



# Understanding Amusement Park Experiences from Perspective of Customer Value in Chinese Culture

Hongyun Kuang<sup>1</sup>, Qian Xiao<sup>2,\*</sup>, Xiaohan Duan<sup>1</sup>, Yawen He<sup>1</sup>, Zafarjon Abdurakhmonov<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Economics and Management, Shanghai Polytechnic University, Shanghai, China

<sup>2</sup>Higher Vocational and Technical College, Shanghai University of Engineering Science, Shanghai, China

## Email address:

hykuang@sspu.edu.cn (Hongyun Kuang), bluetassel@163.com (Qian Xiao), dxh013@163.com (Xiaohan Duan),

hywxian@foxmail.com (Yawen He), Aurorabox99@gmail.com (Zafarjon Abdurakhmonov)

\*Corresponding author

## To cite this article:

Hongyun Kuang, Qian Xiao, Xiaohan Duan, Yawen He, Zafarjon Abdurakhmonov. (2024). Understanding Amusement Park Experiences from Perspective of Customer Value in Chinese Culture. *International Journal of Economics, Finance and Management Sciences*, 12(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ijefm.20241201.11>

**Received:** October 18, 2023; **Accepted:** November 9, 2023; **Published:** January 8, 2024

---

**Abstract:** China's theme park market has kept the fast-expanding development. The growth rate of the theme park's attendance is continuously rising, an increasing number of international companies are actively planning to establish their influence by launching theme parks in China. China has become fertile ground for global theme park investments. Theme parks play a significant role in a globally growing experience economy. Customer value is a key marketing variable for its capacity to drive consumption. Multiple studies have explored dimensions related to theme park experience. But few research have explored from tourists' perspective the customer value of theme park tourism among specific cultural groups, as values is closely related with culture. This study aims to explore the consumer value of amusement park experience in China. Content analysis revealed a typology of five experiential value dimensions (altruistic value, economic value, emotional experience, hedonic value, educational value) situated within a four-quadrant framework, addressing how amusement park tourism in Chinese cultural background can enrich the original domains of Holbrook's value typologies. Moreover, these dimensions offer a comprehensive perspective on how visitors perceive and derive value from theme park experiences. These results lay a theoretical foundation for future studies and provide practical implications for promotion and experience design for the Chinese market, it will also contribute to the ongoing success of theme parks in China's rapidly developing consumer landscape.

**Keywords:** Tourism Experience, Customer Value, Amusement Parks, Chinese Culture

---

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, theme parks are a fast-developing phenomenon in China. Some famous international companies have entered the Chinese market such as Disneyland, Universal studio and Six Flags Inc, while others including Merlin Group have plans to establish parks in China. Statistics of the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) indicate that the top 25 theme parks worldwide received approximately 244 million visitors in 2017, of which China attracted about one-quarter. The theme park market in China is expected to exceed the United States and become the globally largest themed amusement market [72]. Due to its' fast rate of market expansion and significant

global market scale, China's theme park has inevitably become a vital theme park research area.

As an efficient means to show the charm of local history and culture to tourists, a theme park is a kind of cultural tourism that meet the needs of new era consumers for cultural creativity and interaction. Theme parks are also considered as hedonic services [5] that provide fun, pleasure and experiential consumption. Experiences are increasingly important for providing value to customers and for the success of an organization [54], and theme park is a quintessential experiential product.

In previous research on theme park experiences, two main areas of discussion emerge. The first focuses on causal relationship between experience and other constructs such as satisfaction, behavior intention, affective outcomes etc. [42].

Antecedents of experiences that have been studied includes culture [33, 70] and the service-scape [6, 12]. Other research explored the causal relationship of specific types of experience, such as computer-based media experience, brand experience [2, 17, 62, 63], and experience in Virtual Reality [66] or Augmented Reality [30] situation.

A second research approach is to explore the content of customer experiences from theme parks. Compared with the first approach, far less attention has been paid to this topic with notable exceptions by [8, 51, 58]. Furthermore, research using the perspective of customer value to analyze experience contents remains relatively unexplored, despite of the their capacities to predict purchase. While some previous studies about causal relationship of customer value exist [25, 57, 68, 71], these researches largely examined Euro-American theme parks among western visitors. Knowledge or text on the multidimensional experiential value that Chinese visitors perceive from theme parks is scarce. Actually the value judgment of an individual (tourist) is generally highly related to the cultural system that he belongs to.

This paper uses Holbrook M. B.'s [27] value framework to explore the types of experiential value provided by amusement parks within the specific cultural context of China. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews with respondents from Shanghai, China. Content analysis revealed five types of experiential value, among which "Educational Value" was not previously identified in Holbrook's framework. Theoretically, this research demonstrates the importance of culture for understanding the customer value derived from amusement park and expanding the knowledge base of the value aspects of hedonic activity.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Customer Value: Definition and Components

Definitions of consumer value are abound, since the concept of value has changed over time in business markets [14]. Holbrook, M. B. [26] describes value in the consumption process as derived from both hedonic and utilitarian experiences that embody personal preference. Compared with customer value, experiential value focuses on the value that retain from the process of experience. Holbrook, M. B. [26] proposed a framework for customer value with three distinctions: utilitarianism vs. hedonist, active vs. reactive, self-oriented vs other-oriented. This framework leads to eight value types: efficiency, excellence (quality), play, aesthetics, esteem, status, ethics, and spirituality. In another essay Holbrook, M. B. [27] proposed a typology of value that hinges on two distinctions, namely, those between (1) extrinsic versus intrinsic value and (2) self-oriented versus other-oriented value, leading to the "Typology of Customer Value" (as shown in Table 1). Economic value occurs when experience serves as a means to one's own objectives — as when prizing efficiency or excellence. Hedonic value arises from my own pleasure in consumption appreciated for their own sake as ends in themselves — as in the aesthetic

enjoyment that I might feel in a beautiful scenic vista or an entertainment event, or in the fun that might derive from various leisure activities. Social value refers to the case when one's own consumption behavior serves as a means to shaping the responses of others. Altruistic value entails a concern for how my own consumption affects others.

**Table 1.** Holbrook's typology of consumer value (Holbrook, M. B. 2006: 715).

	Extrinsic	Intrinsic
Self-oriented	Economic value	Hedonic value
Other-oriented	Social value	Altruistic value

Holbrook's three-distinctions framework provides a sophisticated means to study tourism and hospitality consumption [21]. However, in different contexts experimental measurements of value have produced different results, as only a few of the eight types of Holbrook's value framework has been concentrated on [19, 53]. Indeed, most studies have chosen to study only one/two dimension of value. gallarza, M. G. and Gil, S. I. [20] used the self-oriented /social value dimension in a tourism setting while Komppula, R. and Gartner, W. C. [35] applied the intrinsic/ other-oriented dimension, identifying "togetherness" in hunting tourism as a new type of value. gallarza, M. G. and Gil S. I. [19] investigated the types of value among student travelers using the Holbrook framework, combining it with negative outcomes. The present study aims to expand Holbrook M. B's [27] value framework to investigate how amusement parks in China stage innovative experiences.

### 2.2. Customer Experience (Value) in Theme Parks

In experiential park settings, studies have examined the causal relationship of visitor experience. For example, a theme parks' service-scape is found to be a very important antecedent of experience, while the communicative staging of which (its human clues) was examined by [67, 73], the substantive staging of which (its functional and mechanical clues) was checked by [23, 45, 46]. Berry, L. L. and al. [4] posited that a service system can be categorized as containing functional, mechanical or human clues. Some studies analyzed the consequences of experience such as satisfaction and behavior intention [1, 16, 17, 48, 64], as well as destination image [32] and relationship marketing outcomes [58]. For experience value, the relationship between it and loyalty [25], online engagement behavior [71], and theatrical components [57] have also been examined in a theme park context.

The concept of experience economy [50] has been applied to determine factors affecting theme park visitor's satisfaction, finding educational experiences to be significant [38]. This suggests that experiences that are absorbing and involve active participation are educational opportunities to learn new things (e.g., a story about a hero) and increase skills and knowledge (e.g., history, science). This finding implies that, when visitors find a real learning opportunity that stimulates their curiosity, they will be more likely to be satisfied.

Emotion is a dimension of experience value [55]. Customer

emotion captured the attention of scholars [52]. Some investigated the causal relationship of emotion [1, 5, 24, 37, 60]. Ma, J and al. [43] discovered four appraisal dimensions eliciting delight. Different experience on these appraisal dimension leads to either delight or satisfaction [42]. Torres E. N. and al. [61] studied the discrete emotional experiences generated by different service encounters.

### 2.3. Customer Value and Chinese Culture Values

Culture is defined as a cognitive system consisting of values, beliefs, norms and other similar subjective mental constructs that shape human behavior and distinguish particular groups of people from others [22]. Every individual possesses a distinctive set of personal values that are molded by both the shared culture of their society and personal experiences [29]. Lovelock, C. H. [40] posited that the effects of cultural values are prominent in tourism businesses and can influence interactions between customers and service delivery personnel. Du J, and al. [13] found that culture values influence Chinese consumer behaviors. Scholars revealed the moderating role of Confucian values in smart tourism [71] and sustainable tourism [64]. Yang, M. J. H. and al. [69] explored the impact of Neo-Confucian values on South Korean family vacation decisions. However, there is still a paucity of research examining Chinese theme park behavior, value judgement and its relationship with culture [36], with exception by Fu X. and et al.'s study [18], which found that the differences in theme park vacation experience evaluation between Chinese and U. S. tourists was determined in part by cultural values. In addition, culture is dynamic and evolutionary in nature [28]. Along the pathway of reform and opening-up, Chinese people have experienced transformation of social values which should be considered together with traditional culture to better understand Chinese visitor behavior.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Site

China's theme park emerged in the late 1980s. "Splendid China", which opened in Shenzhen in 1989, pioneered the construction of theme parks in China. After several rounds of industry shuffling and the trial of market, the operation and management of theme parks have become increasingly advanced. With the steady growth of China's GDP, residents' demands for culture and leisure products have been gradually increasing. Since the year of 2016, the state has implemented a number of policies for the cultural and tourism industries. Thanks to these policies, investments in tourism industry have been extremely active and the supply has been booming as a result. In 2017, there is an increase of nearly 20% in Chinese theme park visits compared with 2016. The number of visitors from Overseas Chinese Town Holdings Company (OCT Parks China), Fantawild and Chimelong Group ranked 4th, 5th and 6th respectively in the world's TOP 10 in 2017.

Theme parks in China can be divided into three categories: amusement parks with large facilities and various kind of

entertainment, miniature landscape parks in large scale, film tourism theme parks and animation cities. Amusement parks account for the largest number of theme parks in China. Therefore, this paper chooses amusement park as the research object.

### 3.2. Data Collection

A qualitative approach is used to achieve holistic and insider perspectives of the phenomenon [59]. This research used qualitative semi-structured depth interviews with respondents selected by snowball sampling, aiming to develop a theory-based integrative framework rather than population representation. Despite potential sample selection bias, this sampling technique has been deemed effective when gathering information about emerging tourism behavior [44]. Interviewees were people who had visited an amusement park in Inland China within the last 18 months. The first 16 participants were recruited from researchers' networks and asked to provide referrals to individuals who may be eligible to participate. The semi-structured conversational-style personal interviews were organized and conducted by two of the authors. Interviews were conducted online via the WeChat App, or by telephone, or in person in January 2020 in Shanghai, China. The interview process was terminated when saturation occurred, and no new information is forthcoming [39]. The final sample consisted of 25 respondents. There were 8 well-known amusement parks in China that had been visited by the interviewees, namely: Shanghai Happy Valley, Shanghai Disneyland, Wuhu Fantawild World, Changzhou Chinese Dinosaur Park, Hangzhou Songcheng, Zhuhai Chimelong Ocean Kingdom, Nanchang Wanda Park and Chengdu GooseTianxiang amusement Park. Interviewee's demographics are shown in Table 2. To ensure anonymity, each interviewee's responses were made anonymous by assigning a specific code from T-01 to T-25.

The research purpose and interview questions as well as definition of amusement park were communicated with the interviewees by email in advance. Souvenirs were given to the interviewees as a token of appreciation after the interview. A set of interview questions were developed to suit the context of amusement park tourism based on prior studies involving theme park experience and customer value [31, 68]. At the start of each interview, the interviewer prompted participants to describe the theme park brand name around the world he knows about. Then, participants were invited to elaborate on their overall feeling or appraisal of theme park traveling. Further, participants were asked to reflect on their most memorable amusement park tourism experiences, such as "What impressed you most during your visit?", "What were the most favorite or worst aspects of the visit?". The authors opted to focus on participants' most memorable experience. At last, participants were also asked to discuss the drivers behind their park visiting activities (e.g. "Why did you choose to visit the park at that time?"; "What does theme park visiting mean to you?", "What factors do you consider when choosing an amusement park?"). The choice factors and feelings provided reflect people's value judgements. From these

interview questions visitor's value judgement and experience of the park were revealed [31]. All interviews were conducted in Chinese and audio-recorded for accuracy with the interviewees' consent. The recordings were later transcribed

into Chinese text using service of Iflytech.com. The interviews lasted roughly 40–60 minutes on average. The 115.3 thousand words of the transcribed text was read by the two researchers and coded with the help of Nvivo.

*Table 2. Profile of Interviewees.*

No	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Educational Background	Monthly Income (¥1000)	Occupation
T-01	female	22	unmarried	Diploma	5-10	Hotel staff
T-02	female	23	unmarried	High diploma	5-10	Administration
T-03	female	23	unmarried	High diploma	5-10	sales
T-04	male	23	unmarried	Diploma	5-10	Retail staff
T-05	female	18	unmarried	Bachelor	<1	student
T-06	female	23	unmarried	Bachelor	5-10	Photography
T-07	male	19	unmarried	Bachelor	<1	student
T-08	male	18	unmarried	Bachelor	<1	student
T-09	male	18	unmarried	Bachelor	<1	student
T-10	female	40	married	Diploma	10-20	designer
T-11	female	38	married	Diploma	10-20	Accountant
T-12	female	30	unmarried	Master	5-10	Government staff
T-13	male	43	married	Bachelor	5-10	Travel agency manager
T-14	female	18	unmarried	Bachelor	<1	student
T-15	female	19	unmarried	Bachelor	<1	student
T-16	female	40	married	Bachelor	10-20	businessman
T-17	male	43	married	Bachelor	20-50	Business owner
T-18	female	38	married	Bachelor	10-20	sales
T-19	male	40	married	Master	10-20	Engineer
T-20	male	34	married	Doctorate	10-20	researcher
T-21	female	40	married	Master	20-50	Consulting manager
T-22	female	29	married	Master	5-10	Government staff
T-23	female	34	married	Master	5-10	Museum staff
T-24	female	34	married	Bachelor	5-10	Educational consultant
T-25	male	47	married	Master	10-20	University lecturer

### 3.3. Data Analysis

As is applied to a large number of studies in the social sciences, and moreover widely used in hospitality and tourism research [7, 10], content analysis was used in this study. This method provides researchers opportunities to organize numerous texts and clarify data with major themes [15]. Open coding was used as it reflects data content by applying codes and sub-themes to the material. The first and second author of this paper conducted double-blind open coding of the original data. Complying with the principle of maximum possibility, the primary codes from both researchers were synthesized. Continuous sorting and summarization were performed to form codes according to the rule of maximum similarity [49]. Sub-themes were identified from the codes and those that has the same essential attributes were combined. Internal relations

among the sub-theme were identified to form themes. Finally, a total of 37 sub-theme emerged after this process. Five themes were revealed as the salient experience values of visitors, namely, altruistic value, economic value, emotional experience value, hedonic value and educational value (In descending order of the corresponding number of coding). They are reported below with supporting quotations.

## 4. Findings

This study aims to explore the typologies of amusement park experience value in Chinese culture. The findings were centered around five interrelated key themes obtained from the qualitative data of this study. In the analysis process, the number of codes and sub-theme as well as related quotations of each theme are presented in Table 3.

*Table 3. Text Breakdown.*

Theme	# of codes for each related theme	# of sub-theme for each related theme	# of quotations on related theme
Altruistic Value	233	15	417
Economic Value	192	6	428
Emotional Experience Value	135	8	202
Hedonic Value	122	6	270
Educational Value	51	2	82

As previously mentioned, the five types of experiential value will be discussed basing on Holbrook M B's [27] experiential value domains and the existing literature. Original

quotations from the reviewers are presented in the succeeding sections.

#### 4.1. Altruistic Value

Data showed that modern Chinese visitors' most salient perception regarding amusement parks was altruistic value. It is really a surprise to discover that people's satisfaction for an amusement park did not stem from his sensual pleasure or enjoyment, but from the benefits that the activity brings to their peers. In the interviews, many visitors spoke proudly of their family outings. They pride themselves on bringing happiness to their family and friends in visiting the park together. "I took my mum and grandparents to Shanghai Disneyland right on the open day. They enjoyed the journey and liked the place very much, so do I (T-05)". Seniors are very proud of traveling together with children, since it can improve the elder's self-respect as well as social status. "If his (my grandparents') daughter shows kindness to him, there will be a sense of confidence in his conversations with friends. After all, people's life in olden times was not so good. Going traveling with children can bring them new experience, giving them fresh topics to chat and social with their friends." (T-03). As friends are "extended" family members, traveling with friends is also a type of ritual that can strengthen relationships. "We seldom go to amusement park alone. Hanging out together with friends makes people feel closer" (T-06).

The root of this new discovery is not difficult to be found in Chinese cultural values. Altruistic value is very similar to the traditional Chinese value of "being kind to others" (Ren, 仁). Chinese culture attaches great importance to interpersonal relationships (especially family relationship), the cores of which are filial piety (Xiao, 孝), benevolence (Ren, 仁) and propriety (Li, 礼). Filial piety and being kind to one's elders are the basis of moral norms constructing social order and human fraternity in China. Filial piety can be realized in many ways, not only in actions of supporting and respecting parents, and making the elderly feel happy, but also of living with courtesy in daily life and leisure time. Propriety (Li, 礼) is dictated through Confucian thought concerning one's relationship with parents, spouses, elders, and friends [9], and is manifested in appropriate behavior roles as well as in ceremonies and other social processes. During the social process of taking parents and friends to an amusement park and making them happy from being accompanied and entertained, Chinese tourists got a moral sense of taking responsibility required by the culture, which is the "reward" itself."

#### 4.2. Economic Value

Chinese attach great importance to value for money and time even when consuming hedonic products and in leisure time. "Although this backpack from Disney is much more expensive than the ones that look like it on Taobao, I think it's worth it" (T-05). "A three days' round journey to XXX Disneyland will cost more than 9000RMB, It's too expensive" (T-22). Many interviewees hope to get the maximum return for the cost, while this return may in the forms of high quality for products. As a visitor said, "They displayed the most advanced 4D and 5D technologies, which is very impressive

to me". (T-12). The Engel Coefficient of urban and rural households in China was 29.3 and 32.2 respectively in 2016. This means that China is now in the stage of consumption upgrading according to the Engel Coefficient categorizing standard of UN. One of the important signs of this stage is that consumers are willing to pay more for marginal improvement in consumption. The purchasing of expensive cultural and leisure products such as theme park tourism is just a kind of marginal improvement. Shanghai Disneyland's strong market performance since its opening is an evident proof of the marginal improvement consumption requirement. However, in the process of this kind of consumption, tourists, as rational economic decision maker, will still pursue utility maximization, seeking to achieve maximization of various kinds of experience. This explains the tourists' passionate pursuit of cost-performance ratio and why economic experience value exists in this study.

#### 4.3. Emotional Experience Value

The interviewees mentioned that various emotions were aroused during the theme park visit, most of which are positive. One interviewee was moved by the easy-going and professionalism of staff in the park, leading her to be satisfied with the visit. Some visitors mentioned they were "very excited/pleasant from the right (ticket) booking time," while others felt happy/joyful from the beginning of their visit to its end. Most young visitors were highly stimulated by their experience, "I screamed when I rode on the famous roller coaster 'Chuang'. It was so exciting" (T-01).

As experiences that will reduce customer value, negative emotions are not included in Holbrook M B's value typology [26]. But in the interviews some words such as regret, disappointment, unexpected, scared appeared once again. "I visited XXX park. It's not safe there, my foot was hurt and has to be stitched" (T-07). "Some facilities were not opened at night, it's a pity. And it's not as interesting as I had thought" (T-08). As there are many facilities operated in amusement parks, it's more liable for visitors to run into unexpected and uncertain complex situation such like bad weather, temporary shutdown of equipment or safety accident, which would lead to negative responses and emotions.

#### 4.4. Hedonic Value

The entertainment experience stems from the five body senses and aesthetic appreciation. The main content of amusement park tourism is to experience all kinds of physical facilities. When operating amusement equipment, the senses of touch, vision and hearing are stimulated. When riding or climbing over on an equipment, the sense of proprioception and kinesthetic consciousness of the body are aroused. Watching or participating in arts Performing make individual obtain the foundation of immersion experience, resulting in the hedonic experience of relaxation and happy. "Because of the color., the music, the people, the dressing... The fireworks in the evening are also very beautiful and moving" (T-23). Most visitors were impressed by dynamic visual scenery and

exotic sensations of body. “The effect is very [good]. Anyway, it makes me feel that the blue sky and white clouds, as well as the Pacific Ocean and desert, keep changing in one second. It’s so exciting” (T-10). For many interviewees novelty is the most important source of joy. Novelty can be embodied not only in appearance but also in theme and design in the park. “In the dinosaur park, you can see dinosaur models in many buildings and even in a small shop, the theme is quite distinct.” (T-20). “During riding you will see a high ‘Tec’ future world created by light, making you feels like shuttling through the space-time tunnel. The most special point is that the running speed can change according to the route and plot” (T-04).

#### 4.5. Educational Value

Another interesting finding is the importance interviewees gave to accompanied children’s affection and happiness as well as the knowledge and educational meanings acquired during visiting. As a tourist said: “Relax and fun is very necessary to my child. While education should be another important thing. Children can get some knowledge from Disneyland. That’s a very good thing.” (T-25). The mentality for education is rooted in the “Wisdom” (Zhi, 智) value of Confucian culture. Visitors are very concerned that their children can learn or their personality developed during traveling, termed as ‘Educational Value’ in this study. “I think every story of it [Disney] has a very positive educational meaning and it delivers very positive energy.” (T-24). Another one said: “I hope my daughter can make some friends on the journey or remember something from the visiting more than just for fun. As parents, we want children to grow up and learn more knowledge every day, right?” (T-17). As discovered “Educational value” had two subthemes: “knowledge acquisition” and “personality development”. Both can satisfy the visitors themselves, especially parents travelling with young children.

## 5. Conclusions

This study examined visitors’ experiences of amusement parks along with the Chinese culture from the perspective of customer value. Consequently, five themes were revealed related to customer value. The first and most frequently mentioned theme appreciated by Chinese tourists is altruistic value which implies the journey’s value for visitor’s companions (e.g., the elderly or children in the family). This descending order deeply reflects the influence of Chinese culture in people’s daily life including leisure time. Taking elderly to have fun together is to some extent a ceremony to show kindness to parents, highlighting the core status of family relationships in China. Family orientation has been recognized as a significant traditional Chinese cultural value in prior studies [29]. Melanie K and al. [43] posited that culture is defined not only as heritage and cultural continuity, but also connected to the practices of everyday life, including daily habits and rituals, as well as events. This research supports these discoveries and further provides empirical evidence for the significance of spending time with family in

leisure time in fast-pace modern China.

The second theme discovered is economic value. Consumers in a developing country like China gave priority to practicality and emphasized a high ratio of outputs to inputs even for a hedonic product. This result is consistent with the work of [47], which reveals that ticket price is among the most important attributes impacting Chinese visitors’ satisfaction with experiences. The findings also share similarities with studies indicating that the facility conditions [12, 69] and favorable hosting behavior [45, 68] are considered crucial for guests’ experience. The third theme is emotional experience, as positive emotions and negative feelings are identified throughout the whole visiting. The finding supports models [3] indicating that functional and emotional features are the main components of experiential value. It also shares similarities with findings from [56] who identified negative experiences as technical (facility conditions) or functional (customer service). Results of this study show that negative feelings in amusement park are mostly aroused by technical issues. Surprisingly, hedonic value has been ranked only as the fourth important theme for an amusement park for Chinese visitor. Compared with Sheth, J. N., Newman, B. I., and Gross, B. L.’s [55] proposition that the most significant features of hedonic products are to be fun, fantasy, and feeling, it’s not difficult to find out that, the different conclusion between [55] and this study lies in the different cultures and values of their research subjects. “Wisdom” has been the core of Chinese culture values throughout history, while “Fun” and “Enjoyment” were once regarded as deviant work and abandoned by the public for a long time.

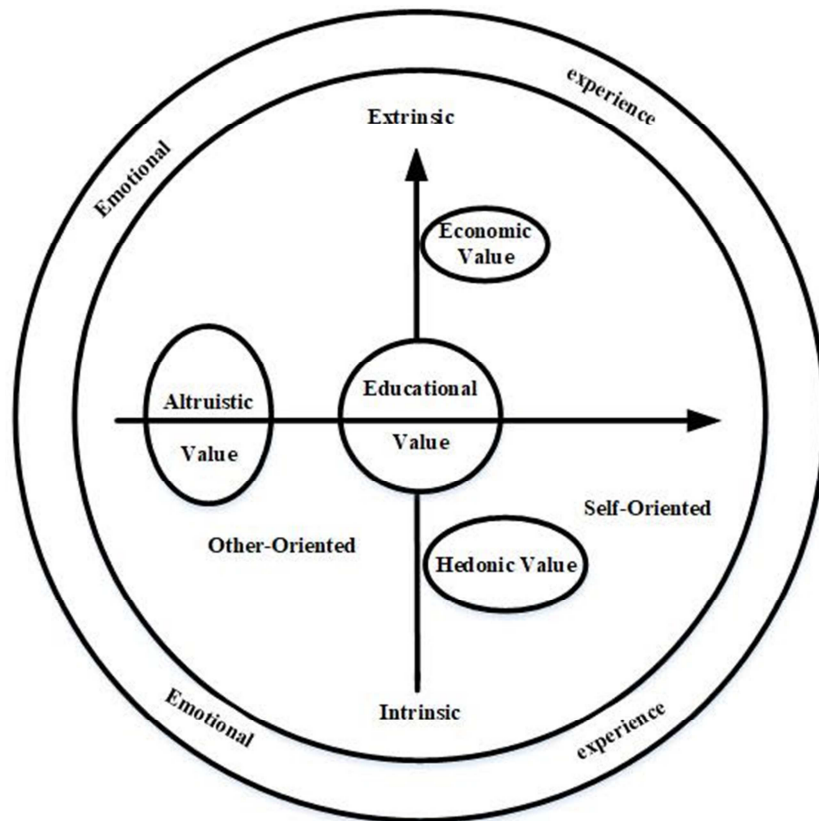
The fifth theme revealed is educational value, which is a new type of customer value not previously included in Holbrook’s framework. Gursoy D and al. [11] claim that, tourists have been increasingly demanding meaningful and engaging travel experiences rather than traditional experiences. Many destinations have been developing new tourism offerings providing interesting and intellectual experiences [65]. In Kang K S, Lee K C, and Lee D E ‘s study [33], Chinese respondents indicate “learning/enlightenment for self” the strongest reason for a home-stay experience, differing from European and American reasons. The unique finding of educational value in this study can be explained by the Chinese philosophy of Confucius in which traveling for a purpose such as learning, moral improvement and self-enlightenment is important. This philosophy is also reflected in the old Chinese saying “du 读 wan 万 juan 卷 shu 书, xing 行 wan 万 li 里 lu 路” which can be translated as “knowledge comes from books and from experience of the world”.

As a critical way to acquire knowledge, education has been entitled with crucial meaning in Chinese life. Hsu C H, Huang S [29] noted that “Knowledge and education” remained a life ambition for the majority of Chinese, and “novelty and broadening horizons” can come from traveling. But there is a paucity of empirical study on relationship between Chinese values and education consumption during traveling in modern era. This study finds a linkage between Chinese culture and

educational experience value in amusement park tourism, thus help fill this academic research gap. The research also reveals that modern Chinese tourists attach importance to educational opportunities beyond the traditionally addressed academic knowledge for kids, which includes improvement of skills like making friends and cultivation of positive characteristics.

Drawing on Holbrook M B's value framework [28], Chinese visitors' amusement park experiences can be modeled as per Figure 1 (as shown below). The horizontal axis depicts the orientation of value, spanning from other-orientation to self-orientation. The vertical axis reflects

the function of value, spanning from intrinsic to extrinsic value. Educational value can be intrinsic/extrinsic and other-oriented/self-oriented, which is situated at the core of the coordinate system. Altruistic value is intrinsically/extrinsically other-oriented. Economic value is extrinsically self-oriented and hedonic value is intrinsically self-oriented. Emotional experiences that occurring throughout the journey function as background for other experience and can be placed circling the two-dimensional model.



**Figure 1.** Framework of amusement park experience values alongside Chinese culture.

Perceived values are not only driver of consumption, but also connected with those embedded in a cultural context. By examining the interplay between value and culture, this study furtherly enriches Holbrook's framework by validating a new conceptual model, finding 'educational value' to be a new typology of experience value for leisure products in Chinese culture. Theoretically, this research will advance literature of theme park by applying a value perspective to a specific consumer culture, expanding the knowledgebase of the sociological aspects of leisure tourism.

In a culture emphasizing a lot on education, amusement park should provide more opportunities to learn and broaden horizon, to improve skills and cultivate good character. In recent years, Red Tourism in China has developed vigorously [76]. Red Tourism refers to the thematic tour that carry out for educational memorial sightseeing on the symbol sites formed by the great achievements made by the people under the

leadership of the Communist Party of China in the period of revolution from the year of 1921 till now. Some well-known Chinese amusement park groups (such as Fantawild) have launched performances based on classic stories of Red Tourism that attracted visitors of all ages. This highlights the importance of providing experiences that deliver educational value through positive themes such as courage and patriotism. 2021 is the first year of China's 14th Five-Year Development schematization. In this year Chinese Education Ministry issued documents proposing reducing homework and after-school academic training for students, the aim of which is to ensure the healthy and all-round quality development of teenagers by promising them more free time to be with parents and to carry out various outdoor activities like traveling to cultivate good character. This stimulates the increasing demand for tourism by school students and more developing opportunities for amusement parks. It will be an efficient way



for theme park and other entertainment industry or destinations in China to attract visitors by following the development trend of the Country, adding Red contents and carrying out Red Education activities.

## ORCID

Hongyun Kuang: 0000-0001-9959-3739

## References

- [1] Ali F, Kim W G, Li J and Jeon H. M (2018). Make It Delightful: Customers' Experience, Satisfaction and Loyalty in Malaysian Theme Park. *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*, 7, 1-11.
- [2] Barnes S J, Mattsson J, Sorensen F (2014). Destination brand experience and visitor behavior: Testing a scale in the tourism context. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 48, 121-139.
- [3] Berry, L., Carbone, L. and Haeckel, S. (2002). Managing the total customer experience. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 43 No. 3, 85-89.
- [4] Berry, L. L., Wall, E. A., and Carbone, L. P. (2006). Service clues and customer assessment of the service experience: lessons from marketing. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 20 No. 2, 43-57.
- [5] Bigne E J, Mattila A S, and Andreu, L. (2008). The impact of experiential consumption cognitions and emotions on behavioral intentions. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 22 No. 4, 303-315.
- [6] Blomstervik I. H., Prebensen N. K., Campos A. C., Pinto P (2020). Novelty in tourism experiences: the influence of physical staging and human interaction on behavioral intentions. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 24 No. 20, 2921-2938.
- [7] Cetin, G., & Bilgihan, A. (2016). Components of cultural tourists' experiences in destinations. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 19(2), 137-154.
- [8] Chiu W. and Cho H. (2021). Mapping aboriginal tourism experiences in Taiwan: A case of the Formosan Aboriginal Culture Village. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 27 No. 1, 17-31.
- [9] Chon, K. and Hao, F. T. (2020). The five constants: a Confucian business model for the hospitality industry, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, 44 No. 7, 1051-1071.
- [10] Dinçer, M. Z., & Alrawadieh, Z. (2017). Negative word of mouse in the hotel industry: A content analysis of online reviews on luxury hotels in Jordan. *Journal of Hospitality Marketing and Management*, 26(8), 785-804.
- [11] Gursoy D, Akova O, Atsız O (2021). Understanding the heritage experience: a content analysis of online reviews of World Heritage Sites in Istanbul. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*. DOI: 10.1080/14766825.2021.1937193.
- [12] Dong, P. and Siu Y. M. (2013). Servicescape elements, customer predispositions and service experience: the case of theme park visitors. *Tourism Management*, 36, 541-551.
- [13] Du J, Fan X, and Feng T (2010). An experimental investigation of the role of face in service failure and recovery encounters. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 27 No. 7, 584-593.
- [14] Eggert, A., Ulaga, W., Frow, P., and Payne, A. (2018). Conceptualizing and communicating value in business markets: From value in exchange to value in use. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 69, 80-90.
- [15] Erlingsson, C., & Brysiewicz, P. (2017). A hands-on guide to doing content analysis. *African Journal of Emergency Medicine*, 7(3), 93-99.
- [16] Fu Y and Wang Y J (2021). Experiential value influences authentic happiness and behavioral intention: lessons from Taiwan's tourism accommodation sector. *Tourism Review*, 76 No. 1, 289-303.
- [17] Fu X., Kang J., Hahm J. J., Witala J (2020). Investigating the consequences of theme park experience through the lenses of self-congruity and flow. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 32 No. 3, 1181-1199.
- [18] Fu X. Xinran Y. Lehto X and Cai L (2012). Culture-Based Interpretation of Vacation Consumption. *Journal of China Tourism Research*, 8 No. 3, 320-333.
- [19] Gallarza, M. G. and Gil S. I. (2006). Value dimensions, perceived value, satisfaction and loyalty: an investigation of university students' travel behavior, *Tourism Management*, 27 No. 3, 437-452.
- [20] Gallarza, M. G. and Gil, S. I. (2008). The concept of value and its dimensions: a tool for analyzing tourism experiences. *Tourism Review*, 63 No. 3, 4-20.
- [21] Gallarza, M. G., Arteaga, F and Gil, S. I. (2019). Customer value in tourism and hospitality: Broadening dimensions and stretching the value-satisfaction-loyalty chain. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 31, 254-268.
- [22] Geertz, C. (2000). *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*. New York: Basic Books.
- [23] Geissler G. L., Rucks C. T. (2011). The overall theme park experience: A visitor satisfaction tracking study. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 17 No. 2, 127-138.
- [24] Godovykh M, Tasci A (2020). The influence of post-visit emotions on destination loyalty. *Tourism Review*, DOI: 10.1108/TR-01-2020-0025.
- [25] Hapsari R (2018). Creating Educational Theme Park Visitor Loyalty: The Role of Experience-Based Satisfaction. *Image and Value. Tourism and Hospitality Management*, 24 No. 2, 20-40.
- [26] Holbrook, M. B. (1994). The nature of consumer values: an axiology of services in the consumption experience, Rust, R. T. and Oliver, R. L. (Ed.), *Service quality: new directions in the theory and practice*. (21-71) London: Sage.
- [27] Holbrook, M. B. (2006). Consumption experience, customer value, and subjective personal introspection: an illustrative photographic essay. *Journal of Business Research*, 59, 714-725.
- [28] Hofstede G H (1991). *Culture and organizations: software of the mind*. London: McGraw-Hill.
- [29] Hsu C H, Huang S (2016). Reconfiguring Chinese cultural values and their tourism implications. *Tourism Management*, 54, 230-242.
- [30] Hu R, Wang C, Zhang T, Nguyen T, Shapoval V, Zhai L (2021). Applying augmented reality (AR) technologies in theatrical performances in theme parks: A transcendent experience perspective. *Tourism Management Perspectives*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tmp.2021.100889>.



- [31] Huang J (2012). Research on brand equity of national scenic spots - from the perspective of college students and short distance tourists. Doctoral thesis; Fudan University Shanghai China.
- [32] Iordanova, E, and Styliadis D (2019). The impact of visitors' experience intensity on in-situ destination image formation. *Tourism Review*, 74 No. 4, 841-860.
- [33] Kang K S, Lee K C, Lee D E (2016). Examining Cultural Worldview and Experience by International Tourists: A Case of Traditional House Stay. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 21 No. 5, 477-499.
- [34] Kim S (2012). A cross-cultural study of on-site film-tourism experiences among Chinese, Japanese, Taiwanese and Thai visitors to the Daejanggeum Theme Park, South Korea. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 15 No. 8, 759-776.
- [35] Komppula, R. and Gartner, W. C. (2013). Hunting as a travel experience: an auto-ethnographic study of hunting tourism in Finland and the USA. *Tourism Management*, 35, 168-180.
- [36] Kwek A and Lee Y (2012). Chinese Tourists and Confucianism. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 15 No2, 129-141.
- [37] Lari L, Iyanna S, Jabeen F (2020). Islamic and Muslim tourism: service quality and theme parks in the UAE. *Tourism Review*, 75 No. 2, 402-413.
- [38] Lee S, Jeong E, Qu K (2019). Exploring Theme Park Visitors' Experience on Satisfaction and Revisit Intention: A Utilization of Experience Economy Model. *Journal of Quality Assurance in Hospitality & Tourism*, 21 No. 2, 1-24.
- [39] Lin C C and Fu R. (1990). A Comparison of Child -raring Lincoln Y S, Guba E G (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- [40] Lovelock, C. H. (1999). Developing marketing strategies for transnational service operations. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 13(4/5), 278-295.
- [41] Ma, J; Gao, J; Scott, N, Ding P (2013). Customer Delight from Theme Park Experiences: The Antecedents of Delight Based on Cognitive Appraisal Theory. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 42, 359-381.
- [42] Ma J., Scott N., Gao J., Ding P (2017). Delighted or Satisfied? Positive Emotional Responses Derived from Theme Park Experiences. *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, 34 No. 1, 1-19.
- [43] Melanie K, Ivett P, Zombor B, Karolina B (2021). The changing nature of the cultural tourist: motivations, profiles and experiences of cultural tourists in Budapest. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, DOI: 10.1080/14766825.2021.1898626.
- [44] Meng, B. and K. Choi (2019). Tourists' intention to use location-based services (LBS). *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 31(8): 3097-115.
- [45] Milman A (2009). Evaluating the guest experience at theme parks: An empirical investigation of key attributes. *International Journal of Tourism Research. Journal of Tourism Research*, 11 No. 4, 373-387.
- [46] Milman A, Tasci A, Wei W (2020). Crowded and popular: The two sides of the coin affecting theme-park experience, satisfaction, and loyalty. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 18.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2020.100468>.
- [47] Milman, A., Li, X., Wang, Y. and Yu, Q. (2012). Examining the guest experience in themed amusement parks: preliminary evidence from China, *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 18 No. 4, 313-325.
- [48] Milman A. Tasci A. (2018). Exploring the experiential and sociodemographic drivers of satisfaction and loyalty in the theme park context. *Journal of Destination Marketing and Management*, 8, 385-395.
- [49] Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. London: SAGE.
- [50] Pine, B. J., & Gilmore, J. H. (1999). *The experience economy: Work is theatre and everyday business a stage*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- [51] Poria Y., Beal J., Reichel A (2020). The joy of riding or walk of shame? The theme park experience of obese people. *European Journal of Tourism Research*, 24, 2412.
- [52] Prentice, C (2020). Enhancing the tourist experience with emotional intelligence. *Tourism Review*, 75 No. 5, 733-744.
- [53] Sánchez-Fernández, R., Iniesta-Bonillo, M. A. (2006). Consumer perception of value: literature review and a new conceptual framework. *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction or Dissatisfaction Complain Behavior*, 19, 40-58.
- [54] Schmitt, B. (1999). *Experiential marketing: how to get customers to sense, feel, think, act, and relate to your company and brands*. New York, NY: Free Press.
- [55] Sheth, J. N., Newman, B. I., Gross, B. L. (1991). Why we buy what we buy: a theory of consumption values. *Journal of Business Research*, 22 No. 2, 159-170.
- [56] Sthapit E, Björk P, Barreto J. J (2021). Negative memorable experience: North American and British Airbnb guests' perspectives. *Tourism Review*, 76 No. 3, 639-653.
- [57] Tsai C F, (2015). The Relationships among Theatrical Components, Experiential Value, Relationship Quality, and Relationship Marketing Outcomes. *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, 20 No. 8, 897 -919.
- [58] Tasci A. D. A., Milman A. (2019). Exploring experiential consumption dimensions in the theme park context. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 22 No. 7, 853-876.
- [59] Thomas R W, Esper T LV (2010). Exploring relational asymmetry in supply chains: the retailer's perspective. *International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management*, 40 No. 6, 475-494.
- [60] Torres, E. N.; Wei, W; Hua N. (2017). Towards Understanding the Effects of Time and Emotions on The Vacation Experience. *Tourism Review*, 72 No. 4, 357-374.
- [61] Torres E. N., Wei W., Hua N., Chen P J (2019). Customer emotions minute by minute: How guests experience different emotions within the same service environment. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 77, 128-138.
- [62] Wang J. H., Choe Y., Song H. J (2020). Brand behavioral intentions of a theme park in China: An application of brand experience. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 12 No. 11, 1-13.

- [63] Wang J., Kim J., Kang S (2019). Antecedents and consequences of brand experiences in a historical and cultural theme park. *Sustainability* (Switzerland), 11 No. 17, 1-16.
- [64] Wang, X. Z. and Zhang, C. Z. (2020). Contingent effects of social norms on tourists' pro-environmental behaviors: the role of Chinese traditionality. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 28 No. 10, 1646-1664.
- [65] Wang, C., Liu, J., Wei, L., & Zhang, T. (2020). Impact of tourist experience on memorability and authenticity: A study of creative tourism. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 37(1), 48–63. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10548408.2020.1711846>.
- [66] Wei W, Qi R, Lu Zhang L (2019). Effects of virtual reality on theme park visitors' experience and behaviors: A presence perspective. *Tourism Management*, 71, 282–293.
- [67] Wei W, Zheng Y, Zhang L, Line N. (2021). Leveraging customer-to-customer interactions to create immersive and memorable theme park experiences. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights*. Doi: 10.1108/JHTI-10-2020-0205.
- [68] Wu, H C., Li, M Y. Li, T. (2018). A study of experiential quality, experiential value, experiential satisfaction.
- [69] Yang, M. J. H., Khoo-Lattimore, C. and Yang, E. C. L. (2020). Three generations on a holiday: Exploring the influence of Neo-Confucian values on Korean Multigenerational Family vacation decision making. *Tourism Management*, 78. No 2, DOI: 10.1016/j.tourman.2020.104076.
- [70] Zare S (2019). Cultural influences on memorable tourism experiences. *Anatolia*. DOI: 10.1080/13032917.2019.1575886.
- [71] Zhang T, Zhang P, Lu L (2019). Service encounter value and online engagement behaviors. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2019.102338>.
- [72] Zhang T, Bin Li B, Hua N (2021). Chinese cultural theme parks: text mining and sentiment analysis, *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*. DOI: 10.1080/14766825.2021.1876077.
- [73] Zheng Y., Wei W., Line N., Zhang L (2021). Integrating the tourist gaze with the social service-scape: Implications for creating memorable theme park experiences. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*. Doi: 10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102782.