EXPLORING THE MOTIVATIONS OF CHINESE BACKPACKERS THAT TRAVELED TO CHILE

a Patricio Torres-Luque, b Boris Araya

ABSTRACT

Objective: Since 2012, Chinese tourists have been the most frequent travelers globally and are presently the leading spenders on international journeys. Among this group, Chinese backpacker tourists notably stand out due to their contribution to the local communities of tourist destinations. In this regard, this research examines the motivations and expectations of Chinese backpacker tourists during their travels in Chile.

Method: The study employed a concurrent triangulation design, combining quantitative and qualitative analysis methods through SPSS and ATLAS.ti respectively. A total of 417 surveys and 15 in-depth interviews were conducted with Chinese backpackers who visited Chile in 2019.

Results: The analysis results reveal that these travelers visit Chile motivated by leisure activities in exotic and exclusive destinations such as Patagonia, Antarctica, and Easter Island. They are interested in experiencing and exploring nature, cultural heritage, tasting local products, along with the perceived safety and investment opportunities offered by the country.

Conclusions: These findings underline the necessity for destinations to tailor their offerings to the specific needs of Chinese tourists to enhance their experience and perception of the country as a tourist destination.

Originality/Value: The uniqueness and scholarly significance of this research lie in its scrutiny of the motivations and anticipations of Chinese backpacker tourists during their visits to global destinations—a facet that has been sparsely explored in existing literature. The findings underscore the pivotal role of tailoring destination offerings across diverse global landscapes to align with the specific interests and needs of Chinese tourists. This broader perspective contributes substantially to enhancing their overall travel experiences and perceptions of various destinations as preferred tourist spots, thus providing invaluable implications for destination management strategies and global tourism development initiatives seeking to attract Chinese tourists.

Keywords: backpacker tourists, Chinese tourists, tourist motivations, destination choice, tourism in Chile, exotic destinations.

Received: 01/15/2024
Accepted: 03/15/2024
DOI: https://doi.org/10.55908/sdgs.v12i4.2610

---

a PhD in Social and Behavioral Sciences, University of La Coruña, Spain. Associate Professor, Faculty of Management, Universidad de Artes, Ciencias y Comunicación UNIACC, Santiago, Chile. E-mail: ptorres@uft.cl Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8193-0423
b Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, Universidad de Chile, Chile. E-mail: barayac@udechile.cl Orcid: https://orcid.org/0009-0006-6101-1346
EXPLORANDO LAS MOTIVACIONES DE LOS MOCHILEROS CHINOS QUE VIAJARON A CHILE

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Desde 2012, los turistas chinos han sido los viajeros más frecuentes a nivel mundial y actualmente son los que más gastan en viajes internacionales. Dentro de este grupo, los turistas mochileros chinos destacan notablemente debido a su contribución a las comunidades locales de destinos turísticos. En este sentido, esta investigación examina las motivaciones y expectativas de los turistas mochileros chinos durante sus viajes en Chile.

Método: El estudio empleó un diseño de triangulación concurrente, combinando métodos de análisis cuantitativos y cualitativos a través de SPSS y ATLAS.ti respectivamente. Se realizaron un total de 417 encuestas y 15 entrevistas en profundidad a turistas mochileros chinos que visitaron Chile en 2019.

Resultados: Los resultados del análisis revelan que estos viajeros visitan Chile motivados por actividades de ocio en destinos exóticos y exclusivos como Patagonia, la Antártida e Isla de Pascua. Están interesados en experimentar y explorar la naturaleza, el patrimonio cultural, probar productos locales, junto con la percepción de seguridad y las oportunidades de inversión que ofrece el país.

Conclusiones: Estos hallazgos subrayan la necesidad de que los destinos adapten sus ofertas a las necesidades específicas de estos turistas para mejorar su experiencia y percepción del país como destino turístico.

Originalidad/Valor: La singularidad y relevancia académica de esta investigación radican en su examen de las motivaciones y expectativas de los turistas mochileros chinos durante sus visitas a destinos globales, un aspecto que ha sido escasamente explorado en la literatura existente. Los hallazgos subrayan el papel crucial de adaptar las ofertas de destinos en diversos paisajes globales para alinearse con los intereses y necesidades específicos de los turistas chinos. Esta perspectiva más amplia contribuye sustancialmente a mejorar sus experiencias de viaje y percepciones de varios destinos como lugares turísticos preferidos, brindando implicaciones invaluables para estrategias de gestión de destinos e iniciativas de desarrollo turístico global que buscan atraer a turistas chinos.

Palabras clave: turistas mochileros, turistas chinos, motivaciones turísticas, elección de destinos, turismo en chile, destinos exóticos.
Pascua. Están interesados en experimentar y explorar la naturaleza, el patrimonio cultural, probar productos locales, junto con la percepción de seguridad y las oportunidades de inversión que ofrece el país.

Conclusiones: Estos hallazgos subrayan la necesidad de que los destinos adapten sus ofertas a las necesidades específicas de estos turistas para mejorar su experiencia y percepción del país como destino turístico.

Originalidad/Valor: La singularidad y relevancia académica de esta investigación radican en su examen de las motivaciones y expectativas de los turistas mochileros chinos durante sus visitas a destinos globales, un aspecto que ha sido escasamente explorado en la literatura existente. Los hallazgos subrayan el papel crucial de adaptar las ofertas de destinos en diversos paisajes globales para alinearse con los intereses y necesidades específicos de los turistas chinos. Esta perspectiva más amplia contribuye sustancialmente a mejorar sus experiencias de viaje y percepciones de varios destinos como lugares turísticos preferidos, brindando implicaciones invaluables para estrategias de gestión de destinos e iniciativas de desarrollo turístico global que buscan atraer a turistas chinos.

Palabras clave: turistas mochileros, turistas chinos, motivaciones turísticas, elección de destinos, turismo en Chile, destinos exóticos.

1 INTRODUCTION

The growth of outbound tourism in China has been exponential in the last 20 years, becoming one of the main sources of outbound tourists worldwide since 2012. The trend is expected to continue, for example, in 2018, nearly 150 million Chinese tourists traveled abroad, resulting in a total expenditure of approximately 277 billion dollars (World Tourism Organization, 2019). In this context, Chile has experienced a sustained increase in the number of Chinese tourists visiting the country since 2008, rising from 8,311 to over 36,000 in 2019, according to the report from the Chilean Tourism authorities (National Tourism Service, 2019). Among them, there is a subgroup of backpacker tourists characterized by a preference for budget accommodations, flexible itineraries, longer vacations, and a desire to engage in local activities and connect with communities (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995). Backpackers represent a steadily growing niche of tourists, and their socioeconomic impact has positive repercussions on local communities (Zhu, 2009). This tourist segment has grown rapidly in China and differs from Western backpackers in terms of age range and length of stay (Zhang et al., 2018) This research aims to analyze the motivations of Chinese backpacker tourists traveling to Chile, taking into account the relationship between tourist motivations and overall satisfaction at the destination. In this way, tourist destinations can tailor their offerings to the needs, motivations, and initial expectations of tourists to collectively meet their requirements.
With this objective in mind, the following question was posed: What are the motivations and expectations of Chinese backpackers visiting Chile?

2 THEORETICAL REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

2.1 MASLOW'S THEORY OF MOTIVATION

Maslow's theory (Maslow, 2013) establishes a hierarchically organized set of needs that drive individuals in their everyday lives. As these needs are satisfied, new ones emerge propelling personal motivation toward the achievement of new goals. Maslow identifies five categories of needs: physiological, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. The author further classifies these categories into two groups of needs: "deficiency needs," referring to individuals' deficiencies, including their physiological, safety, belonging, and esteem needs, and on the other hand, "being needs" related to personal self-actualization. Following Maslow's principles, academics Beard and Ragheb in 1983 created a psychometric scale that analyzes in 48 aspects the main motivations for leisure in humans. Leisure motivations are grouped into four components: physical, intellectual, social, and emotional motivations. Physical motivations are related to the need to rest, recover energy, and maintain physical health. Intellectual motivations are linked to the need to learn, acquire new knowledge, and develop skills. Social motivations are associated with the need to interact and share experiences with others, while emotional motivations are those related to the need to experience positive emotions linked to relaxation and avoiding social contact (Beard & Ragheb, 1983). This scale has been used in subsequent studies in the field of tourism (Ryan & Glendon, 1988). Pearce (2011) asserts that there are five different hierarchical levels that influence the professionalization of tourists, which can be used to explain the needs and motivations for deciding on their travel destination. These needs can be personal or directed towards others. The five hierarchical levels are: physical needs, corresponding to the tourist's most basic needs, such as food and rest, the need for security, the needs for belonging, the needs for esteem, including the tourist's need to be recognized, valued by others, as well as the need to have positive self-esteem, and finally, the needs for self-actualization, which are related to the tourist's need to develop their potential and achieve personal goals, such as learning about different cultures, expanding their knowledge, starting
tourist businesses, among others. Conversely, the destination's personality and its association with its self-brand exert a substantial impact on tourists' motivations to visit the destination (Vuthisopon, 2023).

2.2 MOTIVATIONS OF CHINESE TOURISTS

Motivations of Chinese Tourists Cultural values play a crucial role in shaping the preferences and motivations of Chinese tourists, making it essential to understand their travel patterns and tourist behavior. Chinese cultural values are influenced by three philosophical-cultural streams: Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. Additionally, Chinese culture places high value on family, friendship, and respect for elders, which can influence how Chinese tourists plan their trips and behave (Guang, 2013). According to Tawil and Tamimi (2013), Chinese tourists can be segmented into three groups based on their driving motivations: novelty-knowledge-seeking, rest-relaxation, and prestige. The first group includes tourists who want to explore never-before-visited places and experience something new and different. The second targets those seeking a destination for relaxation and a break from their daily routine. The third group comprises tourists looking for a destination that enhances their social status and allows them to showcase their purchasing power. Regarding destination attributes, Chinese tourists value safety, climate, culture, and the history of the destination. Safety is crucial for Chinese tourists, allowing them to travel without worries and fully enjoy their tourist experience. Climate is another important factor, as Chinese tourists prefer destinations with good weather, and the culture and history of the destination are also significant for these tourists, providing opportunities to learn and have new experiences. Riley (1988) indicates that Chinese backpacker tourists pursue hedonism and meaningful experiences that contribute to their self-development. Furthermore, he compares the motivations of tourists from Western and Eastern countries, highlighting that the primary motivation for the former is the desire to travel, while Eastern tourists seek personal growth, often following the advice of friends and family during their journeys. Regarding the travel style, Loker-Murphy and Pearce (1995) suggest that backpacker tourism has become more organized, with advanced planning and risk assessment similar to conventional tourism. Concerning motivations, Larsen et al., (2011) argue that there are few differences between the motivations of Chinese backpacker tourists and those of conventional tourists.
Leong (2006) assert that the differences between Chinese and Western backpacker tourists are related to the length of stay at the destination (Chinese backpackers tend to travel for shorter periods than Westerners) and the mode of transportation used (Chinese backpackers prefer renting a vehicle to get around the destination, while Westerners use public transportation). Regarding backpackers' motivations, Loker-Murphy (1997) established a typology divided into four groups: those seeking escapism and relaxation, those seeking social and emotional experiences, those seeking success and victory, and those seeking self-development. Uriely et al., (2002) also classified backpackers' motivations into four groups: experimental and experiential, humanistic, recreational and hedonistic, and multipurpose. Meanwhile, Chen et al., (2013) identified the motivations of Chinese backpackers as social interaction, self-realization (including overcoming challenges and self-discovery), experimenting with the destination's culture, and escapism/relaxation. According to the authors, these motivations result from significant sociocultural changes in China due to its integration into a globalized world and a generational shift, where Chinese tourists have become more independent, adopting behavior similar to Western tourists.

2.3 IMAGE OF TOURIST DESTINATIONS

According to Gartner (1994), the formation of a destination's image depends on three interrelated components hierarchically: the cognitive aspect, the affective aspect, and the conative component. These aspects directly influence the tourist's attitude and predisposition toward the destination. Dung et al. (2023) outline six elements pivotal in crafting a destination's image, which significantly enhance its appeal to attract tourists: natural resources, socio-cultural aspects, infrastructure (cognitive aspects) and entertainment activities, service price, human resources (affective aspects). The cognitive aspect refers to the cognitive evaluation tourists make of the characteristics of the destination's environment, from which they form an image of the tourist destination (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999) a mental representation that the tourist has of the various components of the place (Hunt, 1975, Gartner, 1986, Coshall, 2000, Bigné et al., 2001). On the other hand, the affective aspect of the image is related to the tourist's motivations for choosing a specific destination (Gartner, 1994, Baloglu & McCleary, 1999) and is influenced by the assessments and feelings that the desire to travel to a specific tourist
destination arouses in the tourist (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997). Additionally, Hanyu (1993) argues that the affective component refers to the evaluation of the emotional quality of the environment, while the cognitive component refers to the evaluation of the attributes of the environment. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) concluded that sources of information and the sociodemographic aspects of the tourist affect the cognitive perception of the destination's characteristics, while the tourist's motivations affect their affective perception, and both shape the overall image of a tourist destination. The conative aspect depends on the development of these images during the cognitive and affective stages, i.e., the evaluation that the tourist makes of the destination, as the conative function is associated with the tourist's attitude and the formation of loyalty toward a service or product (Oliver, 1999). This relationship occurs after the evaluation of the cognitive and affective elements experienced at the destination. Therefore, understanding the motivations of the tourist is of great importance, as these influence the affective and cognitive perception and the attitude of the tourist towards the destination, i.e., the loyalty shown toward the destination in terms of returning or recommending it to other tourists through various means. According to the theory of Chen et al., (2013) the main motivations of Chinese backpackers are similar to those of conventional tourists. These include social interaction, self-realization (which includes personal growth through studying abroad or identifying business opportunities), experimentation with the culture of the destination, experiencing the sensation of escapism/relaxation, and enjoying nature. The authors argue that these motivations have emerged as a result of the significant sociocultural change brought about by China's integration into the globalized world, as well as a generational shift, where the Chinese traveler has become more independent, adopting behavior similar to Western travelers.

Based on these theoretical considerations, the following hypotheses are formulated: Hypothesis 1 (H1): Chinese backpackers visit Chile motivated by leisure trips where they can interact with new people, experience local culture, escape from everyday life, and relax in exotic destinations. Hypothesis 2 (H2): The motivations of Chinese backpackers to visit Chile include conducting business or studying.
3 METHOD

This work stems from the doctoral thesis 'Image of Chile in China: Impact on Loyalty (Torres-Luque, 2022). The study employed a concurrent triangulation design (Sampieri-Hernandez & Mendoza-Torres, 2018) incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data and analysis. Quantitative techniques were used to analyze the level of importance that Chinese backpackers attribute to various motivations presented to them. A total of 417 Chinese backpackers traveling in Chile were surveyed. The sample size was determined through non-probabilistic convenience sampling, although an estimated sample size was calculated, considering the 36,601 Chinese tourists who visited Chile in 2018, with a confidence level of 95% and a desired margin of error of 5%. The sample size formula suggested 377 participants, representative by gender and age range (18 to 45 years), a number that was exceeded.

Surveys were conducted with all Chinese backpacker tourists at the bus terminal to the airport who voluntarily chose to participate. Descriptive scope analysis was applied to the data using SPSS software. To complement the quantitative data, qualitative techniques were employed, including 15 in-depth interviews with Chinese backpackers concluding their trips in Chile. The sample size was determined through purposive sampling, selecting tourists who could provide detailed and relevant information for the research, considering representation by gender and age range (18 to 45 years).

The interviews took place at Don Santiago Hostel. Grounded Theory methodology, facilitated by the Atlas.ti software, was applied for the qualitative data analysis. Next, the results of the quantitative data analysis, indicating the level of appreciation Chinese backpackers attribute to the presented travel motivations, are presented. This is followed by the results of the qualitative analysis that complement the quantitative data. The presentation concludes with a comparison of the quantitative and qualitative results to verify the initial hypotheses of the study.
4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 RESULTS OF THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

In the quantitative questionnaire, the question posed was: "Evaluate the level of importance from 1 to 5, with 1 being not important at all and 5 being very important, that you attribute to the motivations that encouraged you to choose Chile as a tourist destination." Seven travel motivations were presented: "Discovering cultural heritage," "Enjoying gastronomy," "Enjoying nature," "Studying," "Meeting new people," "Disconnecting from routine," and "Conducting business."

Descriptive statistics for questions related to tourist motivations, presented in Table 1, indicate that the surveyed group predominantly chose Chile as a tourist destination to "enjoy nature," as it has the highest mean of 4.61. It is followed by "disconnecting from routine" and "discovering cultural heritage," with means of 4.35 and 4.31, respectively. The mode, or most frequent value for these questions, also falls between 4 and 5. The options "enjoying gastronomy" and "meeting new people" have lower means of 3.66 and 3.72, respectively, with a modal value of 4 (important) for both. Finally, the categories "business" and "studies" have very low means of 1.92 and 1.43, respectively, with a modal value of 1.

Table 1

Motivations of Chinese backpackers to choose Chile as a tourist destination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discover cultural heritage</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>0.738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy gastronomy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.66</td>
<td>0.934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy nature</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>0.525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>1.205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet new people</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>0.748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disconnection from routine</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>0.668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>1.627</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration

4.2 RESULTS OF THE QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

The interviews conducted with the study's tourists primarily focus on two main dimensions: firstly, aspects of Chile that tourists were aware of before their trip (tangible and intangible aspects), and secondly, the motivations that led them to choose Chile as
their travel destination. After reading the interviews, relevant quotes were selected for analysis and coded in ATLAS.ti. These codes were grouped into categories, which were analyzed as substantive theory to facilitate the development of a formal theory.

4.2.1 Codes and categories

Figure 1 presents the list of codes resulting from the analysis of interviews, along with the citation density. These codes were assigned colors according to the five main categories into which they were grouped. The color green was used for codes related to tangible aspects of Chile that tourists were aware of before their trip, blue was employed for codes linked to intangible aspects of Chile known before the trip, yellow was used for codes referring to the main tourist destinations that motivated tourists to visit Chile, orange was utilized for codes related to entry facilities, associated with visa requirements, and red was used for codes associated with the purpose of the trip, whether for leisure or business.

**Figure 1**

*Codes resulting from the analysis of the interviews*

As observed in the previous figure, it is noticeable that the codes with the highest citation density are "Wine," "Easter Island," "Stability," "Cherries," and "Security." Below them are "Antarctica," "Patagonia," "Travel agency," and "Trade and investment." Meanwhile, among the codes with lower density are "Visa exemption," "Business," "Copper," "Football," "Long country," "Escape," and "Study." As previously described,
similar codes were grouped together to form categories. The five main categories into which the codes were grouped are intangible elements, tangible elements, purpose of the trip, recognized destinations, and entry facilities (Figure 2). The following details the categories along with the codes and citations that comprise them.

**Figure 2**

*Categories*

![Diagram of categories](image)

Source: Own elaboration

Intangible Elements: Among the intangible elements that Chinese backpackers identified about Chile before their trip and influenced their motivations for selecting the destination, safety and trade and investment emerged. The "security" code has the highest number of associated citations. Most interviewees mentioned safety as an intangible aspect they identified before the trip, stating that they knew Chile to be a safe and stable country. Comments included: "I looked for information, especially about safety, and realized it was a very stable and secure country" and "I was looking for a safe destination." The "trade and investment" code was also an area about which tourists had information. They indicated: "I read that Chinese companies have invested in strategic areas in Chile" and "I also know it is a stable country with very good relations with China."

Tangible Elements: The codes "Wine," "Football," "Copper," and "Cherries" represent tangible aspects that Chinese tourists identified about Chile before their trip and
influenced their motivations for selecting the country. The "Wine" code has the highest number of associated citations. Most interviewees recognize Chilean wine as a high-quality product sold in China. Some tourists mentioned: "I really like it, it has a very good price and a very good reputation in China" and "I became addicted to Chilean wine." Other tangible elements recognized by Chinese tourists about Chile before their trip include copper, as they knew Chile is one of the main producers of this mineral, football, an area in which they recognize national football players who excel internationally, and cherries, as a Chilean export fruit found in Chinese supermarkets, considered a very tasty but economically less accessible product.

Recognized Destinations: In the third category, from left to right, are codes related to Chile's tourist destinations that Chinese backpackers were aware of before their trip. The "Easter Island" code has the highest number of associated citations. Most interviewees mention this destination as very famous in China. Some interviewees stated: "Easter Island is a destination I always wanted to visit, I am a historian and have always been fascinated by it" and "I always wanted to visit Easter Island since I was a child," said another tourist. Another tourist destination mentioned in the codes is "Antarctica," as some tourists stated: "Researching at the Antarctic base is definitely the best motivation for traveling to Chile" and "Knowing Antarctica is the main motivation for such a long trip." Another code that appears is "Patagonia," a tourist site about which they said: "The majesty of its nature, particularly in Patagonia" and "I learned about Patagonia when studying geography at university."

Entry Facilities: The category "Entry Facilities" consists of the codes "Visa Exemption" and "Travel Agencies." The first code has the highest number of associated citations, as most interviewees mention that visa exemption motivated them to travel to Chile. They said: "I was looking for a safe destination where Chinese citizens had access without a visa" and "My boyfriend invited me, as we had a valid visa for the United States, we didn't need a visa for Chile." The code "travel agencies" appears as Chinese backpackers mentioned: "My travel agency told me that if I had a valid visa for the United States, I could visit Chile" and "My travel agency recommended Chile to me, as it is a safe destination and does not require a visa."

Travel Motivations: The category "Travel Motivations," the last category in figure 2, from left to right, shows codes related to the main reasons or motivations for which Chinese tourists decide to travel to Chile, highlighting "Leisure," "Studies," or
"Business." These tourists traveled primarily for leisure to escape their daily lives, with one of them mentioning that "I had ended a long-term relationship and wanted to feel a sense of distance and escape." The code "Business" is another reason for traveling to Chile, as some tourists mentioned: "Chile is seen as a very attractive country to invest in, stable with a very attractive growth rate," "My boyfriend was aware of this country as he works for a company that will open businesses in Chile." The last code associated with the travel motivations of Chinese tourists is "Study," as some said: "I came to study at the DUOC institute, which has a 100% English program," "My university in Shanghai has a cooperation agreement with this institution."

In summary, it can be identified that among the motivations for which Chinese backpackers travel to Chile are "intangible elements," highlighting the country's safety, good trade relations between the two countries, and territorial length. They also visit the country attracted by "tangible elements" that tourists knew about before the trip, including products such as wine, cherries, copper, and also football personalities. Chinese backpackers also traveled to Chile motivated by visiting destinations such as Easter Island, Antarctica, and Patagonia, all with exotic characteristics related to special interest tourism. Additionally, the "entry facilities" category is a key variable for choosing Chile as a travel destination. Regarding the "travel motive," Chinese backpackers travel primarily for leisure, to escape daily life, while a marginal fraction does so for business or study purposes in Chile.

4.3 FORMAL THEORY

Chinese backpackers primarily travel for leisure, seeking to escape from their daily lives by choosing an exotic destination like Chile. Chile is known in China as a safe place with excellent trade relations with China, and it also facilitates entry for Chinese citizens. The expectations of the Chinese backpacker are based on the information collected about the destination. In other words, they anticipate finding in Chile a safe and exotic destination where they can taste wines, experience the feeling of escaping from everyday reality, and, additionally, identify business opportunities.
5 CONCLUSION

According to both quantitative and qualitative investigations, two types of tourists can be identified: those traveling for leisure and those traveling for business or studies. However, the majority of Chinese backpacker tourists visiting Chile are leisure travelers, specifically exploring the country's natural and cultural attractions. The three primary motivations for these tourists are "Enjoying nature," with an average score of 4.61, followed by "Breaking away from routine" and "Exploring cultural heritage," with average scores of 4.35 and 4.31, respectively. Conversely, a minority group of tourists visits Chile for business, as this motivation received a low score of 1.92. The results of in-depth interviews conducted with Chinese tourists corroborate these quantitative conclusions. Chinese backpackers predominantly travel for leisure purposes, aiming to break away from their daily routines by selecting an exotic destination like Chile, well-known in China for its safety and robust commercial ties with the country. Furthermore, Chile facilitates entry for Chinese citizens. The expectations of Chinese backpackers are grounded in the information gathered about the destination, seeking a secure and exotic destination in Chile where they can enjoy wine, food, identify business opportunities, and also escape their reality. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is confirmed, however, Hypothesis 2 is partially confirmed (Table 2). Although the samples for both the survey and in-depth interviews considered representativeness by gender and age range, these variables were not considered in the analysis. This was due to the similarity in motivations and recognized elements by Chinese backpackers before traveling. Therefore, the generality of the results might present some limitations and biases. For future studies, it is recommended to consider gender/sex and age dimensions to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the diverse experiences and perspectives of different Chinese tourists.
Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Quantitative data</th>
<th>Qualitative data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1: Chinese backpackers visit Chile driven by leisure travel motives, seeking opportunities to interact with new people, experience local culture, escape from their daily lives, and relax in exotic destinations.</td>
<td>Chinese backpackers' trips to Chile are primarily for leisure reasons. Among these, &quot;enjoying nature&quot; stands out with an average score of 4.61, &quot;disconnecting from routine&quot; follows with an average score of 4.35, and &quot;exploring cultural heritage&quot; with an average score of 4.31.</td>
<td>Chinese backpackers travel for leisure to escape their daily lives. They choose exotic destinations like Chile because it's recognized in China for being safe, having strong commercial ties with China, and facilitating entry for Chinese citizens. Chinese backpackers expect to find in Chile a safe and exotic destination to taste wine, savor local cuisine, and experience an escape from their everyday reality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2: The motivations of Chinese backpackers to visit Chile are business or academic-related.</td>
<td>There is a minority group of Chinese backpackers traveling to Chile for business, with an average score of 1.92, while a small group does so for study purposes, with a score of 1.43.</td>
<td>Even though Chinese backpackers perceive Chile as a safe nation maintaining excellent commercial relations with China, there exists a minority group that travels there for business or study purposes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own elaboration

In this way, it can be concluded that Chinese backpackers travel to Chile mainly for leisure activities in unusual and exotic natural environments that facilitate entry for Chinese citizens. Chinese backpackers engage in special interest tourism by visiting Patagonia, Antarctica, and Easter Island, all known for being very expensive and exclusive. They feel motivated to travel to these aforementioned destinations because they have high expectations of enjoying nature, disconnecting from their routine, exploring cultural heritage, and also trying local wine and fruits. Additionally, Chinese backpackers value Chile's safety, and during their trip, some of them might identify business opportunities. These motivations and aspirations support the assertions of Chen et al., (2013) who consider that Chinese backpackers have acquired behavior similar to Western travelers regarding their interests in social interaction, self-realization through overseas studies or business pursuits, exploring the destination's culture, enjoying nature, and experiencing relaxation and escapism from daily life. This shift is attributed to the significant sociocultural change that China has experienced following its integration into the globalized world and generational shifts. The results of this study also demonstrate that the information Chinese backpacker tourists have about both tangible and intangible aspects of their potential travel destinations significantly influences their motivations and expectations for the country they choose to visit. Hence, it is important to consider the
impact of a tourist destination's projected image on the motivations of backpackers. Initially, information sources induced by the destination had greater priority when gathering information for a potential trip among tourists (Gartner, 1994). However, recent research indicates that tourists value organic information sources and consumer recommendations found on social networks more. This phenomenon, commonly known as e-wom (electronic word-of-mouth) has gained prominence (Ferrer-Rosell & Marine-Roig, 2020).

Consequently, various information sources about a tourist destination, influence motivations for choosing a destination. This is a crucial reason for tourist destinations to adequately tailor their offerings to the needs and motivations of Chinese tourists, who possess a unique and distinctive culture. These motivations influence the affective image of the destination and, consequently, the overall perceived image of the destination. According to Álvarez-Sousa (2015), if there is coherence between the initial motivations and expectations with the visiting experience (perceived overall image), there's a high probability that the tourist will return to the destination and recommend it through various channels. Conversely, if there are inconsistencies between the initial expectations and motivations and the experience at the destination, there's a high likelihood that the tourist won't return or recommend it. Therefore, if Chile aims to continue attracting Chinese tourists, particularly backpackers, it must promote activities and tourist circuits related to the tangible products and elements for which the country is recognized abroad, such as wine and cherries. This calls for strengthening wine tourism and tourist circuits around export fruit cultivation.

Additionally, it's essential to maintain the good conditions or intangible aspects for which Chile is recognized in China. For instance, ensuring tourists' safety during their visits to various tourist sites, as tourists perceive Chile as a country where they can safely enjoy their trip. Tourists also recognize the country for its good trade relations with China and the ease of entry into the country, hence the need to sustain and promote good commercial and diplomatic relations between both nations. Efforts should be made to encourage and promote more instances of business trips or student exchange programs, considering that Chinese backpackers primarily travel to Chile for leisure and relaxation. Promoting tourism in natural and exotic destinations preferred by these tourists is crucial. Moreover, these tourist sites need to have the infrastructure to adequately accommodate Chinese backpackers, allowing them to disconnect from reality and enjoy the natural,
cultural, and heritage diversity of the country. This would fulfill and surpass their initial aspirations and motivations, ensuring coherence with the overall perceived image of the destination, consequently increasing the likelihood of tourists returning to the country and recommending it through various communication channels.
REFERENCES


Torres-Luque, P., & Araya, B. (2024). EXPLORING THE MOTIVATIONS OF CHINESE BACKPACKERS THAT TRAVELED TO CHILE


National Tourism Service (2019, September 11). Chile apunta al mercado de China: sus turistas son los que más divisas dejan en sus visitas [Chile aims to attract Chinese tourists: its tourists are the ones who leave the most foreign currency during their visits]. SERNATUR. https://www.sernatur.cl/chile-apunta-al-mercado-de-china-sus-turistas-son-los-que-mas-divisas-dejan-en-sus-visitas/


