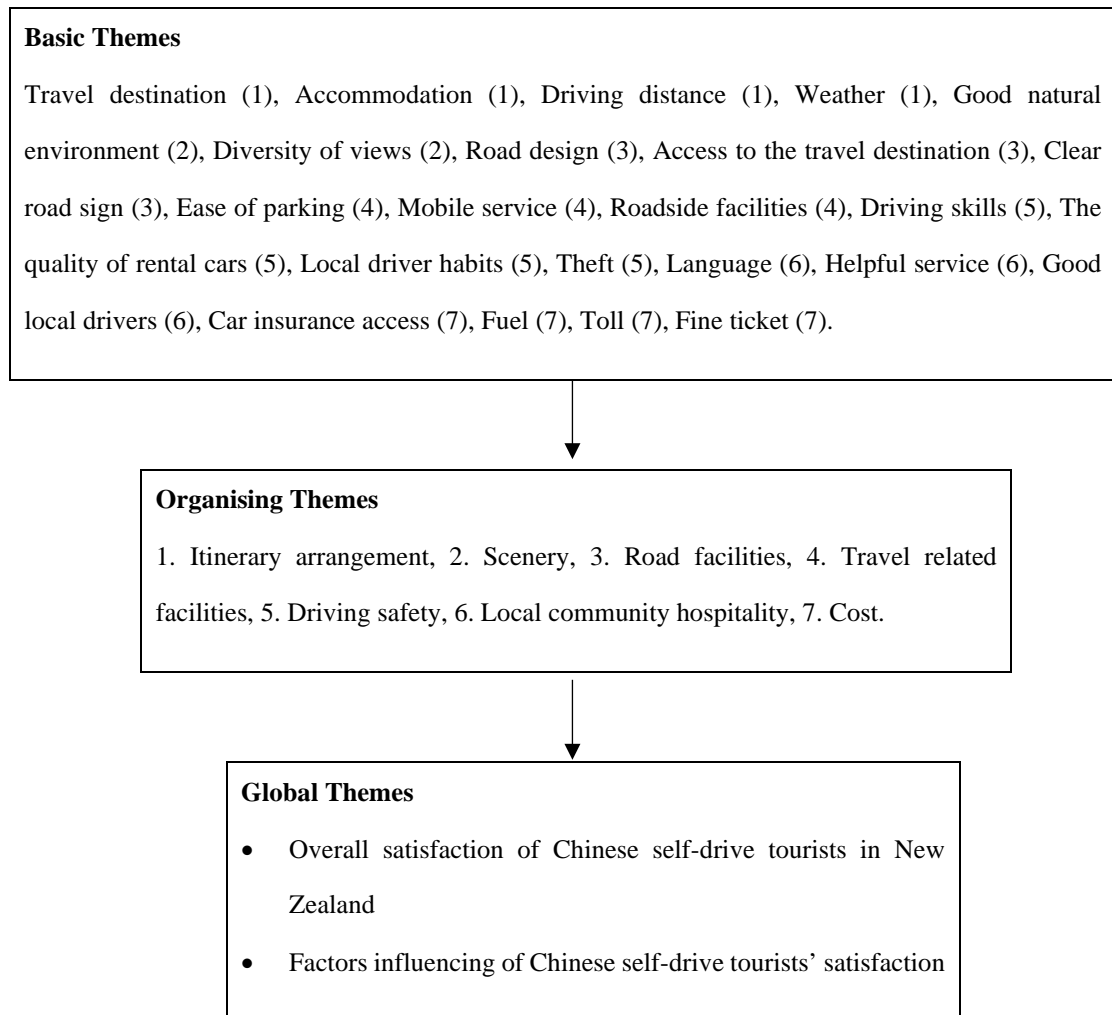


Figure 10: Themes identified in thematic networks

*Note:* Numbers next to the basic themes indicate which organising theme they belong to.

### 4.3.1 Itinerary arrangement

The reviews mentioned several issues caused by adjusting tourists' travel itinerary during the route trip. The basic themes under this topic were which destination to go to, accommodation, drive distance, and weather. Driving in an unfamiliar country, self-drive tourists arrange their attractions and places to stay in advance. However, the unpredictable factors such as flight delays, bad weather conditions, road construction, even terrorist attacks, could upset their itinerary and also result in extra costs, such as accommodation and attraction tickets, due to the itinerary adjustment. Moreover, the best length of time

to drive, according to the reviews, averages three to five hours per day. The following typical comment gives the reason for the suggestion:

*New Zealand's scenic spots are scattered, and many are uphill and downhill. If driving too long per day, you will be very tired and miss out lots of beautiful roadside sceneries, because you have to always focus on driving, or could not reach the next accommodation place at night. On the other hand, a mountain road is so difficult to drive, 4 hours maximum per day is a perfectly safety number of driving hours.*

Furthermore, experienced tourists also suggested that first-time drivers should arrange their itinerary in a place where there are few people for the first one or two days, and put city sightseeing at the end of the trip. For example, one tourist commented:

*When I first came to New Zealand, I chose the short-distance travel route in the first two days, because I am a bit confused about the local traffic rules and unfamiliar with driving on the left-hand side. The distance from Auckland to Hamilton, then from Hamilton to Rotorua is perfect for the drivers who drive for the first time here. Every driving distance is within 2 hours. After practicing driving in the North island, I feel more confidence and safety driving in the South Island.*

Chinese tourists are more sensitive to road conditions than driving distance in their itinerary arrangement. One of the examples is repeat tourists who advise new tourists to choose State Highway 6 from Queenstown to Wanaka, instead of the short distance drive over the Crown Range road to reach Wanaka. They suggested:

*Do not take Crown Range road to Wanaka, although the roadside scenery is magnificent, but the road condition is too bad for the new drivers here, there are a lot of sharp turns on this mountain road.*

### **4.3.2 Scenery**

Scenery is the key factor influencing the touring route's success (Denstadli & Jacobsen, 2011). The compliments about high quality scenery were highlighted by the majority of Chinese tourists after their road trip in New Zealand. This topic includes two basic themes:

The good natural environment and the diversity of views. The beautiful environment regarded as 100% pure nature is in every part of New Zealand. Because of the bad air conditions and crowded population currently in China, Chinese tourists are more likely to enjoy the natural environment with blue sky, white clouds, green trees and grass during their trip. Hence, nearly two-thirds of the comments mentioned the topic of the beautiful natural environments, and all the reviews related to the natural environment are positive.

Furthermore, Chinese tourists also enjoy the diverse views during their trip, For example, changes in ocean, coastal and mountain views, or a mix of open land and villages and towns. Motor tourists enjoy the lookouts on the roadside, so that they can park their car off the road and enjoy the combination of natural attractions and exotic views during the trip. The comments also mentioned that the diversity of landscapes in New Zealand was pleasing on their long-distance drive. One of the typical reviews from a self-drive tourist observed that:

*New Zealand have lots of distinctive sights to see during the road drive. In the South Island, you can see the snowy mountain, grasslands, beautiful lakes combination with the blue skies and white clouds just within 4 hours' drive, and the diversity of landscapes changes made me forget the exhaustion of driving. I would say self-driving is a best option for traveling here.*

### **4.3.3 Road facilities**

Road facilities are importance to all types of road users, especially to the leisure travellers who are more exposed to facility strengths and weaknesses (Denstadli & Jacobsen, 2011). The design of the road, sign facilities and easy accessibility are three basic themes mentioned frequently in the review data. Poor road conditions have brought many problems to new tourists during their road trips in New Zealand. For instance, tourists have had to modify their trip route to reach their next destination before night because they realised there are no street lamps on the mountain roads in the majority of New Zealand regions. It is a challenge for them to drive on unfamiliar and dark roads with lots of sharp turns at night. In the South Island, there is normally only one route to reach the next attraction, which clearly increases the risk of tourists' being unable to complete their route plan. Here is an example comment related to this situation:



*New Zealand travel route don't have many alternative roads to choose like China, especially in the South Island, lots of roads only have one way leading to your next destination. We so regret that we lost the chance to Fox Glacier due to the road being broken down at that time, and our schedules are disrupted because of this bad experience.*

However, the road signs facilities received positive comments in selected comments, as they are easy to understand and helpful. For example:

*New Zealand warning signs are clear and easily understanding, especially when driving in the mountain highway, you can always see a sign ahead to advise the best turning speed to help us find out how sharp it is.*

#### **4.3.4 Travel-related facilities**

Self-drive tourists need high quality of facilities along the route when compared to everyday road users, particularly for first-time visitors with a long-distance drive planned (Denstadli & Jacobsen, 2011). Chinese tourists, in this study, emphasised their needs in terms of the ease of parking, mobile services and roadside facilities. Generally speaking, Chinese tourists were dissatisfied with the convenience of the public infrastructure such as the difficulty to find a car park downtown, bad mobile service coverage and poor WIFI signals. However, tourists were very pleased that they have a good experience with the roadside facilities such as the access to petrol stations, the quality of lookout facilities and rest areas. Some of the typical comments were:

*It is very difficult to find a parking space that you can park over 2 hours in Queenstown downtown.*

*New Zealand's communication network is very poor. Basically, there is no signal if you drive out of the town. It is necessary to download the navigation in advance, otherwise it will waste lots of time to get a GPS signal.*

*You do not need to worry about missing out on the scenery along the road (in any scenic route in New Zealand), because New Zealand*

*always offer a secure parking area near the lookouts where you can stop to take photos or walk for a while.*

#### **4.3.5 Driving safety**

Self-drive tourists were especially concerned about driving safety issues. A perfect road trip needs safe driving conditions and good car quality. Basic themes in this topic including driving skills, the quality of rental cars and local driver habits. Being proficient in local traffic rules was a challenge for Chinese self-drive tourists starting driving in New Zealand, especially driving on the opposite side to what they are used to. The high driving speed of local drivers was also a big issue for Chinese tourists whose first time it is driving in an unfamiliar country. A few reviews also mentioned thieves breaking rental vehicle's window and stealing visitors' belongings had occurred during their road trip. Furthermore, hiring a suitable car and the rental car's quality were other factors that influenced the tourists' road trip quality and safety, because any car damage or accident will spoil the whole trip plan.

*I needed one or two days to adapt to drive on the left- hand side, I have turned to the opposite lane twice, it is really scary. Besides, because the locals' driving speed is relatively faster than Chinese, I was reminded by locals two times due to driving too slowly. I suggest Chinese drivers could arrange the route to the countryside on the first two days and then you could be more confident and safer to start the long-distance trip.*

*Our rental car was broken down on our way from Lake Tekapo to Queenstown, it took nearly a day for us to contact the rental car company and exchange the car, which reduced our time stay in Queenstown. We are very upset because of that.*

#### **4.3.6 Local community hospitality**

Hospitality has the power to shape consumer satisfaction and delight. This organising theme is collected into three basic themes: Language, helpful call centre and good local drivers. About two-thirds of the selected content commented on the community groups that they observed and interacted with during their self-drive tour. The majority of them

appreciated the service and assist are they received. Easy communication in Mandarin, helpful and effective I-site receptionists, hospitable and good local drivers are the frequent themes in these comments. General impressions are recorded:

*I am glad that I met a Chinese receptionist in the rental car company. He gave us a lot of information, including traffic rules, car conditions, and how to fuel the car, which made me less afraid when I started driving.*

*I am impressed with the local drivers in New Zealand and I feel very relax to drive here. They are polite and gentle. All of them obey the local traffic rules very well, no pressing the horns, always stop the car and give way to pedestrians.*

#### **4.3.7 Cost**

The information found in this topic is related to the extra costs incurred during the trip and the prices at the destination. The basic themes included rental car damage, fuel, tolls, and ticket cost. In the context of hire car users, the financial cost for car damage was higher than expected. More than half of the complaints were related to the car repair fees charged by the car rental companies, especially for the small damage such as stone chips on the windscreen or the scratches on the car surface. Furthermore, the comments also recorded the warnings and tickets tourists received from the local police due to breaking the local traffic rules, such as parking over the time limit or speeding. These extra expenses were annoying. However, there were also several positive comments about costs during their trip in New Zealand, the biggest surprises being that there was no toll to pay after using the highways, and the petrol was cheaper than expected. These factors reduced their spending expectations. For example, one young couple commented:

*New Zealand self-driving travel is freedom and money saving. To our surprise, the total cost for this trip is a similar price to the cost of booking a group tour. I would highly recommend the self-drive trip here.*

### 4.3.8 Summary

The seven organising themes on the effects of itinerary arrangement, scenery, road facilities, travel-related facilities, safety, local community hospitality and cost have been presented in this chapter. Itinerary arrangement, driving safety and scenery are the topics most commented upon, and these three important organising themes also correspond to Chinese tourists' trip route characteristics which are summarised in this chapter as well. For example, the quality of rental cars proposed in the safety theme reflected the popular car type selected by Chinese tourists. Chinese tourists' expectations of the natural environment represented the distribution of the length of travel in the North and South Islands and the trip route selection – they would rather spend more time in the South Island with the diverse natural scenery than in the North Island with more cultural and historical attractions.

## 4.4 The overall satisfaction of Chinese self-drive tourists in New Zealand

Table 6 sets out Chinese self-drive tourists' satisfaction levels with their travel experience in New Zealand. The majority of ZUZUCHE's users are satisfied with their experience in New Zealand (97%), only a few tourists did not enjoy their trip (2%). None suffered a bad self-driving experience in New Zealand. This illustrates that although there are several factors complicating self-drivers' trip plans, Chinese tourists still enjoyed their experience in New Zealand and would recommend New Zealand self-drive travel to potential tourists.

Table 6: The overall level of satisfaction of Chinese self-drive tourists in New Zealand (No=100)

Level of Satisfaction	Very satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Unsatisfied	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
	60	60	38	38	2	2	0	0

## **4.5 Conclusion**

Generally speaking, the results of the analysis of the selected online UGC have shown that rental car types, pick-up and return location, attraction types and the relation between the travel days and travel destination selection are the four key characteristics that reflect Chinese self-drivers' route arrangements. Furthermore, there are seven organising themes that reflect Chinese self-drive tourists' trip planning which have been observed based on their comments. Tourists are very satisfied with local community hospitality and scenery, which are significant determinants for their overall satisfaction with the driving route. On the other hand, the travel-related facilities such as few car parks, bad mobile phone connection, extra cost due to car damage, speeding tickets and some unpredictable events that delayed their itinerary are the dissatisfaction factors which have negative impacts on their travel experience. However, the overall satisfaction with their travel experience in New Zealand is still positive; the complaints and dissatisfaction factors may have affected the tourists' trip plans, but did not influence their general expectation of travelling in New Zealand. In addition, the research questions can be answered and research objectives achieved based on the findings. In the following discussion chapter, the literature is employed to make comparisons with and offer support for the findings and provide a deeper explanation of the results.

## **Chapter 5 Discussion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This discussion chapter first discusses the general characteristics of Chinese self-drive tourists' trip route preference in New Zealand, and then focuses on the perceived factors that were found to be influential for Chinese self-drive tourists' satisfaction based on the findings presented in Chapter 4. Finally, how important these factors are in affecting tourists' satisfaction based on their motivation is discussed. Furthermore, the influence of online UGC is observed and discussed based on the similarities and differences of the findings to previous literature.

### **5.2 Overview of Chinese self-drive tourists' trip route selection in New Zealand**

The results in this study show Chinese self-drivers are focused on the natural landscape as the attraction, and would like to choose the same location as their origin and destination during their journey. These results represent travel route planning, design, and development relying on how visitors perceive attractions, their environments and travel related services (Hallo & Manning, 2009).

Firstly, Chinese self-drive tourists spent over two-thirds of their holiday periods in the South Island to explore a '100% pure' natural environment. Furthermore, the beautiful 'scenic routes' and uncrowded road conditions in the South Island are more attractive than self-driving in the North Island. According to Weiler and Yu (2006), the scenic beauty and natural wonders of the destinations they visit are key destination attributes for Chinese travellers' experiences. This tendency could be explained perhaps because the majority of the Chinese self-drive tourists came from densely populated and over-polluted cities, the power of the '100% pure' nature brand, and the predisposition of Chinese tourists to escape the modern city to seek rural landscapes strongly motivated them to choose this kind of trip. Sun et al. (2015) supported the view that because New Zealand's pure natural environment has a distinct advantage compared with China, Chinese self-drive tourists have more emotional preferences for visiting New Zealand's natural landscape during their trip planning.

Secondly, travel destination image preferences reflect the limitations of visitors' understanding of local culture. For example, Chinese tourists would like to shorten the

typical trip route from Auckland to Rotorua to only two or three days and squeeze in more time to travel the South Island and explore the natural landscape there instead. In Rotorua, based on reviewers' comments, few activities associated with Māori culture appeared in the list of travel attributes for Chinese tourists. On the one hand, Māori cultural performances are mainly night-time cultural activities that may be not very convenient for Chinese self-drive tourists who shorten their road trip in the North island to a few days' visit only. On the other hand, self-drive tourists from China tend towards the younger age group compared with the group tour tourists, they lack interest in cultural exploration as opposed to land-based sightseeing. According to results from Fountain et al. (2010), what Chinese tourists are offered may lack a connection between the 'nature' they are experiencing and the 'culture' they expect. Therefore, culture-scape activities interacting with these natural resources areas may add greater appeal for the Chinese self-driving market.

In terms of the environment and travel-related services, this study found that Chinese self-drive tourists would like to pick typical tourist routes rather than a more adventurous trip, such as a South Island circle tour or the mid-line trip route from Christchurch to Queenstown. These scenic byways have been established and developed well, and have good tourism-related facilities and services. According to Denstadli and Jacobsen (2011), tourism route planning needs to not only consider the road itself and its vicinities (landscapes and other attractions), but also travel-related facilities including rest areas, toilets, access to and parking at lookouts, as well as adjacent hospitality industry services such as eating-places and overnight accommodation. P. Murphy, Pritchard and Smith (2000) also noted that a travel destination is regarded as a mix of attractions and services that make up the total tourism experience. In this study, self-drive tourists chose Auckland and Christchurch as their main origin and destination locations because these two biggest cities in the North and South Island provide more convenience before or after travelling, such as vehicle pick-up/return, accommodation and restaurants. Furthermore, Chinese tourists chose Queenstown as an important stopover city because this famous town provides a range of travel-related services, such as accommodation, restaurants, and activities. Most importantly, tourists can take a day trip from Queenstown to surrounding attractions and drive back at night. Hence, the classic tourist route has better travel environment and service facilities to ensure the smooth progress of their travel plans.

### **5.3 Identifying the factors which influence Chinese self-drive tourists' experience in New Zealand**

In regard to itinerary planning, the results illustrated that a tourists' itinerary can increase their satisfaction. Itinerary making is the 'core decision' to be made before starting self-drive travel. Accommodation, activities, attractions, car rental information, flights, etc., are key factors of the tourists' itinerary plan, and each element is linked to their travel experience (Jun, Vogt & Mackay, 2007). The itinerary theme in this study shows that any challenge that happened during their trip might affect the tourists' itinerary and finally cause a lower quality experience. Examples include the lost opportunity to visit the next attraction due to weather conditions, or time lost in picking up the rental car booked in advance which meant tourists could not reach their hotel. Tourists are under great temporal constraints while travelling so they must adhere to a tight schedule and find it hard to deviate from such a schedule that is established prior to visiting and when they are on-site (Wall & Mathieson, 2006). That is to say, a self-drive tourists' trip is more easily disrupted by uncontrollable factors and may eventually reduce their sense of a high-quality experience.

The second theme is the importance of the reaction to the natural scenery of the Chinese self-drive tourists. It is apparent from the reviews that Chinese tourists were very satisfied with the natural landscape and the diversity of views during their road trips in New Zealand. Research by Sun, Ryan and Pan (2015) found that Chinese self-drive bloggers believe that self-drive tourists have greater access to the various natural resources than other types of travelling. The results in this study indicated that the colour of green hills, the blue of the ocean and skies, the symbolic orientation of landforms in relation to the sun and the road route have a positive influence on Chinese self-drive tourists in New Zealand. In other words, a beautiful natural environment motivates tourists to select New Zealand as a destination, and self-driving is the best way to meet this expectation. Wu et al. (2018) have a similar opinion, as they noted that clear air and a pure natural environment at the destination can serve as a strong pull factor and enhance tourists' experience.

Issues with road conditions and drive-related facilities also emerged from the results. According to Qiu, Hsu, Li and Shu (2018), the good condition of the road will shorten tourists' driving time and increase the quality of the driving experience. After the



experience of self-driving in New Zealand, Chinese tourists were very satisfied with the smoothness of traffic flow during the trip. However, driving a long distance, mountainous roads, lack of lighting as well as the bad internet connection caused trouble during their road trips. Scholars have mentioned these road condition factors as influencing the mood and experience of self-drive tourists in their research (Becken & Wilson, 2007; Hallo & Manning, 2009). Furthermore, based on the results from Denstadli and Jacobsen (2011), roadside facilities play a crucial role in achieving overall satisfaction among motor tourists, especially on the longer routes with many first-timers and visitors on longer stays. Therefore, road conditions and drive-related facilities and services are important influences on self-drive tourists' satisfaction with their travel experience. Because the self-drive tourists spend the majority of the time driving, road condition and related facilities will influence their perceived experience and trip quality. Thus, road condition and drive-related facilities need to be improved by tourism destinations and public service sectors in the future to encourage self-drive tourist trips in New Zealand.

The Chinese self-drive tourists identified a positive relationship with the local community based on the results. Chinese self-drivers believe that the locals are good drivers and people are helpful and honest. This study adds evidence to the sentiment that wide-ranging and positive host-guest social interaction enhances tourists' experience (Xi, Sheng, & Dong, 2011; Yu & Lee, 2014). Pizam, Uriely and Reichel (2000) argued that closer relationships between international tourists and local residents make the tourists feel more favourably toward local residents and thus leads to more positive attitudes towards them and the destination. In the present study, the way the local community and fellow drivers responded to overseas driving tourists was a positive highlight for many tourists and this is a new aspect which has not appeared in previous work. The results in this study show that Chinese tourists feel safe driving in an unfamiliar country with good driving conditions and communication environment. Chinese self-drive tourists feel confident about their road trip when they trust the local communities and drivers.

In addition, another important theme identified in this study is driving safety issues. Although Chinese self-drive tourists enjoyed their road trips and self-drive trip patterns, safety concerns related to unfamiliar roads, unfamiliar driving rules and personal driving factors were mentioned extensively in the reviews and influenced their travel experiences. Firstly, narrow roads, too many roundabouts, sharp turns, and uphill/downhill routes on

the mountainous roads caused a lot of pressure for Chinese self-drivers. Furthermore, coming from a country where driving is on the right-hand side of the road, Chinese tourists found the New Zealand driving rules to be very different and they needed to be mindful and cautious (Wu, 2015). According to Wilks and Pendergast (2011), International tourists' accidents are mainly caused by changing their drive habits to drive on the left-hand side. Thus, learning and obeying local traffic rules has been highlighted by most online posters. In terms of the personal factors, tourists travel experiences could also be affected by receiving fines frequently due to speeding or incorrect parking. Bad hiring experiences with the rental car also caused trouble, such as car breaking down during their trip or life-threatening accidents. Therefore, speed and a lack of familiarity with rental vehicles were also reported as frequent causes of international tourist accidents (Wu, 2015). Moreover, although the theft of self-drive tourists' luggage by thieves breaking into the rental car directly caused tourist to lose their property, this kind of incident also brought to attention a hidden danger to the personal safety of self-driving tourists in New Zealand, which eventually affected their journey. However, these personal safety factors related to road trip satisfaction have rarely been discussed in the previous literature. The findings from this study indicated that tourists consider high-quality, reasonably sized cars, familiarity with the local traffic rules, and driving in a country with a safe condition can improve the pleasure of their journey and reduce safety hazards. In addition, in order to maximise the safety of their road trips, Chinese self-drive tourists also highly recommend full cover insurance to avoid distress during their holidays overseas.

One further noteworthy theme – cost – was found to be influential in contributing to Chinese tourists' satisfaction. Financial costs are unavoidable for self-drive tourists, which reflects the attributes of self-drive tours and may have an impact on tourists' experiences (Mmopelwa, Kgathi & Kgathi, 2007). Schiff and Becken (2011) found that Asian market segments appear more price sensitive than other origins, especially the Japanese free and independent tourists (FIT) and Chinese FIT. Furthermore, Lin, Liu and Song (2015) also indicated that the cost of a stay at a destination is an important factor that affects Chinese residents' travelling abroad. The result from this theme in the present study mentioned several elements related to the travel financial cost, such as paying tolls, petrol charges. However, these aspects represented positive attributes according to the advice given by online posters. According to the results from Schiff and Becken (2010),

tourists are not sensitive to petrol prices because petrol costs belong to the road trip. Transport costs on road trip are part of Chinese self-drive tourists' planned travel costs, and the small fluctuations in this aspect of cost had little impact on self-driving travellers' satisfaction. On the contrary, the big unplanned costs, especially the unpredictable spending such as the excess paid for rental car damage, or fines, are factors that did influence Chinese self-drive tourists' satisfaction during the trip. However, this factor has not been mentioned in previous research. A deeper exploration of the impact of different charging factors on Chinese self-drive tourists' experience is needed in future research.

#### **5.4 Travel motivation, tourist satisfaction and the influence of the user-generated reviews**

The selection of rental car types and popular trip routes represent the influence of the online UGC for tourists' planning and decision making. The Toyota RAV4 is the most popular car type and received a lot of positive online UGC comments to guide new customers in selecting vehicles for their road trip. The classic trip routes that were most recommended by posters also influenced new tourists' planning. Thus, UGC sites are mainly used when a destination has already been chosen and the traveller is searching for accommodation options or when deciding where to go, both of which relate to the information search stage of travel planning (Cox, Burgess, Sellitto & Buultjens, 2009). Moreover, the characteristics of Chinese self-drive tourists' route selection show that they would like to spend more time in the natural landscape of the South Island, and also reflect the high levels of satisfaction with New Zealand's natural scenery. Tourists' positive experiences of nature in the South Island brings good online UGC for making recommendations to others and eventually guiding potential tourists to make the best decision in a complex travel plan. Jeng and Fesenmaier (2002) pointed out that travelers would like to minimise the risk of making a poor decision making or trip plan through collecting and reviewing various of travel information early in the travel decision-making process. Potential self-drive tourists would like to find the best travel route to maximise their travel satisfaction during the trip, and achieve what they are looking forward to in their trip through the reviews and suggestions from experienced travellers. The results in this study show that the popular touring routes with diverse natural landscape attractions have positive effects on potential tourists through online UGC.

In addition, tourists have their own internal and external reasons for travelling (Uysal, McGehee, & Loker-Murphy, 1996). However, either motivation force, or both, could have positive or negative relationships with travel satisfaction (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). In this research, overall, the UGC comments related to New Zealand self-drive tourism in ZUZHICHE.com were positive (see Table 6) and this result represents the greater influence of the internal motivation over external factors on tourists' overall satisfaction levels with travel in New Zealand. Specifically, according to the analysis of the seven organisation themes, natural scenery was one of the themes presenting Chinese self-drive tourists' main internal motivation – to get away from the big city and enjoy '100% pure' New Zealand – and this influences Chinese self-drive tourists' overall satisfaction in New Zealand. Although the external motivation factors related to perceived experiential themes such as driving safety, cost, road condition and travel-related facilities covered several negative experiences, the positive natural scenery experience decided tourists' overall satisfaction with tourists' experience in New Zealand. Additionally, enjoying the natural scenery along the way motivates Chinese tourists' emotional feelings, and 'pushes' them to select New Zealand as their travel destination. Uncrowded, pollution-free and the views of clear skies represent significant differences from Chinese tourists' daily lives and act as a psychological force in their travel motivation in New Zealand.

## **5.5 Summary**

The discussion chapter firstly explained the characteristics of Chinese self-drive tourists' route selection. Next, the chapter focused on discussing seven themes which influence tourists' satisfaction with their experiences. There were several previous studies which explored related themes and obtained similar responses. Specifically, Chinese self-drive tourists are very satisfied with the natural environment and local hospitality services, but other themes related to road and travel-related facilities, driving safety, cost and itinerary arrangements still have a negative influence on tourists' experiences during their road trip in New Zealand. However, Chinese self-drive tourists' overall satisfaction level is not obviously affected by these dissatisfaction factors, because they enjoy the nature landscapes during self-driving in New Zealand and present a higher tolerance to these negative empirical factors. Finally, the results in this study supported Yoon and Uysal's (2005) research, which found that 'push' factors more significantly affect tourists' satisfaction with travel experiences than 'pull' factors in terms of recommending a travel destination to others. With the development of eWOM, satisfied tourists show their

loyalty by posting positive online comments to recommend a destination and suggest the potential tourist to make better decisions.

## **Chapter 6 Conclusion**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter revisits the research findings and the relationship between the findings and the objectives. And then discusses the implications of the results. Furthermore, the limitations of this study and future research directions for the research are considered in the final sections.

### **6.2 Aims and objectives revisited**

Li et al. (2013) emphasised that UGC, from a research perspective in the hospitality and tourism industry, is a potentially rich source of customer information. Thus, this study collected online UGC as the data in an exploration of Chinese self-drive tourists' opinions about their travelling experience in New Zealand and the factors influencing their satisfaction.

The literature review highlighted the importance of the trip plan in achieving tourists' travel expectations and the relationship between tourists internal/external motivation and their satisfaction. However, there is scarcely any published research using online UGC to explore Chinese self-drive tourists' trip route preferences and the factors influencing their satisfaction with their travel experiences in a different cultural setting.

To find out about Chinese self-drive tourists' satisfaction and the factors influencing their satisfaction, this study collated 200 online comments from ZUZUCHE.com after tourists had posted about their experiences and shared their trip routes after self-driving travel in New Zealand. Several key concepts emerged as follows:

1. There are nine popular trip routes for Chinese self-drive tourists, and their route plans focus more on tourist attractions in the South Island rather than the North Island.
2. There are four main characteristics related to their trip routes: rental car types, self-driving origin and destination locations, travel days and tourist attraction plans.
3. Scenery and local community hospitality are two themes that have garnered positive UGC comments from Chinese self-drive tourists in New Zealand.

4. Affected itinerary, road and travel related facilities, driving safety and cost are the themes that affect self-drive tourists' satisfaction and have generated several negative comments.

5. Chinese self-drive tourists' overall satisfaction is positive and is more influenced by the 'internal' motivation factors rather than 'external' motivation factors.

These insights filled a research gap regarding knowledge about Chinese self-drive tourists' trip route preferences and the factors which influence their satisfaction

The findings address the three objectives of this research, as follows.

1. To summarise Chinese self-drive tourists' preferred trip routes and discover the characteristics of their route selection.

Chinese self-drive tourists would like to spend more time exploring the natural landscape, so their trip route is designed according to the distribution of scenery, especially in the South Island. Moreover, Chinese self-drive tourists would like to take in the local culture-scape activities while interacting with natural resources during their road trip in the North Island. In addition, Chinese self-drive tourists are concerned about self-driving conditions. Safety, convenient travel related facilities and easy access to the destination are important in their travel route arrangements.

2. To discover what factors influence Chinese self-drive tourists' satisfaction with their road trip.

There are seven organising themes which represent the main factors influencing self-drive tourists' satisfaction. The finding illustrated that natural landscape is the most important and positive factor for achieving Chinese self-drive tourists' expectations. Positive local drivers and overseas self-drive tourists' social interactions enhance Chinese self-drive tourists' confidence and reduce their safety concerns about driving in an unfamiliar country with an unfamiliar vehicle. On the other hand, the poor public facilities, such as the weak mobile phone connection service, bad road conditions, safety concerns, and extra costs due to the unfamiliar traffic rules, rental car damage or other unpredictable issues such as theft, may disrupt Chinese self-drive tourists' trip plans. However, the impact of these negative factors on overall satisfaction of self-driving experience in New Zealand is minor.

3. To gain a better understanding of the importance of these factors in influencing Chinese self-drive tourists' overall satisfaction in New Zealand.

On reflection, it emerged that Chinese self-drive tourists' trip route selection has one key characteristic – enjoying visiting the natural landscape. Also, online UGC give potential tourists a good guide to arranging their travel to these attractions in a reasonable sequence and maximising their expectations for the exploration of nature. On the other hand, the results show that internal motivation affects tourists' general satisfaction; meanwhile, the positive 'push' factors also promote experienced tourists to recommend nature-based travel destinations to others. In this study, scenery is the key internal motivation factor that attracts tourists to visit New Zealand and, based on the online UGC, the large number of positive reviews related to scenery suggest this was the main deciding factor in the overall satisfaction of self-driving tourists in New Zealand.

### **6.3 Practical implications**

According to Yoon and Uysal (2005), push and pull factors contribute to tourists' satisfaction with their travel experiences. Thus, destination managers should consider the pull motivations, which are related to external sources. Most importantly, because the natural scenery during the trip is a significant determinant for Chinese self-drive tourists' overall satisfaction, destination managers should also focus more on tourists' emotional feelings about the landscape as an attraction to increase revisiting and recommending New Zealand to others.

In terms of the external sources, the road and travel-related facilities still need to improve to reach self-drive tourists' requirements. Local management organisations should provide sufficient parking spaces at tourist attractions for convenient access. Also, improved lighting systems are needed to enhance rural destinations' accessibility for overseas self-drive tourists. Additionally, the coverage of mobile phone signals should be enhanced in rural areas to meet tourists' demand for connectivity. In terms of transportation, Connell, Page and Bentley (2009) noted that transportation in New Zealand is an essential part of the tourist experience. Based on this research, Chinese self-drive tourists are very sensitive to charges for rental car damage compared with other expenditure. Thus, it is advisable for rental car companies to increase Chinese tourists' acceptance of damage costs before picking up vehicles, or improve their awareness of the



possibility of buying full cover insurance to avoid the high level of compensation required after damage has occurred. Driving security is another issue that affects Chinese drive tourists' experiences. It is recommended that car rental companies conduct a driving rule test for overseas tourists before hiring the vehicle, in order to improve tourists' awareness of the local traffic rules, or relevant government departments could issue a compulsory regulation regarding improved conditions for overseas tourists to have permission to hire a vehicle in New Zealand. Furthermore, local government need to work hard to create a safe self-drive environment for overseas tourists, and reduce rates of crimes such as robbery that threaten the property and personal safety of overseas travellers during their road trips in New Zealand. For Chinese self-drive tourists themselves, this study also suggests that they should avoid long-distance driving in the first few days, and take several days to become familiar with the left-hand driving conditions and local traffic rules, to ensure safe travelling.

Corresponding to trip route and internal motivation research, results show that Chinese self-drive tourists' overall satisfaction with their chosen route is significantly linked to sightseeing activities along the route, especially the diversity of the attractions on their trip plan. The rich and diverse natural scenery meets Chinese self-drive tourists' internal motivation and is also the main criterion for the satisfaction evaluation of their road trips in New Zealand. Thus, tourism-related organisations should pay special attention to tourists who are motivated to travel to New Zealand for nature sightseeing. Based on the results of this study, Chinese tourists desire to drive in safety and have easy trips, enjoying the natural-based landscapes in terms of their interactions with water, mountains, grass and trees, weather, and air conditions. Therefore, in the further trip route designs, tourism managers need to consider the natural scenery's characteristics and its diversity to satisfy Chinese self-drive tourists' internal travel motivations and improve their overall satisfaction. In return, the higher overall satisfaction with their experience will link to Chinese tourists' emotional feelings and motivate them to recommend the destination to others through online UGC after they have returned home.

## **6.4 Limitations**

Some limitations in this study should be noted. Firstly, the tourist reviews selected from ZUZUCHE.com might not represent the entire spectrum of Chinese self-drive tourists' satisfaction. Firstly, 200 selected samples for this research is adequate, but these samples

are relatively small to represent the complexity of Chinese self-drive tourists outbound market in New Zealand. Furthermore, ZUZUCHE.com, as a Chinese online tourism product booking and review site, might mainly attract the younger generations who are confident and familiar with booking through this online car rental channel. In addition, there are other international online car rental platforms, such as RENTALCARS.com which also account for a large market share in China. Hence, the results collected in this study might not represent all Chinese self-drive tourists' experience and satisfaction in New Zealand.

Secondly, online reviews and comments are highly transient, ZUZUCHE.com only update the latest 100 reviews in the general main page to the public users. The data that were used in this study may not be available for the next study, and data also could be influenced by other factors such as gender, age, travel season, etc. Therefore, a future researcher may have different data within the same online channel for examining the same research topic.

Finally, the limitation of the qualitative thematic analysis in this study is the simplicity of the collated reviews, as the online comments require the tourists to use simple sentences to describe their experiences and their opinions about their trip experience. Thus, extensive characteristics of satisfaction elements and the factors of route selection could not be fully collated, and it would be preferable to include additional items in order to obtain a more complete picture of self-drive tourists' satisfaction factors and route selection characteristics.

## **6.5 Further research directions**

This study has explored Chinese self-drive tourists' popular trip routes in New Zealand, and has also identified what factors influence their satisfaction by using reviewers' comments from an online resource. In future research, because of the lack of research on touring routes, the popular trip routes collected in this qualitative study may form the basis for subsequent quantitative research. Future research could use questionnaires or collecting large datasets through blogs or other channels to get a detailed understanding of tourists' perceptions of their experiences with touring routes. Furthermore, this study did not obtain results related to how negative perceived experience factors influence self-drive tourists' satisfaction with their travel experience. Thus, in further research, using

different methodologies and focusing on different data sources may be able to obtain different results related to the influence of negative perceived experience factors on Chinese self-drive tourists' satisfaction.

In terms of the second topic of this study, concerning the relationship between tourists' satisfaction and motivation, additional understanding might be gained by comparing the comments of domestic and international self-drive tourists and linking motivations and tourists' satisfaction for tourists with different cultural backgrounds. However, personal travel motivation cannot be easily collected via a secondary data analysis. Hence, further research could adopt primary data collection methods to compare factors affecting self-driving tourists' satisfaction for tourists with different motivation backgrounds.

## **6.6 Concluding remarks**

This study focused on examining the determinants of overall satisfaction and the popular trip routes of Chinese self-drive tourists in New Zealand. The study firstly introduced the research's background and objectives, the second chapter showed a literature review. The third chapter provided the methodology of qualitative research based on second-hand data collection through online UGC research and a thematic approach to analysing the data. The results show nine popular trip routes all based on nature-oriented tourism destinations, and positive overall tourist satisfaction with travel experiences and several perceived experiential quality factors influencing their travel experiences during the road trip. The findings of this study contribute to gain a better understanding of natural scenery as the determinant that has the most impact on Chinese self-drive visitors' satisfaction experience and intention to recommend New Zealand to others. The destination planner could benefit from a better understanding of the destination attractions in nature-based settings. Furthermore, the destination services and facility preferences were also examined in this study. The tourists' overall satisfaction with their travel experience has no direct relationship between perceived experiential quality factors such as road and travel-related facilities, driving safety, or cost. However, several previous studies have emphasised that quality services could help tourists' satisfaction and develop a long-term relationship with tourists and, in turn, bring about destination loyalty (e.g., Chen, Lee, Chen & Huang, 2011, Hui, Wan & Ho, 2007, P. Murphy et al., 2000). Further research is needed to examine the relative impacts of perceived experience factors mentioned in this research such as the travel related facilities and driving safety issues on self-drive tourist's

overall satisfaction with a view to improving destination's attraction and New Zealand's competitive advantage in the longer term.

## References

- Ahuja, R. D., Anne Michels, T., Mazzei Walker, M., & Weissbuch, M. (2007). Teen perceptions of disclosure in buzz marketing. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 24(3), 151-159.
- Akehurst, G. (2009). User generated content: The use of blogs for tourism organisations and tourism consumers. *Service Business*, 3(1), 51-61.
- Arlt, W. G. (2013). The second wave of Chinese outbound tourism. *Tourism Planning & Development*, 10(2), 126-133.
- Arsal, I., Woosnam, K. M., Baldwin, E. D., & Backman, S. J. (2010). Residents as travel destination information providers: An online community perspective. *Journal of Travel Research*, 49(4), 400-413.
- Attride-Stirling, J. (2001). Thematic networks: an analytic tool for qualitative research. *Qualitative Research*, 1(3), 385-405.
- Ayeh, J. K., Au, N., & Law, R. (2013). "Do we believe in TripAdvisor?" Examining credibility perceptions and online travelers' attitude toward using user-generated content. *Journal of Travel Research*, 52(4), 437-452.
- Baker, D. A., & Crompton, J. L. (2000). Quality, satisfaction and behavioral intentions. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(3), 785-804.
- Becken, S., & Wilson, J. (2007). Trip planning and decision making of self-drive tourists—Quasi-experimental approach. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 20(3-4), 47-62.
- Becken, S., & Wilson, J. (2013). The impacts of weather on tourist travel. *Tourism Geographies*, 15(4), 620-639.
- Bickart, B., & Schindler, R. M. (2001). Internet forums as influential sources of consumer information. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 15(3), 31-40.
- Brace, I. (2018). *Questionnaire design: How to plan, structure and write survey material for effective market research*. London, UK: Kogan Page.
- Bramwell, B. (1998). User satisfaction and product development in urban tourism. *Tourism Management*, 19(1), 35-47.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
- Bristol, J. (1990). Enhanced explanations of word of mouth communications: The power of relationships. *Research in Consumer Behavior*, 4, 51-83.

- Brown, G., & Getz, D. (2005). Linking wine preferences to the choice of wine tourism destinations. *Journal of Travel Research*, 43(3), 266-276.
- Carson, D. B., & Prideaux, B. (Eds.). (2011). *Drive tourism: Trends and emerging markets*. Abingdon, United Kingdom: Routledge.
- Chatterjee, P. (2001). Online reviews: do consumers use them?
- Chen, C. M., Lee, H. T., Chen, S. H., & Huang, T. H. (2011). Tourist behavioural intentions in relation to service quality and customer satisfaction in Kinmen National Park, Taiwan. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 13(5), 416-432.
- Cheung, C. M. K., & Thadani, D. R. (2012). The impact of electronic word-of-mouth communication: A literature analysis and integrative model. *Decision Support Systems*, 54(1), 461-470. doi: 10.1016/j.dss.2012.06.008
- Chi, C. G. Q., & Qu, H. (2008). Examining the structural relationships of destination image, tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty: An integrated approach. *Tourism Management*, 29(4), 624-636.
- Chung, N., Han, H., & Koo, C. (2015). Adoption of travel information in user-generated content on social media: The moderating effect of social presence. *Behaviour & Information Technology*, 34(9), 902-919.
- Cohen, E. (1988). Traditions in the qualitative sociology of tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 15(1), 29-46.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., Morrison, K., & Morrison, R. B. (2007). *Research methods in education*. Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Connell, J., Page, S. J., & Bentley, T. (2009). Towards sustainable tourism planning in New Zealand: Monitoring local government planning under the Resource Management Act. *Tourism Management*, 30(6), 867-877.
- Cox, C., Burgess, S., Sellitto, C., & Buultjens, J. (2009). The role of user-generated content in tourists' travel planning behavior. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management*, 18(8), 743-764.
- Dann, G. M. (1981). Tourist motivation an appraisal. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 8(2), 187-219.
- De Rojas, C., & Camarero, C. (2008). Visitors' experience, mood and satisfaction in a heritage context: Evidence from an interpretation h. *Tourism Management*, 29(3), 525-537.
- Denstadli, J. M., & Jacobsen, J. K. S. (2011). The long and winding roads: Perceived quality of scenic tourism routes. *Tourism Management*, 32(4), 780-789.

- Doolan, D. M., & Froelicher, E. S. (2009). Using an existing data set to answer new research questions: A methodological review. *Research and Theory for Nursing Practice*, 23(3), 203-215.
- Du, S., Zhang, H., Xu, H., Yang, J., & Tu, O. (2018). To make the travel healthier: A new tourism personalized route recommendation algorithm. *Journal of Ambient Intelligence and Humanized Computing*.
- Eby, D. W., & Molnar, L. J. (2001). In-vehicle route guidance preferences of driving tourists. *Journal of Intelligent Transportation Systems*, 6(3), 261-279.
- Erkan, I., & Evans, C. (2018). Social media or shopping websites? The influence of eWOM on consumers' online purchase intentions. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 24(6), 617-632.
- Fjelstul, J., Wang, Y., & Li, X. (2012). Examining the RV travelers' camping experience: A social media approach. *Tourism Analysis*, 17(4), 403-415.
- Flick, U. (2018). *An introduction to qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fornell, C. (1992). A national customer satisfaction barometer: The Swedish experience. *Journal of Marketing*, 56(1), 6-21.
- Fountain, J., Espiner, S., & Xie, X. (2010). A cultural framing of nature: Chinese tourists' motivations for, expectations of, and satisfaction with, their New Zealand tourist experience. *Tourism Review International*, 14(2-3), 71-83.
- Gartner, W. C., & Erkkila, D. L. (2004). Attributes and amenities of highway systems important to tourists. *Transportation Research Record*, 1890(1), 97-104.
- Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4), 597-606.
- Gray, D. E. (2014). *Doing research in the real world*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hallo, J. C., & Manning, R. E. (2009). Transportation and recreation: A case study of visitors driving for pleasure at Acadia National Park. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 17(6), 491-499.
- Hardy, A. (2003). An investigation into the key factors necessary for the development of iconic touring routes. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 9(4), 314-330.
- Hennink, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2010). *Qualitative research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hui, T.K., Wan, D., & Ho, A. (2007). Tourists' satisfaction, recommendation and revisiting Singapore. *Tourism Management* 28(4), 965-975.

- Hwang, Y. H., & Fesenmaier, D. R. (2003). Multidestination pleasure travel patterns: Empirical evidence from the American Travel Survey. *Journal of Travel Research, 42*(2), 166-171.
- Hyde, K. F. (2004). A duality in vacation decision making. In G.I. Crouch, R.R. Perdue, H. J. P. Timmermans, & M. Uysal (Eds.), *Consumer psychology of tourism, hospitality and leisure* (Vol. 3, pp. 161-168). Wallingford, United Kingdom: CABI Publishing.
- Rahman, M. S. (2017). The Advantage and Disadvantages of Using Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches and Methods in Language “Testing and Assessment” Research: A Literature Review. *Journal of Education and Learning, 6*(1), 102-112.
- Ismagilova, E., Dwivedi, Y. K., Slade, E., & Williams, M. D. (2017). *Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) in the marketing context: A state of the art analysis and future directions*. Berlin, Germany: Springer.
- Jeng, J., & Fesenmaier, D. R. (2002). Conceptualizing the travel decision-making hierarchy: A review of recent developments. *Tourism Analysis, 7*(1), 15-32.
- Jin, S. V., & Phua, J. (2016). Making reservations online: The impact of consumer-written and system-aggregated user-generated content (UGC) in travel booking websites on consumers’ behavioral intentions. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 33*(1), 101-117.
- Johnston, M. P. (2017). Secondary data analysis: A method of which the time has come. *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries, 3*(3), 619-626.
- Jun, S. H., Vogt, C. A., & MacKay, K. J. (2007). Relationships between travel information search and travel product purchase in pretrip contexts. *Journal of Travel Research, 45*(3), 266-274.
- Klenosky, D. B. (2002). The “pull” of tourism destinations: A means-end investigation. *Journal of Travel Research, 40*(4), 396-403.
- Laczniak, R. N., DeCarlo, T. E., & Ramaswami, S. N. (2001). Consumers’ responses to negative word-of-mouth communication: An attribution theory perspective. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 11*(1), 57-73.
- Law, R., Leung, R., & Buhalis, D. (2009). Information technology applications in hospitality and tourism: A review of publications from 2005 to 2007. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 26*(5-6), 599-623.
- Lewis, S. (2015). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches. *Health Promotion Practice, 16*(4), 473-475.



- Li, H., Ye, Q., & Law, R. (2013). Determinants of customer satisfaction in the hotel industry: An application of online review analysis. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research, 18*(7), 784-802.
- Lin, V. S., Liu, A., & Song, H. (2015). Modeling and forecasting Chinese outbound tourism: An econometric approach. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, 32*(1-2), 34-49.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1986). But is it rigorous? Trustworthiness and authenticity in naturalistic evaluation. *New Directions for Program Evaluation, 1986*(30), 73-84.
- Litvin, S. W., Goldsmith, R. E., & Pan, B. (2008). Electronic word-of-mouth in hospitality and tourism management. *Tourism Management, 29*(3), 458-468.
- Liu, Y., Zhang, Y., & Nie, L. (2012). Patterns of self-drive tourists: The case of Nanning City, China. *Tourism Management, 33*(1), 225-227.
- Lu, W., & Stephenkova, S. (2015). User-generated content as a research mode in tourism and hospitality applications: Topics, methods, and software. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing & Management, 24*(2), 119-154.
- Lu, Z. (2011). The study of Chinese tourists' motivations to Canada: 中国旅客到加拿大的动机研究. *Journal of China Tourism Research, 7*(4), 345-354.
- Mackenzie, N., & Knipe, S. (2006). Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods and methodology. *Issues in Educational Research, 16*(2), 193-205.
- Malterud, K., Siersma, V. D., & Guassora, A. D. (2016). Sample size in qualitative interview studies: Guided by information power. *Qualitative Health Research, 26*(13), 1753-1760.
- March, R. (2004). How tourists self-deceive: Exploring the gap between travellers' intentions and actual consumption behavior. In C. Cooper, C. Arcodia, D. Solnet, & M. Whitford (Eds.), *CAUTHE 2004: Creating tourism knowledge* (pp. 466-473). Brisbane, Australia: Common Ground Publishing.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- McCusker, K., & Gunaydin, S. (2015). Research using qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods and choice based on the research. *Perfusion, 30*(7), 537-542.
- Ming, Y. (2018). *Understanding the effect of user-generated content on hotel performance in Auckland* (Unpublished master's thesis). Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand.
- Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. (2019). International visitor survey. Retrieved on June 6, 2019, from

<https://www.mbie.govt.nz/assets/1fc3807d30/international-visitor-survey-year-ending-march-2019.pdf>

- Mmopelwa, G., Kgathi, D. L., & Molefhe, L. (2007). Tourists' perceptions and their willingness to pay for park fees: A case study of self-drive tourists and clients for mobile tour operators in Moremi Game Reserve, Botswana. *Tourism Management*, 28(4), 1044-1056
- Morgan, D. L. (2007). Paradigms lost and pragmatism regained: Methodological implications of combining qualitative and quantitative methods. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(1), 48-76.
- Mudambi, S. M., & Schuff, D. (2010). What makes a helpful review? A study of customer reviews on Amazon. com. *MIS Quarterly*, 34(1), 185-200.
- Murphy, L., Mascardo, G., & Benckendorff, P. (2007). Exploring word-of-mouth influences on travel decisions: Friends and relatives vs. other travellers. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 31(5), 517-527.
- Murphy, P., Pritchard, M. P., & Smith, B. (2000). The destination product and its impact on traveller perceptions. *Tourism Management*, 21(1), 43-52.
- Murray, M., & Graham, B. (1997). Exploring the dialectics of route-based tourism: The Camino de Santiago. *Tourism Management*, 18(8), 513-524.
- Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 16(1), 1609406917733847.
- Pan, B., Li, X. R., Zhang, L. G., & Smith, W. W. (2008). An exploratory study on the satisfaction and barriers of online trip planning to China: American College students' experience. *Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing*, 16(1-2), 203-226.
- Pearce, P. L., & Wu, M. Y. (2018). Entertaining international tourists: An empirical study of an iconic site in China. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 42(5), 772-792.
- Pizam, A., Uriely, N., & Reichel, A. (2000). The intensity of tourist–host social relationship and its effects on satisfaction and change of attitudes: The case of working tourists in Israel. *Tourism Management*, 21(4), 395-406.
- Prideaux, B., Wei, S., & Ruys, H. (2001). The senior drive tour market in Australia. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 7(3), 209-219.
- Qiu, H., Hsu, C., Li, M., & Shu, B. (2018). Self-drive tourism attributes: Influences on satisfaction and behavioural intention. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 23(4), 395-407.

- Ryan, C., & Mo, X. (2002). Chinese visitors to New Zealand—Demographics and perceptions. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 8(1), 13-27.
- Schiff, A., & Becken, S. (2011). Demand elasticity estimates for New Zealand tourism. *Tourism Management*, 32(3), 564-575.
- Sen, S., Lerman, D. (2007). Why are you telling me this? An examination into negative consumer reviews on the web. *Journal of interactive marketing*, 21(4), 76-94.
- Smith, E. (2008). Pitfalls and promises: The use of secondary data analysis in educational research. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 56(3), 323-339.
- Sun, M., Ryan, C., & Pan, S. (2015). Using Chinese travel blogs to examine perceived destination image: The case of New Zealand. *Journal of Travel Research*, 54(4), 543-555.
- Szymanski, D. M., & Henard, D. H. (2001). Customer satisfaction: A meta-analysis of the empirical evidence. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 29(1), 16-35.
- Tobin, G. A., & Begley, C. M. (2004). Methodological rigour within a qualitative framework. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 48(4), 388-396.
- Tsushima, R. (2015). Methodological diversity in language assessment research: The role of mixed methods in classroom-based language assessment studies. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 14(2), 104-121.
- Uysal, M., McGehee, N. G., & Loker-Murphy, L. (1996). The Australian international pleasure travel market: Motivations from a gendered perspective. *Journal of Tourism Studies*, 7(1), 45.
- Van Raaij, W. F. (1991). The formation and use of expectations in consumer decision making. In [T. S. Robertson](#) & [H. H. Kassarijan](#) (Eds.), *Handbook of consumer behavior* (pp. 401-418). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Veal, A. J. (2018). *Research methods for leisure and tourism*. Harlow, UK: Pearson.
- Wahyuni, D. (2012). The research design maze: Understanding paradigms, cases, methods and methodologies. *Journal of Applied Management Accounting Research*, 10(1), 69-80.
- Wall, G. (1972). Socio-economic variations in pleasure-trip patterns: The case of Hull car-owners. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 57, 45-58.
- Wall, G., & Mathieson, A. (2006). *Tourism: Change, impacts, and opportunities*. London, UK: Pearson Education.
- Walther, J. B., Van Der Heide, B., Hamel, L. M., & Shulman, H. C. (2009). Self-generated versus other-generated statements and impressions in computer-mediated

- communication: A test of warranting theory using Facebook. *Communication Research*, 36(2), 229-253.
- Weiler, B., & Yu, X. (2007). Dimensions of cultural mediation in guiding Chinese tour groups: Implications for interpretation. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 32(3), 13-22.
- Wilks, J., & Pendergast, D. (2011). International tourists and road safety. In D. B. Carson & B. Prideaux (Eds.), *Drive tourism: Trends and emerging markets* (pp. 292-309). Abingdon, UK: Routledge.
- Woodside, A. G., & King, R. I. (2001). An updated model of travel and tourism purchase-consumption systems. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 10(1), 3-27.
- World Tourism Cities Federation (Ed.). (2016). *A market survey on the Chinese outbound tourists' consumption*. Beijing, China: Beijing Press Corporation.
- Wu, M. Y. (2015). Driving an unfamiliar vehicle in an unfamiliar country: Exploring Chinese recreational vehicle tourists' safety concerns and coping techniques in Australia. *Journal of Travel Research*, 54(6), 801-813.
- Wu, M. Y., Pearce, P. L., & Li, Q. (2018). Chinese behind the wheel: Factors affecting their satisfaction with international self-drive holidays. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 9, 12-19.
- Xi, L. I., Sheng, Y. E., & Dong, W. (2011). Non-structured measurement of perceived image in tourism destinations – Taking perceived features of Macau business tourists as a case. *Tourism Tribune/Lvyou Xuekan*, 26(12).
- Yoon, Y., & Uysal, M. (2005). An examination of the effects of motivation and satisfaction on destination loyalty: A structural model. *Tourism Management*, 26(1), 45-56.
- Yu, J., & Lee, T. J. (2014). Impact of tourists' intercultural interactions. *Journal of Travel Research*, 53(2), 225-238.
- Zhang, Y., & Peng, Y. (2014). Understanding travel motivations of Chinese tourists visiting Cairns, Australia. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 21, 44-53.