

Exploring Chinese visitor perspectives of Māori indigenous tourism

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Abstract

Māori tourism is a key sector in differentiating New Zealand in the global tourism industry. Māori tourism provides for unique experiences for visitors showcasing culture as well as being a key industry for Māori economic development. At present, Chinese visitors are the second largest international tourist market and highest spenders in New Zealand. That is because New Zealand prides itself upon its natural landscapes and unique Māori indigenous culture, which attracts Chinese visitors to the country. While there is a focus on the Chinese market by Tourism New Zealand, there is not a lot of information on Chinese perspectives particular to Māori tourism destinations. Through a review of Māori tourism literature, the scope of what is Māori tourism was established. Two categories of Māori tourism supported selection of two case studies. The first case selected was a cluster of tourism businesses owned by the tribal grouping of Ngāi Tahu and the second case is a grouping of four Māori tourism villages in Rotorua.

This study analysed the relationship between Māori tourism and the Chinese market from Chinese visitor perspectives. Through a netnographic approach, this study explored Chinese visitor perspectives analysing web based Chinese visitor feedback. The on-line content and literature review provided further insight into this important tourist market in New Zealand. This study combined literature review and visitor's feedback to explore key themes to visitor satisfaction. The key findings highlight that overall Māori tourism has high satisfaction ratings from Chinese visitors. For them, Māori tourism is not just a simple travelling activity, it involves cultural, natural, recreational and educational aspects. The outcome of this study can help to further understand the Chinese experiences and provide a perspective on the requirements of Māori tourism development.

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (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

Lin Li

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1 Introduction

This study examines Chinese visitors' perceptions of Māori tourism destinations through a review of the literature and on-line texts from two major Chinese travel websites, to provide further insights into this important tourist market for New Zealand. There is little information available about Chinese visitor perspectives pertaining to Māori tourism. Thus, in order to better understand the Chinese market and Māori tourism, the study examines two types of Māori tourism destinations.

1.1 Research background

New Zealand has benefited from a growth in tourism over the last decade, much of which has primarily originated from international tourism (Puriri & McIntosh, 2019). Visitor arrivals were 417,900 in February 2019, of which 50,900 were from China (Statistics New Zealand, 2019). This indicates that Chinese visitors play an important role in the New Zealand tourism industry. Indeed, Chinese visitors comprise the second largest international tourist market and the highest spenders in New Zealand (Tourism New Zealand, n.d.). There are 390,000 Chinese visitors to New Zealand in the year to February 2020 (Tourism New Zealand, n.d.). Among these, the purposes of travel was 21% were visiting friends or relatives, business, education and so forth, and 79% of visitors came to enjoy a holiday (Tourism New Zealand, n.d.). Although those Chinese visitors were in New Zealand for different purposes, all met the market for tourism destinations including experiencing Māori tourism destinations.

The Ministry for Business, Innovation, and Employment, predicted that China is poised to become New Zealand's dominant tourism market in the next five years, projecting that visitors from China will spend about NZD4.3 billion a year, accounting for just over half the total tourism spend in New Zealand (Andrew, 2018). There is some literature on the Chinese tourism market and Chinese visitor perspectives. Sun, Ryan et al. (2014, 2015) discussed New Zealand tourism from a Chinese perspective using travel blogs and photographs (Sun et al., 2014; Sun et al., 2015). Sun, Zhang et al. (2015) studied tourism in the South Island of New Zealand, from a Chinese perspective. However, the majority of the literature on this topic has studied Chinese tourists' experience of New Zealand without mentioning much about their experiences of Māori tourism.

Since the mid-19th century, Māori culture has played an important role in New Zealand's international tourism image and the national tourism organisation has consistently promoted New Zealand's spectacular scenery, landscape resources, and the unique Māori culture (Amoamo, 2011). Māori tourism is a key sector in differentiating the nation from others in the global tourism industry and providing unique experiences for visitors (Ruhanen & Whitford, 2017).

The tourism businesses owned by Māori or including Māori culture are diverse. Butler and Hinch (1996) provided an indigenous tourism model that outlines differing degrees of cultural content and indigenous control, into four categories: culture dispossessed, culture controlled, non-indigenous, and diversified indigenous tourism. Zygodlo et al. (2003a) applied these categories to Māori tourism businesses. Because this research is focussed on Māori tourism destinations, two case studies were selected based on the two categories that had either Māori cultural content as a core part of the tourism offering, and/or were owned and operated by Māori. That is, the cases were diversified Māori indigenous tourism and Māori culture-controlled tourisms.

Māori tourism businesses are underpinned by Māori cultural values, such as *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship) or collective *iwi* (Māori tribe) decision-making, which influences business planning and management styles (Carr et al., 2019). Māori culture is and has been used to promote New Zealand as a destination, and the demand for cultural tourism has supported a revival of Māori cultural traditions (Dwyer, 2012).

An initial literature scan showed that little research that explores Chinese visitor perspectives pertaining to Māori tourism. Adopting a netnographic approach, this research therefore explores Chinese visitor perspectives of Māori tourism businesses based on web-based Chinese visitor feedback. This feedback and a literature review identify the key themes in visitor satisfaction in this context. The outcome of this research provides insights into Chinese experiences and a demand-side view of Māori tourism development.

1.2 Research aims

The intention of this study intent is to explore Chinese visitor perceptions of Māori tourism from Chinese on-line content and a literature review, to provide insights into this important tourist

market in New Zealand. China has become the second most popular tourist market for the New Zealand tourism industry. Therefore, in order to provide a better travelling experience, it is important to understand Chinese visitors' experiences and perceptions of Māori tourism attractions. There is a paucity of literature and research in this area, particularly pertaining to Chinese visitor perceptions of Māori tourism destinations. Therefore, the questions underpinning the study are:

- What are Chinese visitors' perceptions of Māori indigenous tourism destinations?
- What are the key themes in Chinese visitor satisfaction?
- How do Māori tourism destinations promote and deliver to the Chinese market?

The sample of this research comprises Chinese tourists who have travelled to New Zealand and visited Māori tourism destinations. Accordingly, using key words, such as "Māori," "New Zealand," "indigenous landscape," "cultural landscape," "Māori market," and "indigenous tourism," data are collected from the Chinese websites, Mafengwo and Qiongyou.

1.3 Research method

This research uses the case study method to explore diversified Māori tourism destinations and Māori culture-controlled tourism destinations. Ngāi Tahu Tourism Ltd was chosen for the analysis of a diversified Māori tourism destination, and Māori village tourist destinations in Rotorua were selected to explore Māori culture-controlled tourism destinations.

With the establishment and improvement of the Internet, information can be shared and obtained online by both individuals and organisations. Applying a qualitative approach, the main research method applied in this research is the netnography method. The research focuses on identifying Chinese visitors' experiences and feelings about Māori tourism, primarily by analysing data from Chinese tourist websites. Netnographic researchers focus on online textual discourse instead of interacting with people in online communities (Van Hout & Hearne, 2016). Depending on the participants' observations, netnographic research can help understand social and cultural phenomena using computer-mediated communications to collect data (Jeanes & Huzzard, 2014). The data in this study are analysed using a thematic analysis approach.

Thematic analysis is an appropriate approach because this research focuses on analysing text. In addition, a webscan of government reports, promotional material and Māori tourism business web-based material is made, focused on the Chinese tourist market, to provide a context for the study.

Data will be collected from secondary sources, such as tourism reviews and travel notes. The sample is Chinese tourists who have travelled to New Zealand and visited Māori tourism destinations.

1.4 Outline of the dissertation

This research consists of six chapters. Chapter two reviews the literature in detail, providing an introduction to Māori culture and Māori tourism, the development of the Chinese outbound tourism market, and the New Zealand Chinese tourist market. The third chapter focuses on the research methodology used to answer the research questions and includes the research strategy, research design, research procedure, data collection, and ethics approval. This chapter also explains the use of thematic analysis to study the secondary data collected from the Internet. Chapter four presents the findings of Chinese visitors' reviews on the cases of diversified Māori tourism destinations and Māori culture-controlled destinations. The perspectives of Chinese visitors on Māori tourism destinations are analysed to answer question 1. Chapter 5 discusses the research results from Chapter 4. The discussion relates the key themes in Chinese visitors' satisfaction and makes suggestions to help Māori tourism destinations promote and deliver their products to the Chinese market. The final chapter presents the conclusion from the findings presented in the dissertation, and provides the limitations to the study.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review chapter is in two sections. The first section provides an overview of the history of the Chinese outbound tourism market and introduces the current situation of Chinese tourists and the inbound market to New Zealand. This section provides the context of the research and provides a rationale for the question around why the Chinese market is important to consider for the Māori tourism sector. This section includes an overview of Tourism New Zealand's strategic plan to develop the Chinese market and how the New Zealand Tourism Board includes Māori cultural values in its marketing strategy and policies.

The second section of the chapter addresses the question, "what is Māori tourism?" and provides an overview of Māori tourism and how it relates to inbound Chinese visitors. This section draws upon Butler and Hinch's indigenous tourism model, as adapted by Zygadlo et al. (2003b), to explain indigenous culture, cultural indigenous tourism, Māori culture, and how the history of Māori tourism continues to inform Māori tourism development. The literature provides for a definition of Māori tourism that is values-centred. While Māori tourism is most commonly perceived by visitors as destinations that showcase Māori culture, cultural shows, and indigenous food, the literature critiques this perception and offers alternative views to the underpinning and motivation for Māori to develop tourism in New Zealand. Furthermore, in reviewing the literature related to Māori tourism, this chapter contextualises the two case studies analysed in this study in Chapter four.

2.2 Chinese tourists and the outbound market

The history of Chinese outbound tourism is presented by Otafiire et al. (2019) as existing in two waves. The first wave was in the early stages of Chinese outbound tourism between 1949 to 1998, while the second wave is the current outbound tourism situation (Otafiire et al., 2019).

First wave

Before 1978, due to conflict and the political situation, China was trying to organise itself internally and did not have extra capacity, determination, or funding to develop a tourism industry (Sun, 1992). Thus, outbound tourism was not developed at that time. However, in 1978, China decided to focus on economic development and subsequently opened up its border to the world (Zhang et al., 2000). It was not until the mid-1990s however, that research on outbound Chinese tourism emerged. By 1990, mainland Chinese were allowed to travel to Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore (Li et al., 2010). Because of the relaxed government policies and increased Chinese incomes, exponential growth occurred in the Chinese outbound tourism market. With the increasing numbers of Chinese in the middle class, people finally had enough discretionary funds for travel (Otafiire et al., 2019). In 1997, the existence of a Chinese outbound market was officially acknowledged by the Chinese government (Li et al., 2010).

Second wave

The second wave of outbound tourism saw an expansion of destinations that Chinese citizens could visit. China started to allow its citizens to travel to nearby places, such as Macao and Hong Kong and other nearby Asian countries, such as Japan and Korea (Otafiire et al., 2019). In time, Chinese were allowed to travel beyond Asia to countries such as Australia and New Zealand (Arlt, 2013), and by the new millennium, Chinese tourists were beginning to travel to further places around the world. Between 2014 and 2017, China became the world's largest outbound tourism market, and in 2018, 149.7 million overseas trips were made by Chinese citizens. In the years between 2001 and 2018, there was a 1,326% increase in outbound travel. In 2001 there were 10.5 million overseas trips, and by 2030, this figure is projected to reach 400 million – a surge of almost 4,000% – and will account for a quarter of international tourism globally (TTG Asia, 2019).

There are some primary factors that affect the numbers of Chinese tourists, including income, the cost of travel at the host country, and the exchange rate (Otafiire et al., 2019). This is because, in general, Chinese tourists prefer cost-effective travel. Most Chinese tourists do not have much travel experience, so they prefer package tours to travel independently (Fountain et al., 2010).

2.2.1 New Zealand's Chinese tourist market

For New Zealand, the Chinese holiday market has become very important. With increased incomes and lifestyle levels, domestic tourism is not able to meet the Chinese people's leisure requirements, so they have started to pursue more exotic environments. New Zealand has wonderful landscapes and a special Māori indigenous culture, so is attractive to many tourist markets, including that of the Chinese. Since 1999, when there was a large increase in Chinese tourists travelling to New Zealand (Fountain et al., 2010), China has become New Zealand's second-largest international visitor market, and most valuable in terms of holiday visitor spend (Tourism New Zealand, n.d.). The Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment reports that China is poised to become New Zealand's dominant tourism market in the next five years, projecting that visitors from that nation will spend about NZD4.3 billion a year, accounting for just over half the total spend (Andrew, 2018).

Although Fountain et al. (2010) asserted that Chinese travellers preferred package tours, New Zealand is experiencing an emergence of Chinese tourists transferring to Free Independent Travel (FIT) (Tourism New Zealand, n.d.). With the improvement of their social lives, Chinese people enjoy relaxing and exploring new adventure and entertainment places. Due to the value of the Chinese market to New Zealand tourism, it cannot be ignored.

Li et al. (2011b) observed that Chinese travellers have particular expectations that are not well understood by Western businesses; these expectations are largely around cultural dimensions. Thus, to better serve this large market segment, it is crucial to understand Chinese tourists' expectations of their tourism experience in New Zealand.

Tourism New Zealand (n.d.) summarised some Chinese tourism travel preferences as follows.

- A large number of Chinese prefer to travel during Chinese New Year (Chinese Spring Festival in February); this Chinese spring period is becoming very popular among Chinese tourists. The number of Chinese tourists who travelled to New Zealand in February achieved a significant increase in 2019.
- Chinese prefer to use mobile payments instead of cash.

- Chinese people prefer to book tickets online; the Chinese online agencies, for example, Ctrip and Alitrip, are actively developing services for independent travellers.

Chinese tourists are easily attracted by the general health conditions of New Zealand and tourism attractions such as mountains, lakes and rivers (Li et al., 2011a). Tourism New Zealand emphasised that the landscape is a primary motivation for visiting New Zealand (Sun et al., 2014). This love of landscape may have Chinese cultural roots. China has a proverb: “the benevolent love mountains, the wise love water” (Sun et al., 2014, p. 129). Another reason for New Zealand’s popularity with Chinese tourists may be that most of China’s cities, for example, Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, and Guangzhou, suffer from air pollution (Sun et al., 2014). The protected ecological environment and beautiful landscape of New Zealand are therefore very attractive to Chinese tourists.

Chinese tourists not only pay close attention to the local food and beautiful scenery, but enjoy the different cultures of a host country (Suntikul et al., 2016). Chinese tourists are particularly concerned about the cultural diversity of their travel destinations, and like to integrate and communicate with local people to learn about and understand indigenous cultures (Otafiire et al., 2019). These travel motivations illustrate that Chinese tourists particularly care about beautiful landscapes and exotic cultures. Hence, it is not surprising that many Chinese people travel to New Zealand to discover its mysterious Māori culture and enjoy its spectacular landscapes.

2.3 What is Māori tourism?

2.3.1 *Indigenous cultures*

There are many definitions of culture; in 1952, Kroeber and Kluckhohn, identified 164 different definitions. More recently, however, Amoamo (2011) asserted that definitions of culture should be based on particular circumstances. Colquhoun and Dockery (2012) found that generally, “culture,” is defined as the spread of traditional beliefs, values, social groups and religions, from one generation to the next. Similarly, Hyatt and Simons (1999) stated that the term “culture” is widely referred to as a set of identifiable assumptions, premises, values, or beliefs. Ritzer (2015) brought these general definitions together in asserting that culture includes values, ideas, practices, and objects, and communities and societies include those who live as harmoniously as possible

based on their values. Oakes (1993) observed that culture is not static. When discussing Chinese ethnic tourism, Oakes argued that to understand culture is a significant challenge. He stated that “culture is a contemporary construction in which tradition is continually redefined by actors operating within networks of political economy which span and interact within multiple geographic scales” (1993, p. 47).

The identifiable group that this research studies, is the indigenous peoples of New Zealand, the Māori, and it considers cultural values in the context of Māori cultural tourism. Māori play an important role in New Zealand tourism and attract tourists from all over the world, not just from China. It is therefore important to gain a deep understanding of Māori culture to inform cultural tourism development.

Distinctive indigenous cultures are commonly determined as “traditional” cultures (Colquhoun & Dockery, 2012). Colquhoun and Dockery (2012) noted that indigenous cultures have a close relationship with history, customs, life experiences, activities, and heritages, and develop with time. Thus, it can be seen that an indigenous culture is deeply rooted in the lifestyle of indigenous people. The characteristics of this type of culture are their flexibility and ability to adapt and (Colquhoun & Dockery, 2012). Amoamo (2011), Oakes (1993), and Colquhoun and Dockery (2012) all emphasised that tradition is not a pre-determined state but changes according to the context. Within an indigenous cultural tourism context, audiences often have a pre-determined view of what “traditional” is, and what indigenous culture looks like, which thus shapes how indigenous culture is presented.

Indigenous cultures are comprised of groups of people that have a historical connection with a region before its colonisation (Rigby et al., 2011). These groups of people have lived largely independent of and isolated from the influence of Western culture and civilisation (Rigby et al., 2011). Thus, these cultures are particular and different from mainstream Western society in language, culture, and social characteristics (Rigby et al., 2011). Indigenous societies can be found all over the world, and gradually become an important part of the global culture. However, for a long period of time, indigenous societies and cultures were socially deprived in their separation from the rest of the world (Glenn, 2015).

The impacts of colonisation on indigenous cultures globally have been dramatic. Colonisation nonetheless processes a range of activities, such as war, displacement, forced labour, removal of children, relocation, ecological destruction, massacres, genocide, slavery, intentional spread of deadly diseases, and linguistic and cultural deprivation (Glenn, 2015). This situation has also occurred in New Zealand. For example, in New Zealand, Māori is the indigenous language that became restrained by British colonisation (Huia, 2014). However, Māori have been involved in tourism development since the inception of tourism in New Zealand, which has promoted the Māori culture to the world and been important to New Zealand's economy.

Since the 1970s, the global tourism industry has developed a growing interest in indigenous tourism, and has been accompanied by the increased academic output on indigenous tourism (Weaver, 2010). Cultural tourism has a long history and has become increasingly popular since the 1980s. During this period, early academic research on cultural tourism started to appear, and the phenomenon of cultural tourism was first defined by the World Tourism Organization (Richards, 2018). The growth of cultural tourism is reflected in the segmentation of emerging market segments, including those of heritage tourism, indigenous tourism, art tourism, gastronomy tourism and so forth (Richards, 2018). As this research explores the attitudes of Chinese tourists to indigenous Māori tourism, the next part of the review focuses on indigenous tourism.

According to the definition given by the United Nations, the meaning of "indigenous" is ambiguous. Many factors influence how indigenous peoples are defined, such as including territories, historical community, socio-economic systems and ancestral culture and life-style (Weaver, 2010). As early as the mid-1800s, indigenous people were beginning to get involved in the tourism industry (Ruhanen & Whitford, 2017). By the 1900s, with the dominance and colonisation by many, British and European nations, explorers, scientists, and anthropologists gradually exposed the lifestyles and cultures of indigenous peoples by visiting their settlements. This stimulated the wider community's interest in indigenous peoples, and by the early 1900s, indigenous peoples were engaging in tourism worldwide. During this time, wealthy European adventurers were curious and interested in exotic destinations and indigenous inhabitants. This

curiosity and interest drove them to travel to the colonies to see and experience unknown and exotic cultures (Ruhanen & Whitford, 2017).

During this long history of development, indigenous tourism developed into a special niche, layering cultural stories, traditions, and lifestyles, upon the landscapes to share with tourists. Indigenous tourism is a lucrative special interest tourism niche defined as “experience tourism,” and covers many aspects of travel; experience tourists can learn about the history, values, lifestyle, and heritage, of different exotic destinations (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2017). By the time of writing, almost all indigenous peoples and places have been impacted by tourism activities, and numerous fields, such as academia, economics, and sociology, have expressed a keen interest in indigenous tourism (Weaver, 2010). Thus, indigenous culture is seen to play an important role not only in shaping the attitudes of people and communities, but by promoting understandings during cross-cultural communication between hosts and visitors (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2017).

In New Zealand, the term “indigenous” specifically describes Māori, who identify with the term and widely rely on it for political representation (Macleod & Carrier, 2010). In the economy of tourism, this term has obtained additional value and significance. This study will draw upon the classifications in Butler and Hinch’s model and apply these to a Māori tourism context. Tourism destinations with indigenous themes present, or indigenous control of the destination, are the focus of this study, “Chinese perceptions of Māori tourism.” On-line reviews of Māori cultural destinations that fit the “culture controlled” and “diversified indigenous” therefore comprise the data for this study.

2.3.2 Māori culture

Māori are known as the people of the land; the *tangata whenua* (people of the land) are officially recognised as the aboriginal people of New Zealand (Amoamo, 2017). Like many other indigenous peoples, as mentioned earlier, Māori also experienced a long history of colonisation. As colonised people, Māori have a highly diverse cultural composition and are no different to other groupings in that the shifting nature of their identity (Amoamo, 2011).

Although colonisation has generated enormous negative impacts in all aspects of social indicators, strong and prosperous indigenous tribal traditions and culture are still maintained by Māori. Tribes represent the key social, economic, and political Māori units, and have two forms of expression: *hapu* (tribe) and *iwi* (subtribe) (Walker, 2004). Each *iwi* has its unique history, myths, sense of localism, customs, and proverbs, and therefore *iwi* own their cultural identity (Amoamo, 2017). Although different *iwi* share a degree of common cultural heritage and tradition, they have also chosen to highlight differences through geographical areas and histories and establish cultural boundaries based on their tribal narratives (Amoamo, 2017). These narratives are key aspects of Māori tourism businesses, providing another regional layer of uniqueness throughout the country.

Whakapapa is the Māori cultural identity system that builds on distinct values and knowledge. It is an ordering identity and spiritual link between generations (Spiller & Stockdale, 2013). Māori can use a variety of means to convey information and knowledge, such as songs, proverbs, and folklore (Amoamo, 2017). These can be seen as a Māori's oral culture. Another oral tradition is embodied in visual art forms associated with myths and legends, such as those portrayed in carving and weaving (Amoamo, 2017). Māori, like other indigenous peoples, had a holistic world view with a relational epistemology (Spiller & Stockdale, 2013). This epistemology can link the natural and cultural world from the past to the present day, and even into the future (Spiller & Stockdale, 2013).

During the course of its long history, although confronting brutal colonisation, the hardworking Māori have created an abundant material civilisation as well as a splendid folk culture. While traditional aspects, such as *kapa haka* (group dance performance) are still an important part of Māori life and tourism, the types of new tourism products including Māori cultural features are being developed based on tourist's interest and desires (Tourism New Zealand, 2020a). Because of that, Māori culture maintains its vigour and vitality, and is gradually becoming one of New Zealand's essential tourism resources (Tourism New Zealand, 2020a).

2.3.3 Māori tourism

2.3.3.1 The history of Māori tourism

Since the late 19th century, the New Zealand tourism industry started to focus their holiday products on Māori culture and natural landscape (Amoamo, 2017). From the mid-19th century, Māori culture has gradually started to play an essential role in New Zealand's international tourism image (Amoamo, 2011). At the same time, New Zealand Tourism, the national tourism organisation, has incessantly promoted New Zealand's significant landscape resources and unique Māori culture (Amoamo, 2011). In 1988, the Aotearoa Tourism Federation was established, which was used to represent Māori interests and protect Māori culture (Smith, 2009). With the development of Māori tourism over 120 years, the New Zealand tourism agencies have started to commercialise and market Māori cultural experiences (Puriri & McIntosh, 2019).

Opportunities for language revival and Māori cultural revitalisation are the key catalysts that prompt Māori to engage in tourism. Furthermore, due to the Treaty of Waitangi settlements and the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975, Māori people's emotions about deforestation and historical grievances are being reduced (Higgins-Desbiolles et al., 2017). Thus, since 1980, more and more Māori have participated in the management and development of Māori cultural and non-cultural tourism experiences (Carr, 2018).

Since 2000, because the New Zealand government started cooperating with Māori indigenous tourism stakeholders, Māori tourism has steadily expanded and grown. For example, the importance of tourism that Māori were involved in, was highlighted twice in the New Zealand National Tourism Strategy in 2010 and 2015 (Carr, 2018). Because of this, the number of Māori Regional Tourism organisations increased from 4 in 2001 to 13 in 2015. In 2004, the New Zealand Māori Tourism Council was established (Amoamo, 2017). The New Zealand Māori Tourism Council represented the majority of Māori tourism businesses in New Zealand (Amoamo, 2017). By 2008, there were more than 350 tourism operations that had indigenous themes or were owned and managed by Māori in New Zealand (Amoamo, 2017). By the year ended February 2015, Māori tourism income had contributed NZD214 million towards New Zealand's economy (Puriri & McIntosh, 2019).

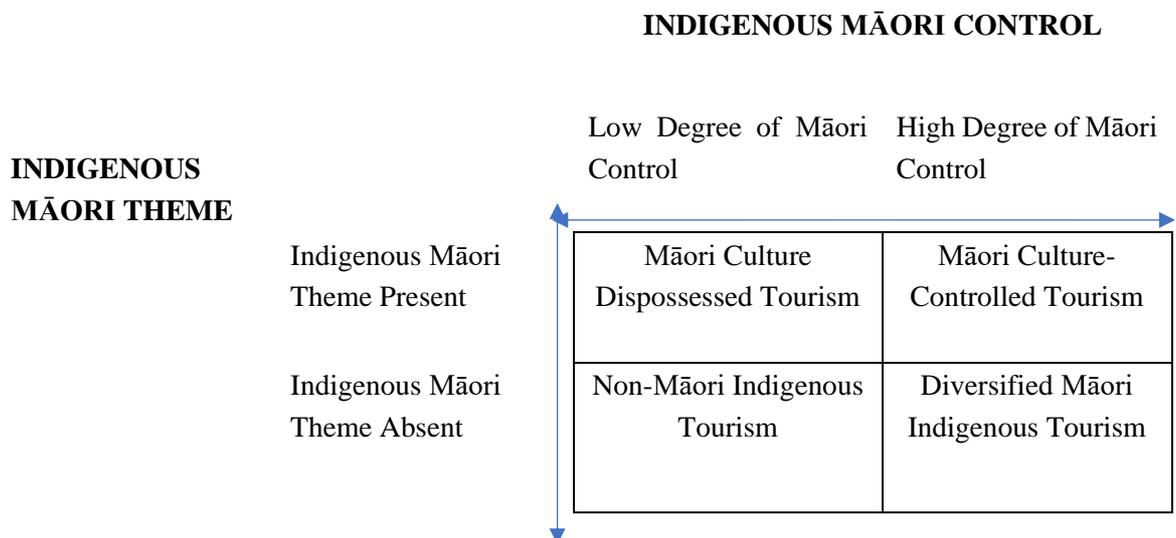
2.3.3.2 Defining Māori tourism

To gain a better understanding of Māori indigenous tourism, this research draws on the interpretation of indigenous tourism provided by Butler and Hinch (1996) and adapted by Zygadlo et al. (2003b). Butler and Hinch (1996) tried to classify the different types of indigenous tourism according to the level of aboriginal control and the level of indigenous culture presentation.

As mentioned, Māori tourism is as a type of indigenous tourism. Māori tourism products and Māori tourism business do not have a single definition. Thus, this research defines Māori tourism based on the two themes identified by Butler and Hinch: the level of control in a Māori tourism business, and the nature of the Māori tourism product. Based on Bulter and Hinch’s model, New Zealand tourism products can also be classified into four types: Māori culture dispossessed tourism, Non-Māori indigenous tourism, Māori culture-controlled tourism, and diversified Māori indigenous tourism.

Figure 1

Māori Cultural Tourism Model



Adapted from “The Values Associated with Māori-Centred Tourism in Canterbury,” by F. K. Zygadlo, A. J. McIntosh, H.P. Matunga, J.R. Fairweather & D. G. Simmons, 2003, p. 13. <https://researcharchive.lincoln.ac.nz/handle/10182/251>. Copyright 2003 by Lincoln University.

In Figure 1, the horizontal axis is the control axis, representing the degree of indigenous or Māori control for the tourism development, from no control to total control, and refers to aspects such

as ownership and management (Hinch & Butler, 1996). The vertical axis represents the degree of presentation of indigenous or Māori culture by tourist attraction, from indigenous theme present to indigenous theme absent. Based on these variables, control axis, and the degree of the presentation theme present or absent, four classifications can be determined. The four classifications are: *culture dispossessed*, *non-indigenous tourism*, *culture controlled*, and *diversified indigenous*.

If a tourism attraction is lacking an indigenous theme and without aborigines' control, the attraction can be classified as non-indigenous tourism. As can be seen in Figure 1, non-Māori indigenous tourism is not controlled by Māori and does not have a Māori theme. This type of tourism is owned by a foreign business and the content revolves around the New Zealand landscape. For example, the *Lord of the rings [motion picture]* and the *Hobbit* films that were made in New Zealand, achieved great success with an enormous fan base that reached to all parts of the world. The Hobbiton Movie Set in Waikato, New Zealand, which was a significant location for these films, was set up and jointly invested in by the film producer and a local family, as a Tolkien tourism destination (Moses Peaslee, 2010). This attraction fits the *non-Māori indigenous tourism* classification.

According to Figure 1, both Māori and non-Māori can provide Māori tourism products. However, in a tourism attraction, where the indigenous theme is present but local aboriginals lose control, this is interpreted as *culture dispossessed*. Māori cannot control Māori culture dispossessed tourism, but this type of tourism product can also present Māori culture to travellers. Although Māori have been involved in tourism for more than 169 years, they still often play the role of being an attraction rather than a tourism manager, or have control over their intellectual property. Māori are therefore marginalised from their cultural expression and cannot control their culture (Amoamo & Thompson, 2010). The classification of Māori *culture dispossessed* reveals that many businesses in New Zealand that showcase Māori culture are controlled by non-Māori. A non-Māori can provide a Māori tourism product and become part of Māori tourism, but this tourism, according to Zygodlo et al.'s (2003a) classification, is not classified as a Māori tourism business. Māori *culture dispossessed* tourism may lack the authenticity of Māori culture. For

example, in stage shows, souvenirs, and performances, Māori present a stereotypical character lacking in regional or tribal differences and individual personalities (Taylor, 2001).

Although some Māori tourism businesses are controlled by foreign companies, with the development of Māori tourism, more Māori have become involved in their tourism businesses. If a tourism attraction is high intensity, controlled by aboriginals, and maintains an indigenous theme, this attraction is *culture controlled*. From Figure 1, it can be seen that Māori cultural tourism can be defined as tourism with a high degree of Māori participation and control. In terms of *Māori culture controlled tourism*, since 2000, there has been steady growth and diversification of Māori tourism business including traditional cultural performances in Rotorua, such as the Whakarewarewa Village Tours (Wikitera & Bremner, 2017).

Where the indigenous theme is absent in a tourism attraction and where it is controlled by aboriginals, this is classified as *diversified indigenous*. For a Māori tourism product, Māori can not only provide Māori culture tourism businesses but also non-Māori culture tourism businesses - *diversified indigenous* tourism. This category is explained in more detail in this research case study.

These are the four forms of New Zealand tourism businesses. However, the aim of this research focuses on the interests of Chinese travellers in Māori tourism. Thus, this research focuses on highly Māori-control attractions, including *Māori culture-controlled tourism* and *diversified Māori indigenous tourism*.

2.3.3.3 *Values centred Māori tourism*

The *diversified indigenous* category includes tourism businesses owned by Māori that do not necessarily have a cultural theme or focus, such as hotel and transport industries (Carr et al., 2019). For example, in the case of diversified Māori indigenous tourism, *Ngāi Tahu* can be used as a typical case. *Ngāi Tahu* is arguably the biggest tribe in New Zealand, and developing a diversified tourism portfolio. From the Treaty of Waitangi claims and the *Ngāi Tahu* Claims Settlement Act 1998, *Ngāi Tahu* received financial settlements and the right and opportunity to buy Crown assets, which enabled the tribe to develop its community and culture (Te kāhui whakatau, n.d.). This

tribe had already invested in different tourism businesses, including non-Māori culture businesses. It purchased tourism businesses around the country, such as the Agrodomes in Rotorua and Queenstown, Shotover Jet, and various hotels, restaurants, and so forth (Amoamo, 2017). The tribe's vision is underpinned by strong Māori values: "*mō tātou, ā, mō kā uri, ā muri ake nei*: for us and our children after us" (Amoamo, 2017, p. 165).

Māori culture has been used to promote New Zealand as a destination, and the demand for cultural tourism has supported a revival of Māori cultural traditions (Dwyer, 2012). However, Māori tourism is a type of Māori-centred tourism. Māori tourism businesses also follow Māori values. Zygadlo et al (2003b) identified and described this kind of tourism as a series of collective values, including *wairuatanga*, *whanaungatanga*, *kaitiakitanga*, *kotahitanga*, *tino rangatiratanga*, *nga matatini Māori*, *manaakitanga*, *tuhono*, *purotu*, and *puawaitanga* (Zygadlo et al., 2003b)(see translations later in this section). These values may not be explicitly represented in diversified Māori tourism destinations, but as Zygadlo et al. (2003b) assert, these values underpin Māori tourism business. Indeed, these values now also underpin New Zealand's national tourism strategy, and values such as *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship) and *manaakitanga* (warm hospitality) continue to inform the national tourism industry (Connell et al., 2009). In addition the collective *iwi* strategies are informed by these cultural values with regard to decision-making influencing business plans and management styles (Carr et al., 2019). Zygadlo et al (2003b) illustrated the values of Māori tourism as a *koru* spiral (Figure 2). Each value has a unique form, life and nature, but each is part of a continuum with an identity core. Each value is connected, integrated, and interdependent, and has significant value to Māori culture.

Figure 2

Māori-Centred Value Model



Reprinted from “The Values Associated with Māori-Centred Tourism in Canterbury,” by F. K. Zygadlo, A. J. McIntosh, H.P. Matunga, J.R. Fairweather & D. G. Simmons, 2003, p. 3. <https://researcharchive.lincoln.ac.nz/handle/10182/251>. Copyright 2003 by Lincoln University.

As presented in Figure 2, *wairuatanga* is located in the centre. *Wairuatanga* is a spiritual aspect of Māori values and provides a guideline to Māori tourism, being perhaps the most essential part of Māori-centred tourism (Puriri & McIntosh, 2019). The Māori language cannot be accurately translated into English, however, simple translations are available (Puriri & McIntosh, 2019; Zygadlo et al., 2003b):

- *Whanaungatanga* represents an ethic of belonging and kinship.
- *Nga matatini Māori* means Māori diversity.
- *Kaitiakitanga* refers to the guardianship of natural resources.
- *Manaakitanga* can be thought of as hospitality, generosity, care, and giving.
- *Kotahitanga* represents the Māori unity that Māori people share as a sense of belonging.
- *Tino Rangatiratanga* means self-determination, ownership and active control.
- *Tuhono* is a principle of alignment.
- *Purotu* is a principle of transparency. The meaning of this principle is that Māori businesses have diverse responsibilities and accountabilities.
- *Puawaiatanga* is the principle of best outcomes reflecting integrated goals.

These values reflect Māori self-determined tourism development, and the necessities of Māori-centred tourism. These can be seen as the first step in developing Māori tourism and provide a Māori tourism basis for commercial development; these values are the basis of Māori tourism. A tourism offering that can enhance the protection of Māori culture, revitalises some aspects of a culture that has been contaminated by historical harm, and provides unique and authentic attractions to the emerging Chinese traveller market. By bringing together an understanding of cultural value-driven tourism and Chinese traveller perspectives/reviews, a more robust tourism offering that optimises the host or visitor relationship can be developed. Such an offering allows Chinese visitors to gain a better understanding of the culture they are visiting, while at the same time, fostering an industry that values and protects the culture in which it is being promoted.

2.4 Summary

This chapter reviewed literature that addressed the question, “what is Māori tourism?” and showed the history and current context of Chinese tourists. Key to Chinese travel is China’s economic development. In relation to this study, the literature shows that Chinese tourists are gradually becoming more curious about indigenous cultures. This trend has evolved globally into an emerging type of tourism - indigenous tourism, and Māori tourism has followed this trend of development. For the purposes of this study, Māori cultural tourism is classified according to Zygodlo et al.’s (2003b) model of four parts: *Māori culture dispossessed tourism*, *non-Māori indigenous tourism*, *Māori cultural controlled tourism*, and *diversified Māori indigenous tourism*. This research focuses on two categories: *Māori culture-controlled tourism* and *diversified Māori indigenous tourism*, which are used to develop the two case studies in Chapter four.

Māori tourism has a strong attraction for Chinese tourists. With the development of China, the Chinese are spending more money on tourism, so for New Zealand, the Chinese tourism market cannot be ignored.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to explore Chinese visitors' perceptions of Māori tourism in New Zealand. This chapter introduces the methodology and methods used for the study. This research is based on qualitative data and uses a case study approach, netnography methods, and thematic analysis to analyse the data. The research uses a thematic scan of websites and analysis of social media reviews.

3.2 Qualitative methodology

There are two major research methodological approaches in academic research, qualitative and quantitative research. Each methodological approach determines the method to be applied. Sometimes the difference between qualitative and quantitative research method is ambiguous. However, there are distinct qualities of both approaches that need to be considered, as determined by the research goals and available data.

The quantitative research methodological approach is based on the measurement of quantity, and is widely used for phenomena that involve quantifiable research data (Mason & McBride, 2014). Qualitative research is concerned with the quality of phenomena; the aim of this method can be to find potential motives and desires (Kothari, 2004). Compared to a quantitative method, a qualitative method aims to understand questions about the what, how, or why of a phenomenon rather than how much, or how many.

Qualitative data can be a powerful data source and are essential to the social sciences (Gray, 2013). This is because qualitative data cannot only provide a snapshot of events, but can also show why things happen and include people's motivations, emotions, biases, and cooperation and conflict in interpersonal relationships (Mason & McBride, 2014). Qualitative research can seek to understand certain aspects of social life and usually produce words as data for analysis, not numbers (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015).

This study seeks to explore Chinese visitors' perceptions about what factors impact Chinese tourism, how these factors impact Chinese tourists' perceptions, and why these factors impact on Chinese tourists' perceptions. Thus, the study uses a qualitative research approach.

3.3 Methods

3.3.1 Case study method

A case study is a widely used research methodology and can provide a useful way to explore the ambiguity and uncertainty of a situation (Gray, 2013). In general, a case study is used to investigate and analyse a single or collective case and explore the complexity of the study target (Hyett et al., 2014). According to Creswell and Poth (2018) a case study can explore a real and contemporary case and is useful for exposing subtle messages and collecting intensive data. Generally, the data of a case study come from many sources, such as documents, interviews, and direct or indirect observations (Hyett et al., 2014). A case study is suitable for dealing with many problems ranging from simple to complex (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

This methodology can provide a clear case that may help gain a deep understanding to answer the research questions; the research questions and target data are simple, which meet the definition of case study. The satisfaction of different customers is difficult to ensure and describe, so a case study may be useful, because it can provide a useful method for exploring ambiguous and uncertain situations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). That means this methodology can help discover a special situation of customer satisfaction, such as with a customer with different characteristics. Using intensive data, a case study can explore a real and contemporary case (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The case studies selected for this study were chosen based on Hinch and Butler's (1996) indigenous tourism model, as outlined in the literature review. Specifically, the study explores how successful Māori tourism destinations promote and deliver to the Chinese market. The study explores Chinese tourists' reviews of Ngāi Tahu Tourism, as cases identified as being in the *diversified Māori indigenous tourism* category. Māori village tourist destinations in Rotorua were also selected, as these fit the *Māori culture-controlled tourism* category. Visitor reviews of

Chinese tourists from Mafengwo and Qiongyou were analysed to ascertain which factors impact on Chinese visitors' satisfaction for these two destination categories.

Table 1

Māori businesses destination category

Māori businesses destination category	Case	Name of Business
Diversified Māori Indigenous Tourism	Ngāi Tahu Tourism	Shotover Jet
		Agrodome
		Rainbow Springs
Māori Culture-Controlled Tourism	Rotorua	Franz Josef Glacier Hot Pools
		Te Puia
		Tamaki Māori Village
		Whakarewarewa Thermal Village
		Mitai Māori Village

3.3.2 Netnography method

With the establishment and improvement of the Internet, information can be shared and obtained online by both individuals and organisations. Internet users can express their thinking, expectations, experiences, and beliefs, in online communities, which can generate a large amount of information. The requirement of analysing these large volumes of available information stimulates the development of various methods, one of which is the netnography method. Netnography is a qualitative approach used to study Internet culture and communities according to computer-mediated user input (Tavakoli & Mura, 2018). Netnographic researchers focus on online textual discourse instead of interacting with people involved in online communities (Van Hout & Hearne, 2016). Depending on the participants' observations, netnography research aims to understand social and cultural phenomena according to computer-mediated communications in collected data (Jeanes & Huzzard, 2014). The netnographic methodological approach is a social science method that combines original and online communication work, participation, and observation, as well as new forms of digital and online data collection, analysis, and research expression (Kozinets, 2015). There are two difficulties of data collection in netnography. The first

is finding suitable data, and the second, is related to keeping a balance when using plenty of data, to seek an in-depth cultural understanding (Kozinets, 2010).

The netnographic method has been extended to uses in the tourism industry. Most online reviews of travel experiences are voluntary, so they are more likely to provide a candid opinion of their reviewer (Mkono, 2012). When using this method, researchers do not need to obtain personal consent if the data are collected from publicly accessible websites (Mkono & Markwell, 2014). This type of model can also allow participants to maintain an unrestricted interactive mode under the ignorance circumstance (Mkono & Markwell, 2014).

However, the limitation of netnography is its variability, so this method cannot be regarded as a rapid research method. For example, a website is considered to have great improvement value in one phase, but the next phase of the website may be meaningless. Furthermore, there are specific concerns about the quality and authenticity of collected data, such as consumer demographics (Heinonen & Medberg, 2018). Hence, this method may not solve important research problems relating to gender, age, or race. The ethical problems of netnography method are also extensively debated, and are no closer to consensus (Heinonen & Medberg, 2018). However, because of its flexibility and convenience, this method is still given close attention to (Kozinets et al., 2018).

Netnography is suitable for the digital tourist industry and is an exploratory approach used to evaluate newly emerging novel phenomenon (Kozinets, 2010), such as in this research, where data were available to present the perceptions of Chinese tourists. These are the five steps of netnography: entrée, data collection, data analysis, data interpretation and member checks (Kozinets, 2010).

This study aims to explore Chinese tourists' perceptions. Chinese websites are made up of a billion Chinese users and can provide a plethora of useful data. In addition to Chinese social media websites, there are specific websites and social media platforms where Chinese tourists share their trip experiences. The data are not difficult to collect from these websites. Thus, the netnography approach was considered a suitable method for this research.

Applying a qualitative approach, this study used netnography to focus on identifying Chinese visitors' experiences and feelings about Māori tourism. Data were sourced primarily from Chinese tourist websites. This study used secondary data such as tourism reviews, blogs, and travel notes.

3.3.2.1 Chinese websites

Mafengwo and Qiongyou are two of the most popular tourism websites in China; when the majority of Chinese tourists arrange their travel plans, they look at reviews on these two websites. This part therefore provides a general introduction to Mafengwo and Qiongyou.

Mafengwo has the most online users of any travel community website in China. In 2006, Mafengwo redefined itself as a site for sharing travel stories, feelings, and experiences of travellers. More than 200 million active online users of Mafengwo provide more than 20 billion travel experiences and tips (Shen & Liu, 2016). These contents are classified into several popular topics where Mafengwo guides user interactions (Luo et al., 2019), then opens the messages to other users (Mafengwo, n.d.). Mafengwo is a social network for tourism, a data driving platform and a new type of tourism e-commerce, providing information and product reservation services for transportation, hotels, attractions, catering, shopping, local entertainment, and other information about 60,000 tourist destinations around the world (Mafengwo, n.d.). Because self-help services are utilized by 60% of travelers in China, Mafengwo seeks to provide more personalized services in the future (Ma et.al., 2015).

Table 2

Mafengwo Services

Function	Detailed service
Travel tips	Destination tips, hotel tips, free travel tips, reliable and practical
Comments on travel notes	Users' personal travel experience, food, accommodation, travel and shopping.
Value sales	Air ticket, hotels, local tours, tickets, visas, insurance, etc., saves money and worry

Qiongyou was founded by Xiao Yi in 2004 when he was studying in Germany (Qiongyou, n.d.). It provides original and practical outbound travel guides, strategies, travel communities and question and answer exchange platforms, as well as intelligent travel planning solutions (Qiongyou, n.d.). It also provides online value-added services such as visas, insurance, air tickets, hotel reservations, and car rentals (Qiongyou, n.d.).

3.4 Analysis

3.4.1 *Thematic analysis*

After collection, data were analysed using a thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis is a method that can identify and analyse centralised data. Gerald Holton, a physicist and historian of science, developed this method in the 1970s. It can illustrate which themes are suitable for the phenomenon under study (Harper & Thompson, 2011) and utilise the nuances of associations well, capturing the potential meaning while keeping a systematic approach (Harper & Thompson, 2011). For this research, thematic analysis is considered an appropriate method of analysis because the research focuses on collating and analysing Chinese travellers' text.

In the social sciences, thematic analysis is used to analyse qualitative data and is widely used in the psychology field (Harper & Thompson, 2011; Walters, 2016). It is further detailed in tourism studies, and the interpretation of written documents commonly uses a thematic analysis approach (Walters, 2016). There are six phases of conducting thematic analysis: familiarisation with data, initial coding, theorising, review of the themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This research followed these six steps to analyse the data.

- Familiarisation with data

Like other qualitative analysis methods, the first step of thematic analysis is becoming familiar with the data and transcribing it, involving potentially interesting features (Michalos, 2014). As mentioned, this research collected Chinese tourists' reviews from Mafengwo and Qiongyou. The content from these Chinese websites was written in Chinese and required translation into English. This phase also involved identifying and recording the potentially interesting features of the data

as related to the research question. The most important way to understand reviews in this phase is to read and reread the collected data. It is also beneficial to record initial thoughts.

- Initial coding

The phase of initial coding ends with the compilation of code lists and collation of all data (Michalos, 2014). After familiarising with data and based on the initial thinking, frequent key words from comments related to Chinese tourists experiencing Māori tourism in New Zealand were identified. The frequent key words in this research were “Māori,” “tradition,” “New Zealand,” and “indigenous tourism.” Themes that emerged from the data were coded. Thus, this phase used systematic coding of the interesting features.

- Theorising and searching for the theme

During the theorising phase, the analysis shifts to a wider focus and a coherent theme can be formulated (Michalos, 2014). This phase is closely linked to the phase of initial coding and is beneficial to ensure a list of possible themes.

- Review of the themes

This step involves determining whether the themes and the data match (Michalos, 2014).

- Defining and naming themes

The process of defining and naming themes is the interpretative analysis stage (Michalos, 2014). Each theme should be defined and formulated to capture its relationship with other topics (Michalos, 2014).

- Producing the report

The last process is to produce the report. This phase provides the last opportunity to improve the analysis with methods such as literature integration (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

When reviewing potential themes, it is important to review the correlations between the coded data and the entire database (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This phase is important for qualitative research (Michalos, 2014).

3.5 Ethics Approval

This study did not require ethical approval. The data were collected from secondary sources and online user-generated content. Thus, the data are available in the public domain and not protected by copyright. This study did not involve primary research and no human participants were involved. Thus, there were no interviews or surveys.

4 Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and emergent themes from qualitative data on Chinese visitor perceptions of two cases, Ngāi Tahu Tourism, and Rotorua Māori villages. The data were collected from two popular Chinese tourism websites, Mafengwo and Qiongyou. This chapter is divided into two parts: *diversified Māori indigenous tourism* and *Māori culture-controlled tourism*. Firstly, the chapter briefly describes the selected case, Ngāi Tahu Tourism. This case provides information about Chinese tourists' perceptions from four popular diversified Māori indigenous destinations owned by Ngāi Tahu Tourism: Shotover Jet, Agrodome, Rainbow Springs Nature Park and Franz Josef Glacier hot pools. Secondly, in the *Māori culture-controlled tourism* part, the cases show Chinese tourists' perceptions about four of the largest Māori tourism villages: Mitai Māori Village, Tamaki Māori Village, Tepuia, and Whakarewarewa Thermal Village.

4.2 Case Study One - Diversified Māori indigenous tourism – Ngāi Tahu Tourism

According to the classification of the *diversified Māori indigenous tourism* category, destinations do not necessarily have cultural content in the tourism offering, but are owned and thus controlled by the indigenous group – in this case, Māori. Thus, Ngāi Tahu Tourism destinations can be deemed as *diversified Māori indigenous tourism* and were selected as a case for this research.

Figure 3

The purpose of Ngāi Tahu Tourism

KIA ORA

At Ngāi Tahu Tourism, our purpose is to make the connection with our customers, through our people, to our place and to Ngāi Tahu.

We are one of the largest tourism operators in Aotearoa (New Zealand), hosting more than one million customers a year across our 12 iconic businesses. These include Shotover Jet, Guided Walks New Zealand, Dart River Adventures, Franz Josef Glacier Guides, Franz Josef Glacier Hot Pools, Hukafalls Jet, Agrodome, Rainbow Springs and Glacier Southern Lakes Helicopters. We are also a 50 percent owner in the famous astro-tourism experience Dark Sky Project.

We are owned by Ngāi Tahu, the biggest iwi by population in Te Waipounamu (the South Island). Ngāi Tahu has over 60,000 registered members, making us one of the largest whānau-owned businesses in Aotearoa.

We take great pride in warmly welcoming manuhiri (visitors) to our experiences. Manaakitanga (hospitality) is one of the core values that drives the way we do business. As hosts, we care for our customers and our team as our own whānau.

Our tourism roots extend back to when our ancestors were the guides for many of the first European explorers. Tourism allows us to host manuhiri, reconnect with ngā awa (rivers), ngā maunga (mountains) and te moana (the sea), and provide lasting memories for our customers.

Through our story-telling based experiences, Dart River Adventures, Hollyford Track and Franz Josef Glacier Guides, we are also able to share one of our tribe's most precious treasures - the stories of our traditions.

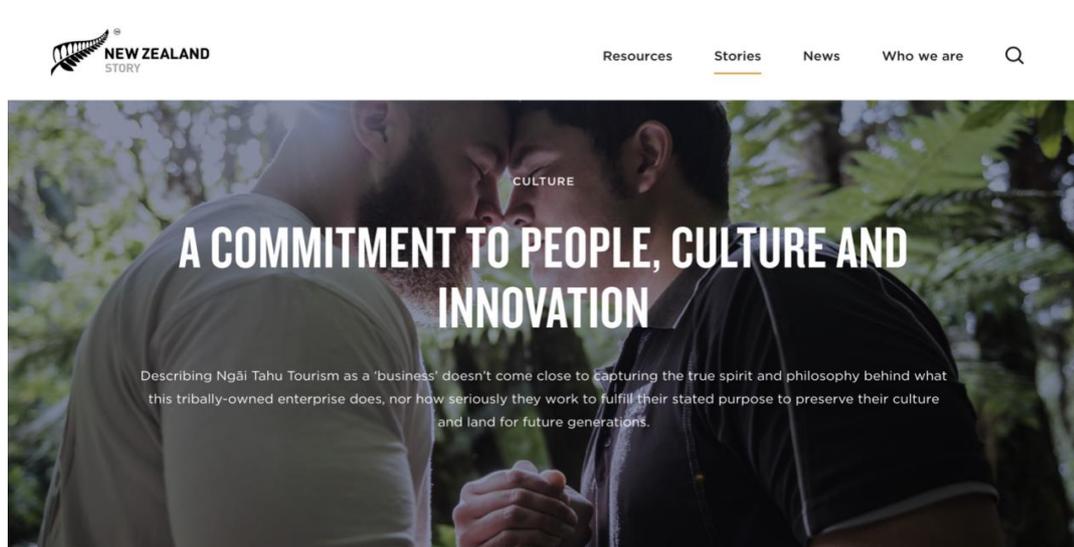
Mō tātou, ā, mō kā uri, ā muri ake nei
For us and our children after us

From *Ngāi Tahu Tourism*. <https://www.ngaitahutourism.co.nz>. Copyright 2020 by Ngāi Tahu Tourism.

Ngāi Tahu Tourism is owned by *Ngāi Tahu*, the largest indigenous tribe of the South Island in New Zealand (Ngāi Tahu Tourism, n.d.). Ngāi Tahu has more than 56,000 registered members, making this company one of the largest tourism operators in New Zealand (New Zealand Story, n.d.). Its business includes Shotover Jets, Hukafalls Jet, Guided Walks New Zealand, Franz Josef Glacier Hot Pools, Agrodome, and others (New Zealand Story, n.d.). The company warmly welcomes tourists; its key value of business is *Manaakitanga* (hospitality) (New Zealand Story, n.d.). In addition to the tourism businesses, Ngāi Tahu also operates other industries, such as dairy, fishing, property, and capital (New Zealand Story, n.d.).

Figure 4

A Commitment of Ngāi Tahu Tourism



From *Ngāi Tahu Tourism*. <https://www.ngaitahutourism.co.nz>. Copyright 2020 by Ngāi Tahu Tourism.

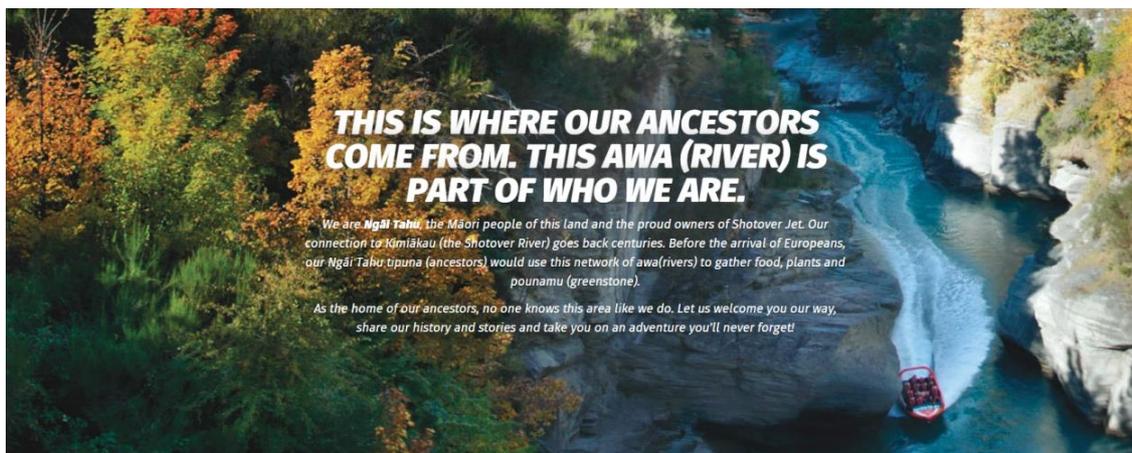
4.2.1 Shotover Jet and Chinese tourist reviews

Shotover Jet combines beautiful scenery and an exciting adventure in a unique and memorable tourism activity, which takes tourists through a deep chasm and treating them to exciting 360° spins in a jet boat (Shotover Jet, n.d.-a). Shotover Jet began operations in 1965 as a jet boat service through the Shotover River canyons near Arthurs Point's beach (Shotover Jet, n.d.-b). With a history of 55 years, Shotover Jet has developed as a leader in the New Zealand tourism market. Because of their special indigenous rights, Shotover Jet is the only group able to offer this river trip to visitors (Shotover Jet, n.d.-b). At present, Shotover Jet is a New Zealand private company and operated by Ngāi Tahu Holdings (Shotover Jet, n.d.-b).

While this tourism business offers a unique adventure tourism product, Shotover Jet is part of the Ngāi Tahu tourism portfolio and underpinned by Māori centred tourism values of *whanaungatanga* and *kaitiakitanga*. Highlighted on their web page is the connection to their ancestors, landscapes, and identity as tribal guardians of the river. Ngāi Tahu takes sustainable tourism seriously.

Figure 5

Shotover Jet



From *Ngāi Tahu Tourism*. <https://www.ngaitahutourism.co.nz>. Copyright 2020 by Ngāi Tahu Tourism.

Accreditation

Due to its successful operation and sustainable innovation, Shotover Jet has won many of New Zealand's tourism awards. In 2004, Shotover Jet was awarded the top Adventure Activities and the major category of New Zealand Visitor Activities and Attractions (Shotover Jet, n.d.-b). In 2005, Shotover Jet received an award for New Zealand's Adventure Activities again (Shotover Jet, n.d.-b).

Shotover Jet has also gained the Trax Seal of Approval. This seal is awarded for adaptive adventure travel and inclusive tourism (Making Trax, n.d.). Shotover Jet supports inclusive tourism. The business also achieved Qualmark Gold, which is for the best sustainable business in New Zealand, delivering excellent experiences to tourists (Qualmark, n.d.-b; Shotover Jet, n.d.-a). This business was also awarded a TripAdvisor certificate for excellence in 2019 (Shotover Jet, n.d.-a).

Figure 6

Shotover Jet Accreditation



4.2.1.1 Chinese visitor reviews - Shotover Jet

Chinese visitors’ reviews of Shotover Jet were collected from Mafengwo and Qiongyou. There were 220 reviews about Shotover Jet from between 2012 and March 2020. The reviews from both websites were similar and the ratings showed a high level of approval. The reviews were sorted by star ratings (5 stars being the most highly rated, to 1 star being poorly rated) as presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Review Rating of Shotover Jet on Mafengwo and Qiongyou

	Mafengwo 47 Total Reviews	Qiongyou 50 Total Reviews	Total
★★★★★	32	27	59
★★★★	12	13	25
★★★	3	9	12
★★ and ★	0	1	1

The majority of tourists rated Shotover Jet highly. The four key reasons for the high star ratings were that reviewers found it was an exciting adventure, they were satisfied with the service, and they liked the flexibility of the activity arrangements, and the beautiful landscapes. The speed and breath-taking feeling provided by Shotover Jet was the main reason for attracting Chinese tourists. Shotover Jet provided service that satisfied, including the experience of the jet boat drivers and

the superior facilities such as heated handrails on the boats. Tourists were also very satisfied with the two types of Shotover Jet tour routes, because they could choose the route based on their requirements. The satisfaction with the beautiful landscape on the Shotover river was a strong influence on the satisfaction ratings.

Adventure

A primary reason for satisfaction was that the reviewers experienced a fast and breath-taking adventure. From the reviews and travel notes on Qiongyou and Mafengwo, more than 60 Chinese tourists mentioned the thrills and excitement of their experience. A reviewer named Fuqiduoduo (2017) shared his experience in travel notes on the Mafengwo website.

It is one of the many exciting rides in Queenstown... Jet at an extremely rapid rate speeding on the surface of only a few centimetres of water. Skilled professional drivers take you at high speed through the Shotover river, close to the rock wall to do all kinds of stunts, and at 85 kph of high speed, making difficult circles of 360 degrees, with a myriad of crystal-clear crystal Bai Shuizhu [fresh water] blurring the line of sight in front of you. Words are difficult to describe its thrilling excitement. If you like the feeling of an adrenaline rush, you must try it! (Fuqiduoduo, 2017)

Satisfied service

Satisfaction with service was another reason for having a great and multi-sensory experience for 30 reviewers. Shotover Jet's drivers were portrayed as highly skilled at driving jet boats with a deep understanding of the river way. As one reviewer mentioned:

Our jet driver was so good! Sometimes he deliberately ran into the shore of the rocks and when almost hitting them, he swerved immediately. (Jessieduck, 2017)

Jet drivers also cared about the tourists' feelings and provided explanations about the surrounding landscape. From the travel notes of Lea:

These jet drivers were trained for more than 180 hours and knew every obstacle in the river. He saw everyone feeling happy and then asked us if we would like to spin again. (Lea, 2018)

Feilongzaitian, provided supplementary information:

...jet driver will stop several times to talk about the formation of the jetboat and the Shotover River. (Feilongzaitian, 2018)

More than three tourists on the Qiongyou website mentioned a “sweet service” that also impressed them deeply. This service related to facilities such as the heated handrails in the jet boats. As Tianqingjie wrote,

There is a very thoughtful design. The boat’s metal handrail is actually heated. This handrail lets everyone in the cold wind really have a “timely help” feeling. (Tianqingjie, 2016)

These reviews suggest that the majority of tourists were satisfied with Shotover Jet’s service. Jet boat drivers were seen as highly professional with extensive on the job experience. They could not only control the jets very well, but also provided an explanation about the river. They were also considered careful, caring about each person’s feeling when they decided to do something. The heated handrail also deeply impressed the Chinese tourists.

Flexibility of arrangements

Shotover Jet provided two types of routes to tourists, which led to this activity being suitable for tourists with different timetables, ages, and characters. YK’s travel note expressed this well.

This programme has two routes, of 20 minutes and 60 minutes. 20 minutes is shorter and may be suitable for a child. A 60-minute route can provide plenty of time to tourists for sightseeing the picturesque shores beside the river. (YK, 2019)

Landscape

Lastly, beautiful landscapes left a deep impression on the Chinese reviewers. Using Qiongyou and Mafengwo, nine reviewers expressed their appreciation of the spectacular scenery along the river. As Lixia said in his travel note:

On such a beautiful lake, it was pleasant even to be in a trance. (Lixia, 2018)

However, there were also some unsatisfied tourists. Nearly 15 reviewers on Mafengwo and six on Qiongyou mentioned they felt cold when they were enjoying this activity. The following two reviews capture this well.

Although wearing a raincoat, I still got all wet. Please pay attention to keeping us warm. This activity is very cold. (BCCshizhuzhu, 2015)

It was still very cold in March. There was an old man whose face turned pale with cold. (Aixingxingdeyu, 2014)

Dissatisfied reviewers

Although this activity left an exciting impression on the majority of reviewers, around ten tourists thought it was not exciting enough.

Do not recommend... highly not recommended... it's much less exciting than an amusement park. (Mlsymlsy, 2015)

Photography was another interesting factor. For safety reasons, camcorders, telephones and cameras were not allowed. Although many Chinese tourists would know that a stimulating and fast experience could easily make their device fall into the river, seven wrote that they regretted that they could not photograph the beautiful scenery themselves during this activity.

Unfortunately, we were not allowed to take pictures. The good impression just had to stay in our minds. (Tomandjerr, 2015)

4.2.2 Agrodome and Chinese tourist reviews

Agrodome was founded in 1971 and is majority owned by Ngāi Tahu Tourism (Travelyy, 2019). Agrodome is located on 350 acres of lush farmland in Rotorua (Ngāi Tahu Tourism, n.d.), and is a real working sheep and cattle farm (Ngāi Tahu Tourism, n.d.). Tourists at Agrodome can watch a farm show, go sightseeing on the farm, taste agricultural products, and have close encounters with the animals (Ngāi Tahu Tourism, n.d.). Apart from being owned by Ngāi Tahu Tourism, this destination did not reflect any Māori cultural content in its product (Agrodome, n.d.).

Figure 7

Agrodome



From *Ngāi Tahu Tourism*. <https://www.agrodome.co.nz>. Copyright 2020 by Ngāi Tahu Tourism.

Accreditations

Agrodome has achieved Qualmark Gold, which is for the best sustainable businesses in New Zealand, delivering excellent experiences to tourists (Agrodome, n.d.; Qualmark, n.d.-b). This business was also awarded a TripAdvisor certificate for excellence in 2019 (Agrodome, n.d.).

Figure 8

Agrodome Accreditations



4.2.2.1 Chinese visitor reviews

Agrodome had 114 reviews on Mafengwo and 59 reviews on Qiongyou between 2010 and June 2020. Its scenic location was highly acclaimed by the Chinese reviewers. The reviews were sorted in star ratings as presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Reviews' Rating of Agrodome on Mafengwo and Qiongyou

	Mafengwo 114 Total Reviews	Qiongyou 59 Total Reviews	Total
	89	30	119
	21	19	41
	3	7	10
	1	2	3
	0	1	1

There were several different key themes in the reviews: educational knowledge, the beautiful landscape of farmland, the novel and distinct activities, and the interesting commentaries. For many Chinese tourists, this was likely to be the first time that could enjoy an authentic farm, where they could learn new and basic farming knowledge and encounter new things. Agrodome presented an authentic and peaceful farm with different kinds of cute animals. The arrangements of Agrodome's activities were diverse, and included feeding the animals as well as eating local farm food. The Chinese narrators provided an interesting commentary that satisfied the reviewers.

Educational knowledge

The primary reason for reviewers to enjoy this tourist attraction was that they felt it was novel and educational in terms of animal husbandry; around 20 tourists expressed this view. It is not easy to see such large and natural farms in China. As Fengshengfeng wrote,

*Since there are no such big farms in China, we felt it was quite novel and fresh.
(Fengshengfeng, 2019)*

Because this might be the first time that the reviewers had seen some kinds of animals, it might have been a good opportunity for them to learn basic knowledge about animal husbandry and

meet animals they had never seen before. Tianyuxiaohuamao's travel note explained that such different animals may make Chinese tourists feel they were unusual and extremely interesting.

New Zealand has several livestock wonders, cows standing in line, sheep without a tail, animals wearing clothes, and alpaca. (Tianyuxiaohuamao, 2018)

Tourists were able to encounter all kinds of new things at Agrodome, such as a sheep shearing show, and different kinds of animal. The farm also provided explanations about New Zealand's farms from professional farmers. For tourists, these experiences were seen as a good opportunity to learn new knowledge. For example:

You can learn a lot of knowledge about different kinds of sheep. Different breeds of sheep can produce different wools! (Kongxindage, 2016)

Landscape - beautiful farmland with “cute” animals

A second reason for their satisfaction was the beautiful farmland. Almost 60 Chinese reviewers expressed the idea that they could not only enjoy beautiful scenery but experience untouched nature and a peaceful farm life with cute animals.

You can truly experience the unique beauty of pasture and farmland in here and get up close and personal with all kinds of cute animals. (Zuorideshijie, 2016)

Agrodome Farm is a very beautiful ranch with green grass and flowers everywhere, like a scenic park. (Kongxindage, 2016)

So-called “cute” animals, especially alpaca, left an impression on these Chinese tourists.

An alpaca is very intelligent. It will come back to you if you have food. If you do not give food to it, it will chase you or spit on you. (Miumiu_G, 2018)

Finally, I saw the alpaca I had been expecting for a long time. There are also many kinds of animals on the farm. What a good experience I had! (Babyvonne, 2018)

The arrangement of fascinating and distinctive activities

Thirdly, more than half the tourists' reviews said that activities in the Agrodome were fascinating and distinctive. Apart from one tourist, the reviewers gave high accolades to these three attractions.

They enjoyed and were involved in the performance and tasted the farm food. For example, from Jesun and Miumiu_G's feedbacks from Qiongyou and Mafengwo website,

At first, we fed the alpacas in order. After that, we started to taste kiwifruit and honey produced by the Agrodome. The highlight at the Agrodome is to watch the shearing performance. This performance is similar to a small story play with small plots. The main actors are farm animals. Of course, I have to say, the host's performance ability, the whole performance added a lot of lustre. To my critical eye, the performance is still wonderful. In addition, there were a lot of interactions and my children were chosen to go on stage to feed the lambs. All in all, children were really happy during this farm trip. (Jcsun, 2020)

Pasture also produces good Kiwi honey. Because of the low yield, Kiwi honey cannot be sold thus we can only eat it in the pasture! (Miumiu_G, 2018)

Interesting narrators

In addition, Agrodome provided narrators who spoke Chinese and were interesting, which increased the Chinese tourists' satisfaction. This was affirmed in 31 Chinese tourists' reviews.

The Chinese-speaking guide at the ranch is absolutely amazing and hilarious. His every sentence is a joke. I highly recommend this programme! (Baitiantian, 2019)

Unsatisfied reviewers

This kind of humour may not be fully accepted by all Chinese tourists. As Fengshengfeng and LonggeLukas mentioned:

The only drawback is the Chinese narrator. His tour guide makes me feels like I am in the 1990s. He always tells some vulgar jokes to adjust the atmosphere, but this antiquated joke is long gone in China... it's unbearable... (Fengshengfeng, 2019)

The guide on the bus was terrible. We were all kids and parents in the bus, and the guide was crazy and telling dirty jokes. Kids didn't get this, and the parents were extremely embarrassed. (LonggeLukas, 2017)

Of all the reviewers on the Agrodome, five felt that the processes were commercial and not natural enough. For example:

And it is inevitable that the programme process starts to be commercialised. (Datiao, 2019)

There were a further ten reviewers who wrote that they were not satisfied. Agrodome had many freely roaming animals, so tourists may have found it be unavoidable to have contact with animal waste.

Apart from the sheep shearing show, others are not good. Due to having plenty of animals, it is easy to see animals' wastes, but the show seat also had waste, which affected my mood. Besides, this place has too little variety in eating. (Yunjianyehe, 2018)

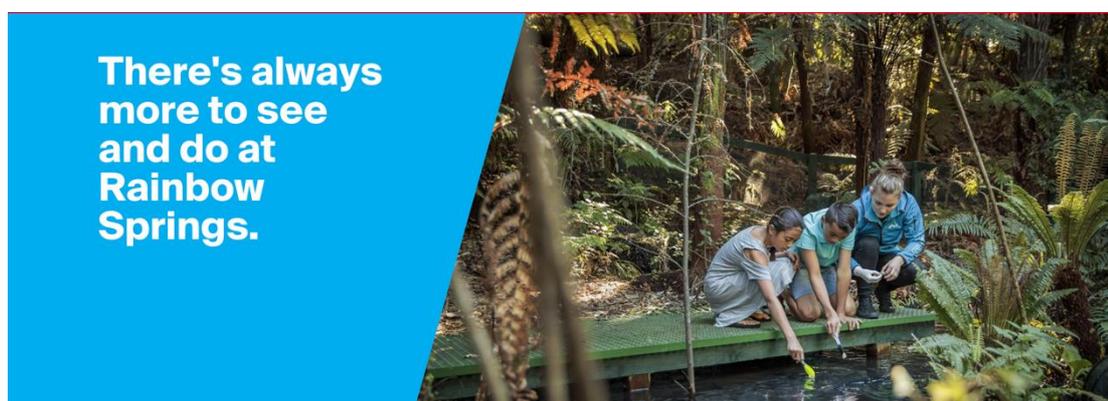
The taste of food was mentioned by six tourists, who also referred to a gift shop and food in the Agrodome that may not have been good. For example, they reported that the food taste was very ordinary, and it was expensive, the style of woollen fabrics was too old, and the prices in the gift shop were a little high.

4.2.3 Rainbow Springs and Chinese tourist reviews

Rainbow Springs is located amongst beautiful native trees and streams in Rotorua (Ngāi Tahu Tourism, n.d.). In 2004, Rainbow Springs Park was purchased by Ngāi Tahu Tourism (Rainbow Springs Nature Park, n.d.). Rainbow Springs Park maintained a sustainable culture sustainable and protection of the environment and animals (Rainbow Springs Nature Park, n.d.). Visitors were able to enjoy the adrenaline rush of the Big Splash and feed the birds (Ngāi Tahu Tourism, n.d.).

Figure 9

Rainbow Springs



From *Ngāi Tahu Tourism*. <https://www.rainbowsprings.co.nz>. Copyright 2020 by Ngāi Tahu Tourism.

Accreditations

As with Shotover Jet and the Agrodome, Rainbow Springs Nature Park had also achieved Qualmark Gold and was awarded a TripAdvisor certificate for excellence in 2019 (Rainbow Springs Nature Park, n.d.). Rainbow Springs Nature Park were also finalists for the Qualmark 100% pure New Zealand Experience Award. This award is used to recognise the business that makes significant contributions to local people, culture and scenery, and is only given once a year (Qualmark, n.d.-a).

Figure 10

Rainbow Springs Nature Park Accreditations



4.2.3.1 Chinese visitor reviews

There were 62 reviews from Chinese tourists on Mafengwo and Qiongyou between 2013 and June 2020; Mafengwo had 41 reviews and Qiongyou had 21 reviews. The reviews were sorted in star ratings as presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Review Ratings of Rainbow Springs on Mafengwo and Qiongyou

	Mafengwo 41 Total Reviews	Qiongyou 21 Total Reviews	Total
★★★★★	20	6	26
★★★★	17	9	25
★★★	3	4	7
★★	0	2	2

	1	0	1
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The three key reasons for the high star ratings were: educational significance of Rainbow Springs Nature Park, natural and beautiful environment, and variety of activities. The Chinese tourists were able to see animals and plants that they had never seen in China and learn about them. The beautiful and natural environment of Rainbow Springs Nature Park was attractive to Chinese tourists. They also enjoyed the various activities, such as looking at animals and plants, the bird show and the Big Splash.

Educational significance

Most reviewers gave well-deserved recognition to Rainbow springs. The Chinese tourists could see different and rare animals at the park. Around 30 tourists thought it had educational significance and they could also learn more about New Zealand.

This Rainbow Spring park is suitable for families with young children. Children can visit New Zealand's national bird, rainbow trout, etc., and learn knowledge about animals and plants. Just like taking children to the zoo in China, it is educational. (Aqi, 2016)

If you want to learn about New Zealand's unique and wonderful environment and wildlife, don't miss Rainbow Springs Park. Day or night, it offers a truly unique experience... During the Big Splash, you can learn about New Zealand's ecological development. (Woqulvxingwang, 2015)

Natural and beautiful environment

As the foregoing reviews mentioned, this park provided tourists with an original natural environment. Around half the tourists expressed that they enjoyed the beautiful environment of Rainbow Springs park.

The park is covered with lush forests, allowing visitors to enjoy natural, clear springs. (Laoyougui, 2018)

Various types of activities

The types of tour activities were various, and included a bird show, animal watching, and the exciting Big Splash. The multiple tour activities were able to meet the requirements of different tourists. Around ten tourists expressed that they preferred this kind of activity arrangement.

There are many rare animals in the park, such as New Zealand's nocturnal opossums, the prehistoric cold-blooded reptile known as New Zealand's living fossil, and the Kiwi Bird Exhibition hall especially built for the kiwi's living environment. You can also enjoy The Big Splash and dive down 12 metres to get your adrenaline pumping. (Woqulvxiwang, 2015)

Dissatisfied reviewers

However, more than a third of the Chinese reviewers felt their travelling was not worth the park ticket fee. The primary reason they came to the park was to see a kiwi. However, this kind of bird sleeps during the day and finds food at night. Thus, it is not easy to find them in a dim light. Thus, tourists may not always find the kiwi, and almost a third of the reviewers mentioned that they did not see the kiwi in the park.

It is really difficult to find the kiwi because this bird lives in a dark place. (Ilovetour, 2014)

I looked for a long time, but I still have not found New Zealand's national bird. It is such a pity. (Jinghongzuixue, 2014)

There were four people who thought the park was small.

This park is not recommended because it is small and expensive (NZD40). (SweetSkull, 2018)

On both Qiongyou and Mafengwo websites, it was apparent that detailed information was not updated in a timely manner.

We arrived today but it was closed at 17:30. I think the timetable was recently changed, and the tickets have been scrapped, too. What a pity. Pay attention to the opening hours on the website. (Kevin, 2019)

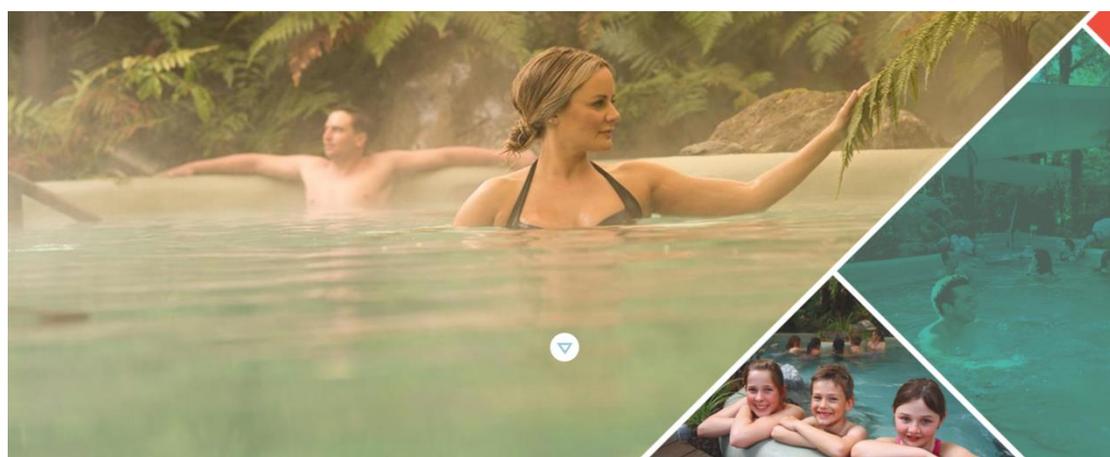
The timetable of this park is wrong in the introduction, you can't see the kiwi when you arrive at 5 pm, and now the closing time in summer is 5:30 pm, not 22:30 pm! (Septemberch, 2019)

4.2.4 Franz Josef Glacier Hot Pools and Chinese tourist reviews

Franz Josef Glacier Hot Pools are located in the Franz Josef village in a temperate rainforest (Ngāi Tahu Tourism, n.d.). The Glacier Hot Pools are owned by Ngāi Tahu Tourism and can provide a very New Zealand experience to tourists (Glacier Hot Pools, n.d.). There are three main pools for visitors to relax in (Ngāi Tahu Tourism, n.d.).

Figure 11

Hot Pools Advertisement



Nestled in lush rainforest, the Franz Josef Glacier Hot Pools are a haven of natural tranquility. Our pools are the perfect way to relax and unwind after travelling along Te Tai o Poutini (The West Coast).

From *Ngāi Tahu Tourism*. <https://www.glacierhotpools.co.nz>. Copyright 2020 by Ngāi Tahu Tourism.

4.2.4.1 Chinese Visitor Reviews

Franz Josef Glacier hot pools had 13 reviews, four on Mafengwo and nine on Qiongyou. The reviews were from 2016 to June 2020 and sorted in star ratings as presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Review Ratings of Franz Josef Glacier Hot Pools on Mafengwo and Qiongyou

	Mafengwo 4 Total Reviews	Qiongyou 9 Total Reviews	Total
★★★★★	3	5	8
★★★★	1	3	4
★★★	0	1	1

★★★ and ★	0	0	0
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Franz Josef Glacier Hot Pools relied on beautiful and natural scenery to appeal to Chinese tourists, and used long and flamboyant phrases to describe hot pool experiences.

Beautiful and natural scenery

For most Chinese tourists reviewing on Mafengwo and Qiongyou, the hot pool seemed to rely on beautiful and natural scenery as a place to rest during their New Zealand journey.

Franz Josef Glacier Hot Pools are located in dense forests. At night, we can see the stars in the night sky. The trees reflected in the water are dancing. It's a great place to relax and refresh yourself. (Yeming, 2016)

Dissatisfied reviewers

There were few negative reviews apart from those from two visitors who commented on the temperature of the pools not being hot enough.

There are only a few pools, and the highest temperature is only 40 degrees. (Senlindehuiyin, 2017)

4.3 Case Study Two - Māori culture-controlled tourism

The case for the *Māori culture-controlled tourism* category was made up of the four largest Māori tourism destinations packaged as Māori village tours. These villages are in the central North Island and built around the geothermal features of the area and natural landscape. These destinations share Māori culture through storytelling of the Māori tribal people's connection to their land. The Māori villages in the case were Mitai Māori village, Tamaki Māori Village, Tepuia and Whakarewarewa Thermal Village. This section includes Chinese tourists' reviews of Rotorua's Māori villages collected from Mafengwo and Qiongyou.

4.3.1 Te Puia and Chinese tourist reviews

Te Puia is located at Te Whakarewarewa Geothermal Valley of Rotorua (Te Puia, n.d.). In 2017, the ownership of Te Puia was transferred to *Te Arawa iwi* (Guy, 2017). Marketing to the Chinese

market on the business's website states that Te Puia is New Zealand's most sophisticated Māori cultural centre with two geysers (Te Puia, n.d.). One of the springs discharged up to 20 times a day, spewing a column of hot water up to 30 metres high (Te Puia, n.d.). Both the National Carving School and the National Textile School are located in Te Puia and allow tourists to learn about traditional Māori wood carving and weaving techniques (Te Puia, n.d.). There is also a woodcarving meeting place for visiting woodcarving, several galleries, and a kiwi sanctuary (Te Puia, n.d.). There are Māori musical performances and a Māori meal to be enjoyed each evening (Te Puia, n.d.).

Figure 12

Te Puia Advertisement



From *Te Puia*. <https://tepuia.com>. Copyright 2020 by Te Puia.

Accreditations

Te Puia has achieved Qualmark Gold Status (Te Puia, n.d.). That is, Te Puia was recognised as the highest quality of tourism enterprises, which means the Te Puia tourism experience is unique, safe, and environmentally sustainable (Qualmark, n.d.-b; Te Puia, n.d.).

Figure 13

Te Puia Accreditations



4.3.1.1 Chinese visitor reviews

On Qiongyou and Mafengwo, the number of tourists reviews about Te Puia were 32 and 52. The reviews were from 2013 to June 2020 and sorted in star ratings as presented in Table 7.

Table 7

Review Ratings of Te Puia on Mafengwo and Qiongyou

	Mafengwo 52 Total Reviews	Qiongyou 32 Total Reviews	Total
★★★★★	30	12	42
★★★★	16	18	34
★★★	3	2	5
★★ and ★	3	0	3

The landscape, Māori culture, and traditional Māori dishes in Te Puia made tourists feel impressive. At Te Puia, the geothermal geyser provided Chinese tourists with an amazing sight. They were surprised with the Māori culture, which included performance, handicrafts, and buildings. They found it enjoyable and the Māori dishes delicious.

Scenery

Almost 35 tourists mentioned spectacular sights in relation to the amazing geothermal geyser in Te Puia. For example, Lujunyi’s travel note explained,

The most interesting thing to watch is the mud pool where the clay and the water mix to form a diffuse steam. From a distance, it looks like a brownish-black marsh. From a closer look, it keeps bubbling and spraying mud, showing the vitality of the earth. (Lujunyi, 2018)

Māori culture experience

Māori culture is one of highlights of Te Puia. Around 20 tourists expressed their affection for Māori culture at this attraction. Tourists were able to watch Māori performances and handicraft making and go sightseeing around to the traditional Māori buildings.

There are written, graphic and multimedia materials in the Māori culture pavilion, while the Māori performance, especially when they stick out their tongues, staring and shouting, left us a very strong impression. All kinds of wood carvings are in the village, exquisite and expressive, and the use of various shells and gems make these become very precious folk-art works. (Kongxindage, 2016)

Traditional Māori food

The traditional meal provided by Te Puia was mentioned by five reviewers, who wanted to try it and perhaps enjoy love it.

Dissatisfied reviewer

However, compared with the Māori culture in Te Puia, more reviewers said that the natural scenery had left them with a greater impression. For the majority of tourists, Māori culture in Te Puia was not so impressive. As Fengyerudan said in his review,

...the character of a Māori cultural village is not in Māori culture. (Fengyerudan, 2018)

It may be that Māori culture in Te Puia was not shown sufficiently and well to attract Chinese tourists.

4.3.2 Tamaki Māori Village

The Tamaki Māori Village is a collection of ancient Māori houses that have been restored to reveal the most complete form of Māori culture (Tamaki Māori Village, n.d.). Mike Tamaki was the director and founding owner of Tamaki Māori Village (Tamaki Māori Village, n.d.). In 2018, Tamaki Māori Village started to cooperate with one of the biggest tourism operators in Rotorua, Tauhara North Tourism and Company (NZherald, 2018). The *mana whenua* (the land), *mana tangata* (the people) and *mana atua* (the spirit) are the three heart pillars of Tamaki Māori Village (Tamaki Māori Village, n.d.). In the centre of the Tamaki Māori village is an exhibition of unique

Māori sculptures inside, making it the best place for visitors to learn about Māori culture (Tamaki Māori Village, n.d.).

Figure 14

The Activities of Tamaki Māori Village



KIA KOTAHĪ TĀTOU | WE ARE ONE

This is our company whakatauki, a proverb completely expressive and depictive of the values we live and breathe here.

From *Tamaki Māori Village*. <https://www.takamimaorivillage.co.nz>. Copyright 2020 by Tamaki Māori Village.

Accreditations

Tamaki Māori Village was given the seventh best experience in the world award by TripAdvisor’s Traveler’s Choice and the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence award in 2018 (Tamaki Māori Village, n.d.). Tamaki Māori Village was voted as one of the top10 experiences in the world and also gained the Qualmark Mark Silver award (Tamaki Māori Village, n.d.).

Figure 15

Tamaki Māori Village Accreditations



4.3.2.1 Chinese visitor reviews

On Qiongyou and Mafengwo, the number of tourists reviews of Tamaki Māori Village were 43 and 15. The reviews were from 2013 to 2019 and sorted in star ratings as presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Review Ratings of Tamaki Māori Village on Mafengwo and Qiongyou

	Mafengwo 43 Total Reviews	Qiongyou 15 Total Reviews	Total
★★★★★	18	5	23
★★★★	19	9	28
★★★	4	1	5
★★★ and ★	2	0	2

The Māori culture experience and beautiful landscape were two major attractions for the reviewers. Chinese tourists were able to enjoy Māori culture with a rich Māori atmosphere in Tamaki Māori village, and as with other New Zealand attractions, tourists were drawn to the beautiful landscape.

Māori culture

Of all the reviews, 34 reflected that the main attraction of Tamaki Māori Village was the rich Māori culture. From the reviews, it was evident that Tamaki Village arranged a traditional Māori style welcome ceremony for the tourists' arrival. After that, the village prepared a wonderful Māori dance performance. Tourists were introduced to the culture, handicrafts, and history of the Māori people, and in the evening, they were able to enjoy traditional Māori food. Several (20) tourists said they really enjoyed the Māori atmosphere, which helped them have a better experience and understand the Māori culture. For example, from Pjzhang's review,

An important task for each vehicle is to select a chief who will later travel to the Māori village to deal with the aborigines on behalf of the entire caravan. In this Māori village, enthusiasm will issue a challenge of the Māori people of peace at the invitation of a warrior who will take a spear, posing with some scary sticks and other weapons to test the visitor. If Māori people think you are a friend, he will make hongi with you. Visitors can learn about weaving art and Māori dance. The most interesting thing is that they cook delicious food in a Māori oven, which is a traditional Māori cooking method that uses geothermal heat or heated stones to cook delicious food. (Pjzhang, 2016)

Beautiful landscape

A total of 13 tourists expressed their attraction to the beautiful scenery in Tamaki Māori Village.

Treedxcy wrote that

...this place is like a surreal fairyland! (Treedxcy, 2015)

Dissatisfied reviewers

However, three tourists mentioned that in comparison with others, this Māori village was not much different. This might be because the characteristics of Tamaki Māori Village may be not have been sufficiently outstanding. Furthermore, in two reviews, the tourists wrote that they did not fully understand Māori culture and it might be better to have a Chinese guide interpreter.

4.3.3 Whakarewarewa Thermal Village

This village is a living traditional Māori cultural village and is the heritage and home of *Tuhourangi-Ngati Wahiao* (Wikitera & Bremner, 2017). Whakarewarewa is located amongst geothermal activity and a living Māori village south of Rotorua (Wikitera & Bremner, 2017). This thermal village was owned and operated by local residents (Whakarewarewa, n.d.). Hot springs can be seen everywhere in the village and the highest potential temperature of the spring water was 120 degrees (Whakarewarewa, n.d.). In 1998, Whakarewarewa Thermal Village started to operate as a tourism business (Wikitera & Bremner, 2017). The aim of this village was to protect its heritage, culture, and traditions (Whakarewarewa, n.d.). Its tradition followed some principles, including *kaitiakitanga* (resources guardian), *manaakitanga* (excellent hospitality), *matauranga Māori* (sharing and protecting the culture and history), and *taonga tuku iho* (heritage custodians) (Whakarewarewa, n.d.).

Figure 16

Whakarewarewa Thermal Village Advertisement



From *Whakarewarewa*. <https://www.whakarewarewa.com>. Copyright 2018 by Whakarewarewa Thermal Village Tours.

Accreditations

Whakarewarewa has achieved Qualmark Gold (Whakarewarewa, n.d.). This destination gained a TripAdvisor certificate of excellence from 2018 to 2019 and the 2018 Travelers' Choice Award (Whakarewarewa, n.d.). It is a member of the Rotorua Sustainable Tourism Charter and Tourism Industry Aotearoa (Whakarewarewa, n.d.). The village is committed to sustainable tourism and cooperates with the Department of Conservation to ensure sustainable development of the natural environment (Whakarewarewa, n.d.). GNSScience is an important partner of Whakarewarewa Village (Whakarewarewa, n.d.). In terms of *tiaki*, this village promised to protect its place (Whakarewarewa, n.d.).

Figure 17

Whakarewarewa Thermal Village Accreditations



4.3.3.1 Chinese visitor reviews

Whakarewarewa Thermal Village received 45 reviews, seven on Mafengwo and 38 on Qiongyou. The reviews were from 2013 to 2019 and sorted in star ratings as presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Review Ratings of Whakarewarewa Thermal Village on Mafengwo and Qiongyou

	Mafengwo 7 Total Reviews	Qiongyou 38 Total Reviews	Total
★★★★★	1	17	18
★★★★	5	14	19
★★★	1	2	3
★★ and ★	0	0	0

Landscape and Māori culture

The reviews of Whakarewarewa Māori Village were similar to those for other Māori villages analysed earlier. Around 15 tourists mentioned the beautiful landscape – the geothermal scenery and the natural environment. The reviews of 14 tourists mentioned that Māori culture was presented in performance, handicrafts, and buildings.

Unsatisfied reviewer

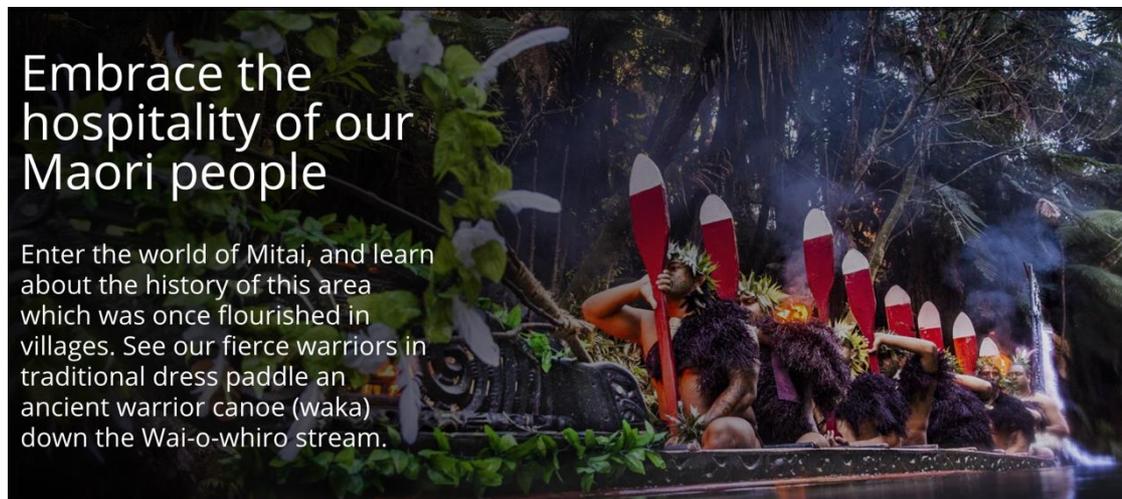
Unfortunately, two tourists who had visited these two destinations mentioned they had not understood the performance because they did not understand English.

4.3.4 Mitai Māori Village

Mitai Māori Village is a Māori cultural Village located in Rotorua (Mitai Māori Village, n.d.). This family business was owned by Wetini Mitai, an award-winning performer (Discover Aotearoa, 2020). At Mitai tourists can watch Māori performances, learn about Māori customs, taste their food, see Māori warriors in traditional costumes, Māori canoes (*waka*), and appreciate and learn about Māori carving culture (Mitai Māori Village, n.d.). In addition to the culture, there are also habitats for glow-worms (Mitai Māori Village, n.d.).

Figure 18

Mitai Māori Village Advertisement



From *Mitai Māori Village*. <https://www.mitai.co.nz>. Copyright 2019 by Mitai Māori Village.

4.3.4.1 Chinese visitor reviews

There were 25 tourists reviews of Mitai Māori Village: 13 from Qiongyou and 12 from Mafengwo.

The reviews were from 2013 to 2018 and sorted in star ratings as presented in Table 10.

Table 10

Review Ratings of Mitai Māori Village on Mafengwo and Qiongyou

	Mafengwo 12 Total Reviews	Qiongyou 13 Total Reviews	Total
★★★★★	7	5	12
★★★★	4	3	7
★★★	1	4	5

 and 	0	1	1
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The review content of Mitai Village was also similar to that of other Māori villages analysed earlier, except apart from Māori culture and landscape, many tourists mentioned the traditional Māori food of this village.

Food

Mitai Māori Village provided an extensive Māori buffet. Except Māori food, this place also provided various salads (e.g. vegetable salad, potato salad), chowder, steamed potatoes, kumara, chicken, lamb and gravy (Discover Aotearoa, 2020). In the reviews, five tourists used words such as “delicacy,” “delicious,” or “excellent cuisine,” to describe the traditional Māori food of Mitai Māori Village. The buffet was also suitable for vegetarians; one reviewer mentioned that that Mitai served vegetarian food.

Dissatisfied reviewers

Of all the reviewers, three expressed that Māori Village destinations were all much of a muchness. One tourist wrote,

In fact, there are several Māori cultural villages in Rotorua. If tourists would like to experience Māori culture, they just need to choose one village. (Ladylee520, 2016)

4.4 Summary

Overall, the findings of this study show that the two kinds of Māori indigenous tourism destinations, diversified Māori indigenous tourism and Māori culture-controlled tourism, were fascinating for the majority of Chinese visitors. The reviewers expressed their feelings, both positive and negative. There was no one destination that fully satisfied the Chinese tourists but this is perhaps inevitable. Although this study chose different kinds of tourism product, the Chinese visitors evaluated each one highly. These positive and negative reviews can provide important information about how to better promote and deliver Māori tourism destinations to Chinese visitors.

5 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents discussion of the research findings, relevant literature and thematic analysis of the qualitative data on ‘Chinese visitor perceptions of Māori indigenous tourism destinations’. The chapter aim is to present the key themes that respond to the research questions: what are Chinese visitor perceptions of Māori tourism destinations?, what are the key themes to Chinese visitor satisfaction?, and what do Māori tourism destinations promote and deliver to the Chinese market?

5.2 What are Chinese visitors’ perceptions of Māori indigenous tourism destinations?

The contents of the findings chapter provide for the overall response to this question. The Chinese reviews are representative of all Chinese visitors and reflect their overall perceptions. The majority of Chinese visitors had a high opinion of Māori tourism. From the Chinese visitor reviews, it was evident that they were especially attracted to the beautiful landscapes of New Zealand. In Māori tourism destinations, they experienced and enjoyed the natural views, and along with Māori culture resulted in Chinese visitors reporting a multi-sensory experience. It is worth noting that Māori tourism destinations utilised their cultural connection to the natural landscapes and this comes through in visitor responses. The story’s and Māori representations associated with the natural environment enhanced the tourists’ experiences. There was a variety of different attractions in the Māori destinations, such as cultural shows, adventure and tours which ensured the Chinese tourists did not get bored. Chinese visitors were particularly impressed by the kind and attentive service. For Chinese visitors, it was not only a Māori cultural experience but also a journey of learning. Chinese visitors felt that they could temporarily become involved in the local culture and gained an understanding of Māori culture. When sightseeing, they enjoyed learning new knowledge.

Although Māori tourism destinations found favour with most reviewers, visitors reported some negative points. The discrepancies between their expectations and the real situation related

primarily to cultural differences, such as language barriers and perceived commercialisation of the destinations. These points were presented by several Chinese visitors about specific destinations but were not the common impressions of the visitors.

5.3 Key themes of Chinese visitor satisfaction

5.3.1 *Diversified Māori tourism*

From the collection of Chinese tourists' reviews, according to their reflections, the key themes of *diversified Māori tourism* in relation to Chinese visitor satisfaction were natural scenery, cultural experience, the arrangement of tour activities, and service quality.

5.3.1.1 *Beautiful natural scenery*

As mentioned in the literature review, the pollution-free beautiful natural landscape, such as lakes, mountains, and rivers, has a particular attraction for Chinese tourists (Li et al., 2011a). This was also evident in the content of the reviews. For both diversified Māori indigenous tourism destinations and Māori culture-controlled tourism destinations, the beautiful landscape was discussed by most reviewers. Chinese visitors to New Zealand wrote lovely expressions of their affection for the landscape.

When experiencing Shotover Jet, visitors enjoyed the shimmering lake and gained maximum visual contact with the lake. At the Agrodome, Chinese visitors lost themselves in the green meadows and were fascinated by the farm animals. At Rainbow Springs park, the natural environment had a deep impression of beauty and nature, and at the Franz Josef Glacier Hot Pools, they enjoyed relaxing under the stars. The reviews all showed that the New Zealand natural landscape played an important part in Chinese visitor satisfaction. This aligns to the key focus of landscapes and culture in the New Zealand tourism strategy.

5.3.1.2 *New cultural experiences*

Suntikul et al., (2016) assert that apart from the beautiful New Zealand landscape, Chinese visitors also enjoy the different cultures of the host country. From the tourists' reviews of the Agrodome, Rainbow Springs and the three Māori villages, cultural experiences were an essential factor of

Chinese visitor satisfaction. These were not solely related to the Māori culture as visitors also enjoyed the unique New Zealand cultural aspects of farming and protection of wildlife. At the Agrodome, tourists expressed that they could experience the advanced animal husbandry culture of New Zealand and learn livestock knowledge. At Rainbow Springs Park, they learnt about the protection of New Zealand's national bird, the kiwi. In addition, they were able to get an understanding of native animals and plant use in New Zealand. Chinese visitors may have had little or no exposure to Māori culture before, so while enjoying various tourism activities, Chinese tourists also enjoyed the rich culture and had the opportunity to gain specialised knowledge about those cultures.

5.3.1.3 Co-ordination of tour activities

From the tourists' reviews and travel notes, the co-ordination of tour itineraries and activities rated highly in satisfaction. Chinese tourists reported there were a wide range of activities. Shotover Jet provided two types of tours for tourists. This flexible arrangement was able to meet the different requirements of different tourist groups such as families and young thrill seekers. The diversified Māori destinations arranged a range of activities. For example, the Agrodome provided activities such as a sheep shearing show, animal feeding, farm food tasting, and so forth. At Rainbow Springs Park, tourists were able to see various wildlife, watch bird shows, and experience the exciting Big Splash water ride. The combination of a variety of activities enriched the cultural content of attractions and lead Chinese visitors to feel like they had a meaningful experience at the destinations. When travelling in a destination, if one activity did not appeal to the Chinese tourists, there were other opportunities or activities on offer that increased their satisfaction.

5.3.1.4 High levels of service quality

High service quality is also a key theme influencing Chinese visitor satisfaction. According to the tourists' reviews, Shotover Jet and Agrodome provided wonderful service to the Chinese tourists. The drivers of Shotover Jet were skilled at driving the jet boats and they demonstrated a deep knowledge of the river. They provided explanations about the formation of the Shotover gorge and river leading to confidence in the driver's ability. Tourists enjoyed an exciting adventure. At

the Agrodome, Chinese interpreters were found to be interesting and knowledgeable, and could make the Chinese visitors laugh with their jokes. This kind of tour guide won the admiration and satisfaction of plenty of Chinese visitors. However, the jokes also made some Chinese visitors write that they were old-fashioned and boring, so that they were unsatisfied and gave low grades to the Agrodome. From these situations, it can be seen that service quality plays an important role in improving Chinese visitor satisfaction. Having Chinese translations was also considered an important factor in satisfaction.

5.3.2 *Māori culture-controlled tourism*

From the Chinese tourists' reviews, the key themes of the Māori culture-controlled tourism destinations related to the natural landscapes, Māori cultural experiences, and traditional Māori food.

5.3.2.1 *Natural landscapes*

There are many beautiful landscapes around Māori villages, with traditional natural scenery and geothermal geysers. At different Māori villages, the Chinese were curious about the thermal wonders and natural landscape. As mentioned before, Chinese visitors like natural scenery such as mountains and rivers (Li et al., 2011a). It is widely recognised that New Zealand is known for its beautiful natural scenery. The landscapes around the Māori villages were considered breathtaking. Moreover, compared with ordinary rivers and mountains, the thermal landscapes, for example in Te Puia and Whakarewarewa Thermal Village, were unusual to the Chinese visitors. Thus, the spectacular thermal scenery had great appeal to these tourists. The majority of Chinese visitors who visited the Māori villages, with geothermal geyser scenery, marvelled at the beauty of the magnificent geysers and jet fountains.

5.3.2.2 *Māori cultural experience*

As representatives of the indigenous culture of New Zealand, the Māori Villages are focussed on Māori cultural tourism. From the literature review, it was apparent that not only are landscapes enjoyed, but Chinese visitors also enjoy the special culture of the Māori (Suntikul et al., 2016).

The Māori villages offer various activities for tourists, such as Māori dance performances, showing Māori traditional handicrafts and how to make them, Māori food tasting, and other Māori cultural experiences. These Māori villages offer activities and provide Chinese tourists with opportunities to gain an understanding of the Māori culture. For example, Chinese tourists were able to be involved in some Māori performances and feedback showed that this level of engagement was attractive to the visitors. At the Māori tourism destinations, the unique Māori culture was attractive to Chinese tourists.

Tasting traditional food was another method of experiencing the local culture. As mentioned earlier, Chinese visitors pay attention to the local foods when they are travelling (Suntikul et al., 2016). For Chinese visitors to Māori villages, food was another factor impacting their feelings and satisfaction. All three Māori villages provide Māori traditional food for tourists. Although Mitai Māori Village had few reviews, the food there gained more positive reviews than the other Māori villages. The variety and richness of a Māori food buffet gained consistently high praise from Chinese visitors.

5.4 How to promote and deliver Māori tourism destinations to Chinese visitors

5.4.1 Pay attention to the tourist seasons

At present, the aim of the New Zealand Tourism marketing campaign in China is to show Chinese travellers what to see and do in less accessible parts of New Zealand or the outer regions. Also to promote tourist interest in visiting in the spring and autumn outside of the peak tourist season (Tourism New Zealand, n.d.). This strategy is to mitigate over tourism in key tourist locations and to promote a larger spread of tourism development throughout the country. Consequently, there has been an increase in the number of Chinese visitor arrivals in New Zealand during the Spring season (Tourism New Zealand, n.d.).

Tourism New Zealand identified that many of the Chinese visitors preferred travelling during the Chinese New Year (Chinese Spring Festival) which is in February (Tourism New Zealand, n.d.). February is the New Zealand summer and while it is the peak season for tourism, the Chinese New Year is a key travel time for Chinese tourists. Māori tourism might not only focus on Spring and Autumn but see the Chinese Spring Festival.

5.4.2 Service quality

The Chinese visitors' reviews of the diversified Māori and Māori culture-controlled tourism destinations show the general level of Māori tourism businesses service quality satisfaction is high. While there are high satisfaction levels there is some room for improvement. Language or communication was a barrier for some as most translations were from Māori to English. A lack of understanding what was happening led to a few negative comments. However, where there was Chinese translations, there was also some negative responses. For example, due to the wonderful guiding and humour, the Chinese interpreter at the Agrodome gained the satisfaction of the majority of Chinese visitors. However, these kinds of jokes were seen as tasteless and inappropriate by some families with young children.

5.4.3 Employ more Chinese employees

In some Māori destinations, it was apparent the tourists could not fully understand the cultural performances. Primarily this was due to being newly introduced to the Māori culture and language barriers in that they could not understand the English and/or Māori language (Li et al., 2011b). Because of cultural differences, the expectation of Chinese visitors did not seem to be understood well by both western business as well as Māori business. It is recommended therefore that Māori business consider employing the help of Chinese advisors that have an understanding of Chinese business and expectations. These advisors can become an important bridge for communicating between Chinese and Māori. They can not only help Chinese visitors to better understand Māori culture but also help Māori businesses understand the expectation of Chinese visitors. Chinese language services can also be deemed as a selling point to attract more Chinese visitors.

5.4.4 Increase cultural engagement and differentiate between Māori destinations

Chinese tourists show a keen interest in exotic cultures (Suntikul et al., 2016). One of the main reasons for them to travel to New Zealand is to experience the Māori culture. While the Māori culture is a key part of New Zealand's marketing, the Chinese tourist responses reflected more on the beautiful natural landscapes than Māori culture. This can be seen that what impressed those

Chinese visitors most might be natural environment and that the presentation of Māori culture in Māori tourism businesses might not be strong enough.

The different Māori destinations provide different kinds of activities for tourists. The Maori villages provide Māori cultural performance, listen to Māori stories related to the people and place, learn about Māori handcrafts, try Māori food and so forth. The other ‘diversified Maori tourism’ destinations offer limited Maori cultural products. From the literature, Chinese visitors like to participate in cultural experience (Otafiire et al., 2019). Thus, Māori destinations should consider providing more chances for Chinese visitors to engage in Māori culture.

In addition to increasing Maori cultural engagement, the Māori village destinations should consider differentiating their offerings from one village to the other. For example, the responses from Chinese tourists that visited more than one village indicated that they did not see too many differences. They felt that it is enough to visit one Māori village which influenced their satisfaction.

5.4.5 Check Chinese online information in a timely manner

Because Chinese visitors prefer to book their travelling plans online (Tourism New Zealand, n.d.), Māori tourism business might pay more attention to reviewing the Chinese tourism web based activity such as Chinese marketing and social media. The website information of destinations is an important resource for attracting Chinese visitors. Chinese tourism websites, for example Mafengwo and Qiongyou, destination information is comprehensive, including contact numbers, location, opening hours, attractions and so forth. However, there is a lack of information or inaccurate information provided about this study’s destinations on those sites. Social media and tourist feedback provide descriptions of some destinations and main tourist attractions, sightseeing programmes and processes. Chinese tourists’ reviews showed that due to wrong information on the Chinese websites, they were unable to go to the Māori tourism destinations. Māori Tourism businesses need to address promoting to the Chinese market by regularly scanning and updating website information and focus publicity more on the Chinese web-based network platform.

There is a large amount of feedback and suggestions about Māori tourism destinations on Chinese websites. Comparing with TripAdvisor, Chinese visitors like to share their experiences on Chinese websites, such as Mafengwo and Qiongyou. To improve marketing and attracting Chinese visitors, Chinese websites review, and promotions would improve the visibility of Māori business to this important market. Māori tourism business may then adjust their offerings to include Chinese visitor's reviews, especially unsatisfied reviews. Depending on this, Māori tourism business may gain useful ideas about how to promote and deliver their business to Chinese visitors.

5.5 Summary

In summary, the findings show the key themes to Chinese visitor's satisfaction of Māori destinations which are landscapes, service quality, cultural experience and the co-ordination of tour activities and itineraries. These factors influence the satisfaction of Chinese visitors. Based on these factors, this research drew on relevant literature and analysed the tourist reviews to highlight areas of improvement to promote and deliver Māori tourism destinations to the Chinese market. Maori destinations must focus on publicity, service quality, differentiation of Māori cultural products between destinations and regular scanning of Chinese visitor's reviews to attract Chinese visitors as well as serve this markets expectations to achieve and sustain high satisfaction levels.

It must be mentioned that this research specifically used Ngāi Tahu business as representative of the 'diversified Māori tourism' sector and the three Māori villages representing the 'Māori culture-controlled' tourism sector. These are just a few of the many Māori tourism destinations in New Zealand. That means that the research has taken just a small sample in comparison to Māori tourism destinations as a whole within New Zealand.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

New Zealand's tourism industry is a key part of the nation's economy and Māori tourism is an important sector of the industry as it not only provides a unique point of difference in the global tourism context but also encourages social, economic, and cultural development for local communities. The intention of this research was to explore the Chinese visitor perceptions of Māori tourism from Chinese on-line content and a literature review to provide further insight into this important tourist market in New Zealand. This chapter presents a summary of the research objectives and main findings, as well as highlighting the limitations of this research and offering options for future research directions.

6.2 Research objectives and key findings

The overall research intention was to explore Chinese visitor perspectives of Māori indigenous tourism. This was divided into two parts: a literature review and a web-based study.

Firstly, the literature review was undertaken to contextualise the research regarding Chinese tourists and also to establish what Māori tourism is and provide a background to the types of destinations that should be considered in the research.

The research introduced Māori tourism from two aspects: *diversified Māori indigenous tourism* and *Māori culture-controlled tourism*. Ngāi Tahu Tourism was selected and discussed as a case study of diversified Māori tourism. For the Māori culture-control tourism category, four Māori tourism villages were selected as Case 2.

The concepts and theories related to indigenous culture and Māori tourism were expounded in the literature review. Indigenous culture was defined as including traditional beliefs, values, history, and religions, from one generation to the next, and deeply rooted in the lifestyle of the indigenous people. Māori culture is no exception and has still developed over time and through tourism. The history of Māori tourism describes the changes and how their culture is presented. Their culture is not just presented by showing themselves but the showing is underpinned by the values and

business decision-making. Their values underpin Māori tourism business and now underpin national tourism strategy.

The literature on Chinese tourists contextualised the Chinese market in New Zealand and provided some background about outbound tourism from China, the study context, and the perceptions of Chinese tourists. With the economic development and the growth in the living standard of Chinese, outbound tourism is developing fast in China. New Zealand depends on its natural beautiful landscape and unique Māori culture and has become one of the most popular destinations for Chinese visitors.

However, due to cultural differences, Western tourism businesses may find it difficult to fully understand Chinese expectations. For better servicing of the Chinese market to New Zealand, the perceptions of Chinese visitors were summarised. The obvious perceptions of Chinese visitors include preferring places with natural and beautiful landscapes, and cultural experiences. The Chinese depend on web-based bookings and seek interactive tourist experiences.

Secondly, a web scan was conducted on Chinese perspectives for the two case studies, underpinned by these three key objectives:

- What are Chinese visitor perceptions of Māori indigenous tourism destinations?
- What are the key themes in Chinese visitor satisfaction?
- How do Māori tourism destinations promote and deliver to the Chinese market?

1. The perspectives of Chinese visitors

According to the analysis of reviews from the two cases, the overall findings of the research were that the majority of Chinese visitors enjoyed the Māori indigenous tourism destinations and had high expectations of almost every destination. Due to the high levels of satisfaction, Māori tourism is considered high quality for Chinese visitors to New Zealand. Māori tourism trips are not just simple travelling activities for Chinese visitors, but involve cultural, natural, recreational, and educational factors. However, Chinese visitors also had some unsatisfactory experiences at

specific Māori destinations. The main reason for unsatisfactory visits was related to cultural differences, misunderstandings, and different habits.

2. Key themes in Chinese visitors' satisfaction

Based on Chinese visitor perceptions and literature, this research summarised key themes related to visitors' satisfaction in order to better understand and improve their satisfaction. Two key themes were the landscapes and culture experiences. In both types of Māori destinations, diversified Māori tourism destinations and Māori culture-controlled destinations, the satisfaction of Chinese visitors with beautiful or natural landscapes and culture were commonly mentioned in reviews and travel notes. This result was in agreement with the literature and can be seen as a key theme of satisfaction. Chinese visitors like to choose their time and may have private reasons to choose and customise their diversified Māori tour. The diverse tour activities in diversified Māori destinations also obtained consistently high praise from Chinese visitors. These two factors were attributed to the reasonable arrangement of tour activities and were also key themes. The service quality perceived by Chinese visitors was also one of the key themes and directly affected satisfaction.

3. Promote and deliver Māori tourism destinations to the Chinese market

Through the analysis undertaken in the previous two steps and based on the literature, this study has provided specific measures from four points to elaborate on development strategies for catering to the Chinese market.

From a publicity aspect, the latest data showed the peak Chinese tourist seasons were spring and summer. These data also suggest that aside from these two seasons, the best travelling period is during Chinese Spring Festival. Not only Māori businesses, but New Zealand tourism business generally, may find it useful to increase advertising during these periods.

In addition, as mentioned before, service quality is one of the key themes impacting the satisfaction of Chinese visitors. From the visitors' reviews, because of language and cultural

differences, Chinese language services can be seen as an attraction for Chinese visitors. Also, employees can change their style of service for Chinese visitors in different age groups.

For Māori cultural businesses, keeping their unique characteristics can be seen as important. Chinese visitors may enjoy the diversity of Māori culture experiences. Lastly, Chinese travelling websites are important sources for attracting Chinese visitors and Māori businesses may find it useful to allocate more time and energy to operate on these.

6.3 Limitations of the study and future research directions

This study faced several limitations. The large scope of the Māori tourism sector meant that this research was only able to select a small sample of the industry to study. Future research could collect a large sample and increase the number of sources to include more Māori businesses in different tourism enterprises of New Zealand.

Due to the information available on the websites, the data did not include demographic information. Therefore, the study was not able to break the reviews into age groups, gender, and types of tourist, thus limiting a deeper exploration of the Chinese visitors' perspectives based on differing demographics.

In the early stages of the research, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the world. Due to the border restrictions and timeframes of the research project, this research-scope was not able to include interviews and was restricted to web-based research. Thus, the timeliness of online information and the researcher subjectivity of translation and codes grouping influenced the research findings.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically impacted the tourism industry globally. This research did not factor in these large changes. COVID-19 impacts not only Māori tourism destinations but the whole tourism industry in New Zealand. Due to a lack of international tourists, Tourism New Zealand decided to restart tourism and transfer their operation strategy (Tourism New Zealand, 2020b). The strategies include Respond, Kickstart and Reimagine (Tourism New Zealand, 2020b). "Respond" was initiated to address the tourism situation both currently and in the future, and to address the relevant tourism actions and support (Tourism New Zealand, 2020b).

The meaning of “kickstart” was to encourage domestic tourism at present and encourage international tourism when the time was right (Tourism New Zealand, 2020b). To “reimagine” is to look forward to the future (Tourism New Zealand, 2020b). While this study did not include the dramatic impact of the pandemic on Māori tourism, the findings could inform the Tourism New Zealand direction with regard to reimagining the future. Further research is needed on how the strategies of Tourism New Zealand, and Māori tourism businesses do in the post COVID-19 period.

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