

“I WANT TO SHARE A BEAUTIFUL JOURNEY WITH MY FRIENDS!”
CHINESE MILLENNIAL TRAVELERS’ SHARING OF TRAVEL VIDEOS VIA SOCIAL
MEDIA AND THEIR TOURISM EXPERIENCES

BY

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THESIS

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ABSTRACT

In Web 2.0, the consuming and sharing of user-generated travel videos are becoming increasingly popular among Chinese Millennial travelers. However, research regarding the motivations to create and share personal video recorded travel content is scarce, and understanding of the power of such videos in influencing tourism experiences is inadequate. The purpose of the current study was to explore the reasoning and social justifications of tourists to engage in the production and sharing of travel videos and how an involvement of social media practices in everyday life experiences extended to tourism contexts. Using phenomenology, this study conducted semi-structured interviews with 12 tourists who had experiences watching, creating and posting travel videos via social media. Data were analyzed following the “phenomenological attitude”—eidetic reduction. Findings suggest that altruistic, hedonistic and social-related motivations are the three primary reasons for tourists to watch, produce and share travel videos, and the spillover impacts exhibited from everyday life, especially the impacts of social media use, have clearly extended to tourism context, resulting in the blurring of boundaries between tourism experiences and everyday life experiences, the private life and the public life as well as the unlocking of three stages of tourism experiences.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In Web 2.0, two pervasive changing trends regarding media content have been identified: a shift from professional media content to user-generated content, and a progression from textual to visual representations (Hays, Page, & Buhalis, 2013; Munar, Gyimóthy, & Cai, 2013; Shaffer, 2001; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Creating and sharing self-generated content on social media has become an everyday routine for many people (Smith, Fischer, & Yongjian, 2012). In the context of tourism, the development of information technology along with web 2.0 participatory culture have enabled and encouraged individual tourists to contribute to travel-related content through posting reviews, sharing their experiences via articles, photos and videos on a variety of social media platforms (Kang & Schuett 2013; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). According to Kim, Xiang and Fesenmaier (2015), Millennials, in particular, are found to be some of the most active consumers and producers of travel-related content given their distinct pursuit of uniqueness and creativity.

In China, especially, Millennials are showing an unprecedented enthusiasm toward consuming, producing, as well as sharing travel-related videos on social media platforms. For example, although not initially designed as an app for sharing travel experiences in particular, the social video app Tik Tok has become a vehicle for mediating tourist experiences. Since 2017, ten tourist destinations have significantly benefited from Tik Tok with its significant ability in disseminating information within a short time to an extensive audience. For only several seconds, a video about a travel destination or experience can reach out to hundreds of millions of people. Among “Tik Tok Hot Destinations”, Xi’an, also unofficially called “the City of Tik Tok” by some Tik Tok users, has seen significant growth in its tourism. From February to April 2017, users produced and posted 610,000 videos related to Xi’an, the viewing rate of which reached 3.6 million and the total number of likes accumulated to 1 million. During the National three day

weekend in April, the number of travelers visiting Xi'an for the total three days increased by 38.76% (Qu, 2018). This "Xi'an Fever" started with a 15-sec video in which a user drank a bottle of local wine and smashed the bottle on a cultural street. This video became a hit immediately and attracted numerous Tik Tok users to visit the same cultural street and do the exact same act of smashing a wine bottle. This "Xi'an Fever" highlights that individual's preference and interest for video content and the everyday use of social media has extended and shaped contemporary tourism experiences.

To understand the nature of the Tik Tok phenomenon, three research questions need to be answered: (1) why do tourists choose to create, share and consume travel videos?; (2) how, if at all, are tourist experiences transformed through their engagement with travel videos?; and, (3) Does the everyday use of social media influence tourism experiences and, if so, how?

Extensive research has explored the motivations to use social media for travel. For example, Munar and Jacobsen (2014) classified tourists' motivations to share their experience by self-centered motivations, community-related motivations, and individual action and personal cognition motivations. Wang, Xiang, and Fesenmaier (2014) investigated tourists' motivations to use social media in three-stages of tourist experiences. Their findings show that social fun, staying connected with families and friends, and keeping others up-to-date are the three most-driven factors for tourists to use social media. Information searching and process is also found to be common motivations for tourists to engage in social media practices (Kim et al., 2015). While some research has found that hedonism and altruistic motivations are most influential for tourism content creators (Amaro, Duarte, & Henriques, 2016; Gretzel, Yoo, & Purifoy, 2007; Kang & Schuett, 2013; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004; Yoo & Gretzel,

2008; Yoo & Gretzel, 2011), what factors influence content creators to get more involved in video consumption and production and what amuses them remain unknown.

A significant number of previous research has adopted a temporal perspective to explore tourism experiences (Craig-Smith & French, 1994; Graburn, 1989; Wang, Park, & Fesenmaier, 2012). However, some researchers argue that the touristic experience lies “beyond” the temporal dimension (Jennings & Nickerson, 2006). It is a process in which tourists “seek out opportunities to discover and construct narratives meaningful to them” in a reflexive way and over time (Park & Santos, 2017). Travel then can be approached as a “special stage” of technology use whereby technology such as a smartphone is used on a daily basis and over time influences (i.e., spills over to) the use of technology while traveling (Gretzel, 2011; MacKay & Vogt, 2012; White & White, 2007). In terms of the use of social media, the existing literature majorly focused on social media practices in the tourism context within a particular stage of tourism experiences such as during the travel process (Ayer, Au, & Law, 2013; Kim et al., 2015; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010), ignoring that the use of social media can change across different stages of tourism experiences, which are being “unlocked” due to close connections and association with the home environment while traveling (Gretzel, 2011). These “decapsulated” tourism experiences are thought to be affected by spillover effects brought by everyday routines (Jansson, 2007). For example, synchronic communication tools have enabled tourists to share their experiences en route (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010), resulting in the “de-exoticizing” of travel and tourism experiences (Larsen, 2008), and contribute to a blurring of the spatial boundary, temporal boundary and imaginary boundary between tourism experiences and everyday experiences.

A video is a powerful tool in mediating tourism experiences by engaging tourists’ imagination and mental stimulation together. Dinhopl and Gretzel (2015) proposed that video

was more effective in representing tourism experiences both in social practices and technological practices. Although considerable attention in tourism research has been paid to the mediated mechanism of photography (Lo, Cheung, Law, Lo, & McKercher, 2010; Larsen, 2005; Urry & Crawshaw, 2002), the mediating effects of videos have not been widely investigated. This is surprising because tourism experiences are by nature visual experiences and video, especially, is more adept than photos at providing tourists with space to share experiences. Also, little is known about the underlying processes that shape tourists' consumption and production of travel videos and tourist experiences.

Specifically, this exploratory phenomenological investigation employs in-depth interviews and video elicitation to explore the reasoning and thinking behind tourists' production, dissemination, and consumption of travel videos. The first purpose of this study was to explore why tourists consume, create and share travel videos. The second purpose was to understand the role of travel videos in mediating tourism experiences. The third purpose was to explore whether and how the everyday use of social media would influence tourism experiences.

The remainder of the thesis is organized into four parts. It begins with an extensive review of the literature on factors influencing tourists' participation in social media practices for travel. The study continues by discussing the possible reasons to share tourism experiences using a video. Following is a review of the connections between tourism and everyday life, paying great attention to the impacts of everyday use of social media on tourism experiences. The second part introduces the reader to phenomenology methodology, the data collection process, the particularities of the sample and data analysis procedures. The third part presents the findings of this thesis with three emerging interpretive themes generated from tourists' interviews. A discussion of the findings, limitations of the study and possible directions for future research are

provided. The results of this study can enable us to gain a more profound theoretical understanding of tourism experiences as well as its connections and interactions with everyday life experiences in a media culture saturated era. From a practical perspective, an enhanced comprehension of the ability of video in mediating tourism experiences can assist tourism marketers in designing customized marketing strategies.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourists' Use of Social Media for Travel

In contemporary society, social media refers to “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). In the realms of tourism, social media has been utilized in numerous ways. For example, on the one hand, synchronic social communication platforms (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, snapchat) have enabled tourists to stay connected with their families and friends and to share their experiences on the move. Travel thus becomes more “spontaneous” (Wang et al., 2012) and accessible to others. Travel review websites (e.g., TripAdvisor, Yelp) are used for facilitating the process of decision-making across different stages of the tourism experience. Travel blogs and websites are increasingly offering limitless and quality information to tourists, making travel more flexible and efficient (Kim et al., 2015; Neuhofer, 2016; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010)

Moreover, the development of these travel-related social media tools has empowered tourists to undertake multiple roles, such as information seeker, the troll, activist, socialite and social critic, etc (Mkono & Tribe, 2017). As such, an important shift can be noted that tourists are not passively consuming information provided by traditional travel agencies and social media marketers, they are increasingly spreading their influence to all aspects of tourism by making great contributions to the online travel communities through sharing their personal travel experiences (Muntinga, Moorman, & Smit, 2011; Shao, 2009). A variety of academic efforts have been made to identify the factors affecting traveler’s increasing engagement with social media in the context of tourism.

Factors Affecting Tourists' Engagement with Social Media

Pop culture

Pop culture has increasingly significant power in influencing tourists' engagement with social media. For example, by adopting Jenkins's (2006) theory of "Convergence Culture", Månsson (2011) found that tourists' consumption and production experiences were shaped by the "participatory culture" phenomenon in which nonprofessional, grassroots travel content created by amateurs rather than traditional, professionally-created content were better valued by tourists. Millennials, especially, have demonstrated a growing reliance on user-generated content when searching for information (Amaro et al., 2016; Liu, Wu, & Li, 2018). While cultivating such a culture, social media is also able to attract tourists' continued participation by fulfilling a variety of needs, including functional needs and psychological needs (Jansson, 2007; Wang et al., 2012).

Motivations

Considerable attention has been paid to multiple types of motivations that trigger tourists' engagement in travel-related social media practices.

Functional motivation. A search for better quality travel content has been reported as the most crucial motivator that drives tourists to engage in social media for travel (Chung & Buhalis, 2008). Contemporary tourists frequently use social media for travel information searching, processing and dissemination (Ayer et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2015; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010; Wang et al., 2012). They value the functional values of social media including facilitating online travel transactions, providing high quality information as well as helping solve problems. Provided with great travel-related information, such as user-generated information, tourists are able to see a more complete picture of every stage of their travels, and thus a sense of uncertainty concerning their travels is decreased (Fodness & Murray, 1997). In particular, compared to other

types of information, videos have been noted as a superior information source that increases the accessibility and accuracy of information (Keelan, Pavri-Garcia, Tomlinson, & Wilson, 2007).

Habit and to pass time. Recent research suggests that “travel can be seen as a ‘special stage’ of technology use”, whereby individuals carry skills, routines and habits established in their everydayness into travel (Currie, 1997; MacKay & Vogt, 2012; White & White, 2007).

Tourists’ use of social media for travel shows the same pattern use as in everyday life (Wang et al., 2016). According to Munnar and Jacobsen (2014), Stoeckl, Rohrmeier, and Hess (2007) and Wang and colleagues (2016), the production and consumption of online travel content, especially visual content, are commonly motivated by the passing of time and their habitual use of social media in their everyday life. For instance, if they would like to kill dull time by watching interesting videos on Tik Tok, they may engage in similar activities during travel.

Altruistic motivation. Among existing identified motivations, altruistic motivation has been found to play an essential role in motivating individuals’ participation in online travel consumption and production (Gretzel et al., 2007; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004). According to Munnar and Jacobsen (2014), in terms of the motivations to share post-trip experiences, more than 40% of their respondents claimed that they contributed online because they wanted to prevent others from using bad products and choosing bad tourist services. When deciding whether to participate in online travel media, many tourists would assume that being “helpful to others” is the key valued by the virtual travel community and they believe that an enhanced cooperation in return can be achieved through their altruistic contribution to the online travel communities (Bronner & de Hoog, 2011; Gretzel & Yoo, 2008).

Social recognition and self-representation. Social media users are effortlessly engaging in building self-identity, sharing positive self-image as a way to augment self-esteem and gain

recognition from others (Baym, 2015; Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Rosenberg & Egbert, 2011; Kim & Tussyadiah, 2013; Hancock & Toma, 2009). In the communication setting, Mosemghvdlishvili and Jansz (2013) adopted an in-depth interview approach to study why a Youtuber made and posted videos about Islam based on User and Gratification theory, which emphasized that online media users posted to fulfill certain needs. The study results showed that the Youtuber was able to better communicate and construct the image of Islam, enhance self-expression and gain social recognition in a video format. In tourism settings, identity-related motivations, including commitment, identity salience, and role performance share the same importance as in the communication settings (Bond & Falk, 2013). For example, the more a tourist self-identifies or is identified by others as a videographer, the higher the possibility that the tourist will continue performing the role of videographer through creating and sharing a lot of videos across their trip. As in Munnar and Jacobsen (2014), those tourists who had used social media across the trip showed a high level of identification with a self-centered motivation: liking to share impressions through social media. Great attempts have been made by tourists to generate more recognition and respect from others (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014), especially significant others by sharing their experiences via videos and photos, which are considered effective channels to present a positive self-image (Dinhopl & Gretzel, 2015). Following Goffman (1959)'s "Self-Representation" theory, Lyu (2016) examined Korean women's motivations to edit and package their travel selfies on social media webpages and found that sharing a "positive-self" with others was highly valued by Korean women travelers. Especially, she suggests that the level to which tourists would participate in editing their photos online was positively influenced by appearance surveillance. The more they care about their "presented appearance", the more they would try to gain positive recognition from others, leading to an increased sharing on social media. Social

benefits brought by an explosion in travel social media thus encourages tourists' enduring participation.

Hedonism and entertainment. Hedonism and entertainment motivation refer to a need to escape and unwind from daily responsibilities, have fun and gain hedonistic pleasure (Bronner & de Hoog, 2011). For travel-related content consumers, they are reported to have fun with online content (reading travel review, viewing and commenting on shared travel photos and videos, etc), the consumption of which makes the travel planning process much more enjoyable (Chung & Buhalis, 2008; Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Gretzel et al., 2007; Parra-López, Gutiérrez-Taño, Diaz-Armas, & Bulchand-Gidumal, 2012). Travel content creators, similarly, are making significant contributions mostly due to intrinsic motivations, such as hedonic pleasure (Amaro et al., 2016; Kang & Schuett, 2013; Yoo & Gretzel, 2008, 2011; Yoo & Gretzel, 2011). In particular, the level of participation in online social travel media and perceived enjoyment are closely related (Kang & Schuett, 2013). Indeed, the more tourists perceive enjoyment from creating travel content, the more they will engage in contributing and sharing travel content (Amaro et al., 2016). Some scholars have proposed that social media users are also motivated by financial reimbursement (Bronner & de Hoog, 2011). However, by exploring the differences in motivations of video-blogging and weblogging, Stoeckl and colleagues (2007) found that intrinsic motivations (e.g., fun and passing time) other than extrinsic motivations (i.e., financial reimbursement) were valued far more by video-bloggers even though the production of video content required more time, devotion, energy and expensive technical equipment.

Personal characteristics

Tourists' engagement in social media for travel can differ according to their personal characteristics including personality, age, education, incomes, ethnicity, lifestyle, and others to a

varying degree (Wang et al., 2014). Findings of previous research reveal that young tourists who are well educated and have high income are more likely to use social media for travel planning, content creation and sharing tourist experiences (Amaro et al., 2016; Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou, 2013; Gretzel et al., 2007; Kim et al., 2015; Ip, Lee & Law, 2012). Kim et al. (2015) studied the profile of users who use travel websites for planning and sharing tourist experiences. As their study results show, more than 54.6% of respondents who would be willing to share their experiences online are under the age of 25 years old. A longitudinal generational analysis of the use of the internet for travel found that Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y shared a lot of similarities in terms of channels of information search, planning, and booking and purchasing of travel products. Among generations studied, Generation Y has been found to be more engaged and active in travel planning, and they tend to use a greater variety of information and communication devices for travel. Amaro et al.'s (2016) work further developed Kim et al.'s (2015) study by categorizing five segments of tourist new media users according to the demographic characteristics, perceived enjoyment and level of involvement and found out that those who were “fully engaged” and “consuming enthusiasts and apathetic creators” were younger people who had a comparatively higher involvement in travel planning and content creation.

As the existing literature shows, young travelers are increasingly playing an important role in both the production and consumption of social media for travel. As such, the current study paid particular attention to young travelers at this age, specifically Millennial travelers. Millennials, also known as Generation Y or the “Net Generation”, refers to people who were born between the early 1980s to early 2000s (“Millennials,” n.d.). As the first generation that has grown up with computers, it is believed that they are familiar with all kind of new technologies

(Prensky, 2013), so they are more enthusiastic about engaging with and adopting social media (Bizirgianni & Dionysopouloub, 2013). This generation is also unique for standing right at the crossroads where multi-media cultures are colliding and permeating their impacts in every realm of life including the tourism domain. Despite the growing importance of Millennials in tourism consumption, there is sparse existing research investigating their experiences across different stages of tourism. Using social comparison theory, Liu and colleagues (2018) suggest that Millennials' destination visit intention can be triggered by benign envy towards those who share positive tourist experiences online. Amaro et al. (2016) and Liu et al. (2018) describe unique characteristics of Millennials—they value creativity and uniqueness (Nielsen, 2014), thus having higher likelihood that they will consume, create and share travel-videos.

Factors Affecting Tourist' Engagement with Travel Videos

As the number of social media users in tourism is increasing, the pattern of the usage is also changing. To be specific, advanced technology increased the easiness of editing visual contents, and a diversified social media platform allowed immediate experience with sharing (Tomlinson, 2007).

Technological advancement

The advancement of technology has enabled tourists to choose from far more options to record their tourism experience, and in turn it has caused a change in media use for tourism practices. For example, GoPro which has a wide angle is wearable and is durable in harsh natural conditions allowing individuals to create high-quality video content far more easily than previously possible. The popularity of this camera has skyrocketed since its appearance, and it became the world's best-selling camera in 2012 (Ryan, 2013). The invention of mobile phone video apps, especially, cannot be dismissed as an important driving force for video consumption

and production. These mobile video apps have made everyone a “video editor” by simplifying and facilitating the process of video creation and dissemination. At the same time, various elaborate filters, digital stickers, effects, and popular music have opened up new opportunities and space for users to create more creative and exciting videos. In addition, another feature of these mobile video apps is that they are not only tools for creating a video but also serve as entertainment and social platforms for people to share their videos and have fun with consuming others’ videos, as well as interacting with other users.

Sharing environment

In addition to the technological improvement, the development of online platforms such as YouTube which created a convenient online video sharing environment has also facilitated the transition addressed in this thesis. Since video contents are rich-media, it has traditionally required high speed internet connection; however, the costs of this rich media creation have been declining as access and internet connection has increased (Harwood, 2004). Therefore, the combination of the development in different areas increased the number of people who consume as well as produce video content. According to the official YouTube statistics, about 1 billion people visit YouTube each month, over 6 billion hours of video are watched each month, and about 100 hours of video are created every minute (VIDISEO, 2015).

In China, sharing through social media is getting unprecedentedly popular among the young generation. Since 2017, China has seen a significantly increased use of video social apps. As of Feb 2018, the amount of video social apps reached 235 (Qimai Data, 2018). These video social apps can fulfill people’s functional and psychological needs with their entertaining contents, easy-to-control video editing functions and the opportunity to socialize with other users. Among these video social apps, Tik Tok is the most-used one. According to Tik Tok’s

annual report (2018), its daily users has reached 150 million, who spend accumulated 13.5 days on Tik Tok per month on average. Targeting a global market, Tik Tok is spreading its influence around the world at a tremendous speed (Haimacloud & Miaozen systems, 2018). The overseas version of Tik Tok has become the most downloaded app in the world, surpassing Facebook, Youtube and Instagram, and reaching a total number of 700 million active users. In terms of customer characteristics, about 66.1 % of users are female and more than 93% of them are under 30 years old and reported to have substantial social needs, show great interest in engaging in internet-based products and value the concept of “recording beautiful life”, which is precisely the slogan of Tik Tok. Although not initially designed as an app for travel, in particular, Tik Tok has exerted significant impacts on shaping destination image, transforming tourist behavior and mediating tourist experiences.

Current research on travel videos

Despite a growing upsurge in sharing travel videos, in tourism studies, few empirical attempts have been made to understand tourists’ shifting preferences from text and photographs to videos. Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier (2009) first positioned shared videos as a vital mediator of tourist experiences in the context of tourism. Through analyzing YouTube videos and the following comments about the city of New York, they found that shared videos were able to stimulate a kind of imaginative pleasure that allowed viewers to either re-experience their past memories or get access to the place through daydreaming (as reminiscences and daydreams). Dinhopl and Gretzel (2015) have proposed a theoretical framework to help explain why videography is getting popular with a focus on the changing way of recording which is a crucial aspect of tourism practices, from photography to videography. They proposed that videography differed from photography in technological practices of representation (e.g., allowing for visual

continuity and time, offering multiple cues and motion), social practices of representation (e.g., asking high-profile of editing and creating digital distance), as well as mediating tourism experiences (e.g., creating more immersive experience, leading to tourists' performativity during recording and enabling an extension of tourist experience).

Tourism, Leisure and Their Relationship

Leisure

Leisure, as an important life domain for human beings, has received considerable attention from academic research. There's no single definition regarding "leisure" as it has been studied from many perspectives. The earliest scholars used the work/non-work dichotomy framework to study leisure, identifying it as the opposite of work (Veblen, 1899; Murphy, 1975). Later researchers argued that despite an effective way to distinguish leisure from work, the work/non-work dichotomy framework was too broad for understanding the nature of leisure fully and it ignored the involvement of human emotions. From a psychologically-oriented perspective, therefore, leisure is regarded as a state of mind (de Grazia, 1962; Mannell, 1984; Pieper, 1952). People participate in leisure activities to fulfill certain needs (e.g., escapism from the daily interpersonal world, social needs, self-development, etc.) while seeking psychological rewards at the same time (Kraus, 1985; Mannell, 1987). Leisure has also been studied as an industry that "encompasses those organizations and individuals primarily involved in the provision of goods, services and facilities to individuals or groups in their leisure time" (Brown & Veal, 1988, p. 7). Focusing on multiple aspects of leisure, the holistic view has enabled scholars to attain a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of leisure (Csikszentmihalyi 1975, 1990; Iso-Ahola & Monily, 1980; Kelly, 1983; Neulinger 1974, 1981). For example, based on de Grazia (1962), Neulinger (1974) proposed that perceived freedom and intrinsic motivation were the central

determinants of what people considered to be leisure. Especially, freedom/autonomy is considered as the most important and signature characteristic that distinguishes leisure from other domains of life (Clarke & Critcher, 1985; Iso-Ahola, 1980; Kelly, 1987; Neulinger, 1976). While admitting the importance of freedom and intrinsic motivation, Iso-Ahola (1980) argued that the recognition of leisure participation was determined by the level of the perceived sense of freedom and the perceived sense of intrinsic rewards. According to Iso-Ahola (1980), activity participation with the least perceived freedom and perceived intrinsic rewards is categorized as “obligatory non-work activity participation. An activity that can provide participants with the highest sense of autonomy and perceived values is referred to as “leisure participation”. The in-betweenness is a free-time activity. Without reaching a certain level, participation in activity does not equate to leisure participation. Iso-Ahola (1981) then proposed that leisure is also a social experience phenomenon involving a lot of social interactions among leisure participants. Socialization can be both the benefits and motivations of leisure participation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1981). Based on past studies using a holistic view, Mannell and Iso-Ahola (1987) theorized leisure as the time to be used at an individual’s discretion involving a sense of freedom, intrinsic motivation, enjoyment, and relaxation. Later research leisure was based on these components.

Tourism

Tourism has long been studied as a special form of leisure by many researchers (Berdychevsky & Gibson, 2015; Cohen, 1974; Norris & Wall, 1994). In terms of the definition of tourism, no consensus has been reached since tourism is viewed from various perspectives. The first definition of tourism was proposed by Hunziker and Krapf (1941), who stated that “Tourism is the sum of the phenomena and relationships arising from the travel and stay of nonresidents, in so far they do not lead to any permanent residence and are not connected with

any earning activity". It has been studied from an evolutionary perspective, which resembles mass tourism to the industrial process. In this sense, a tourist experience, such as "escapism", can be purchased like any other commodity (Hiller, 1976). Neo-Durkheimian scholars consider tourism as a "sacred journey" (Graburn, 1977), a pilgrimage that is in its nature a desperate searching for the extraordinary on places elsewhere (Cohen, 1979; Graburn, 1989; MacCannell, 1973, 1976). For example, according to Graburn (1989), tourists are traveling in pursuit of authenticity in times and spaces other than those of their allegedly contrived environments. Tourism experience, therefore, equates to an authentic experience which cannot be attained at the home environment (MacCannell, 1973). From a psychological perspective, similar to leisure, tourism can also fulfill people's certain needs, including curiosity, adventure, spiritual pleasure, material austerity escape and a negation of everydayness (Featherstone, 1991; Mayo & Jarvis, 1981). More recently, the understanding of tourism focuses on its close relationship with time and space. A significant body of work and research has adopted a temporal perspective to explore tourism experiences, stressing the close connections among tourism, place and time (Craig-Smith & French, 1994; Clawson, 1963; Graburn, 1989; Jennings, 2006; MacCannell, 1973, 1976).

By arguing that tourism is formed in opposition to everyday life, Urry (1990) proposes that a "key feature would seem to be that there is a difference between one's normal place of residence/work and the object of the tourist gaze...Tourism results from a basic binary division between the ordinary/every day and the extraordinary" (p. 11). The modern development of technology and global networks, however, highlights tourism as a communicative practice to a greater extent by mobilizing tourists, thus eroding the boundary between tourism and everyday life in a sense (Jansson, 2002; Jansson, 2007; Jansson, 2018; Wang et al., 2014). The former

focus on time and place has been challenged by modern technology. Tourism is no longer about leaving for a destination away from home for over 24 hours or more.

For one thing, in the past when technology was underdeveloped, it was noted that tourist consumption could only take place in the tourist destination. In contemporary society, however, tourism increasingly overlaps with other forms of mobility (Jansson, 2018), making tourist consumption available at home. As a response to the time-space compression, in 1994 the World Tourism Organization has started to regard day-tripping as a form of tourism (United Nations, 1994). Gretzel and colleagues (2006), Jeng and Fesenmaier (1998) argue that tourism is not merely a temporal and spatial practice, but also a process in which tourists interact with local people, places and other travelers, and eventually come back to their daily life. Tourism, thus, cannot escape its close relationship with ordinary life.

The relationship of leisure and tourism

In spite of a close connection, tourism and leisure are treated as separate dimensions of life and fields of study (Moore, Cushman, & Simmons, 1995; Smith & Godbey, 1991; Simmons & Leiper, 1998). For example, according to Simmons and Leiper (1998), tourism can be distinguished from other leisure as a process including withdrawal and return, lasting a period of time of 24 hours or more, being more socializing, exclusive and discretionary with lower frequency and higher, random cost.

However, over the years, various scholars have noted that leisure and tourism are closely related (Carr, 2002; Hamilton-Smith, 1987; Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987; Ryan, 1994). Indeed, according to Moore et al. (1995) “in behavioral terms, ... there seems little necessity to insist on a major distinction between tourism and leisure phenomena” (p. 75) as they both share some key characteristics, such as freedom, relaxation, and meanings. Specifically, regarding tourism as a

special form of leisure, Hamilton-Smith (1987) identifies four kinds of tourism within the leisure context. Ryan and Glendon (1998) study the motivation dimensions of tourism by applying a leisure motivation scale. Moreover, it has been noted that both tourism and leisure are meaning-making processes. Based on Symbolic Interactionism theory, Colton (1987), Smith and Godbey (1991) argue that leisure, tourism, and recreation can be linked to the existential quest for meaning. Edensor (2000, 20001) also supports that both leisure and tourism can be subjectively defined by the meaning constructed by individuals. In terms of meaning-making, based on Weiler and Jennings (2006), Wang et al. (2016) indicate that “travel is a sense-making process whereby travelers construct the touristic experience by learning, understanding, and feeling the places visited and the culture embedded in these places” (p. 372). Some scholars argue that the meaning of tourism and tourist experiences are specifically related to “places” (Gross & Brown, 2006, 2008; Gu & Ryan, 2008). However, this space-time specificity is also challenged by some researchers who argue that modern technology has dissolved the particularity of tourism (Jansson, 2002). Regarding tourism as one end of a broad leisure spectrum (MacBeth, 1993; Moore et al., 1995; McKercher, 1996; Page & Hall, 1999; Ryan, 1997), they voice that tourism and leisure should be understood by their embeddedness in everyday practices (Edensor, 2001; Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987; Moore et al., 1995). Leisure, whether conceptualized as an activity, time or experience, is generally considered to be part of everyday life (Kelly, 1996). Likewise, Laing (1987) found “leisure activities on holiday are systematically related to those undertaken more regularly at home” (p. 231).

Using spill-over/familiarity and compensatory hypotheses, Currie (1997) proposed that daily leisure behaviors had an impact on tourism behaviors. From the spill-over side, he suggested that individuals would participate in activities similar to their everyday leisure in

searching for the sense of familiarity even on vacation. From the compensatory side, however, he argued that tourists would expect and actively look for an extraordinary experience different from what they already had at home environments. Nevertheless, he concluded that both spillover behaviors and compensatory behaviors were deeply embedded in tourists' everyday practices.

Drawing on Bystrzanowski's (1989) concept of residual culture (retained social skills) and Currie's (1997) "spillover" theory, Carr (2002) developed the "Leisure-Tourism Continuum" model to further explain tourists' consistent behaviors in both tourism and leisure context. According to Carr (2002), individuals' behaviors are shaped by tourist culture and residual culture. At one end of the continuum is leisure behavior influenced by residual culture, while on the other end, would be tourist behavior influenced by tourist culture. In-between, people's behavior and experiences would be influenced by both tourist culture and residual culture to a varying degree. On the one hand, tourist culture refers to "an animated non-ordinary lifestyle, observable rituals, behaviors, and pursuits... [which] bind them [people on holiday] into one collectivity: that of tourists" (Bystrzanowski, 1989, p. 37).

On the other hand, residual culture, or spillover effect refers to "the result of deep-rooted habits and needs that exist within tourists, ones that cannot be simply left at home that will be taken along whether they like it or not, such as social skills" (Carr, 2002, p. 975). Whether leisure cues or tourist cues are triggered is dependent on three elements. The first one is the physical/perceived environment, which refers to the time and place where individuals are at. Personal characteristics refer to demographic factors including gender, race, ethnicity, and age, etc. Another vital element is personal motivation involving both intrinsic motivations and extrinsic motivations that drive tourists to participate in leisure/tourism experiences.

Subsequent empirical studies have lent support for Currie (1997) and Carr's (2002) theoretical assumptions. For example, by examining undergraduate students' spring break experiences and its relation to risky behaviors and alcohol consumption, Ribeiro and Yarnal (2008) supported the existence of a leisure-tourism continuum. Their findings revealed that college students do not treat spring break as an excuse, or an extraordinary time and space to consume more alcohol but rather see it as a continuation of an ordinary practice that they already engaged in throughout the year. Tourism and leisure, seen as two separate environments and fields of research, are thus closely related. Tourism is not a temporal process in which all personal codes and conventions are suspended (Ribeiro & Yarnal, 2008), but rather an ongoing process that is embedded in the context of individuals' everyday practices. Chang and Gibson (2011) also noted the spillover effect of leisure practices had an impact on tourism practices. They identified the impacts of "enduring involvement" on the consistency of individuals' perceived preferences over paddling in leisure and tourism and found out that the more individuals engaged in leisure paddling, the higher the possibility that they would choose the same activity on vacation.

The literature provides evidence for the spillover effect of everyday practices on tourism, and supports the applicability of the "Leisure-Tourism Continuum" model, the results of which is a complex interaction among "sociocultural norms and values, motivation, the environment, and personal characteristics" (Carr, 2002, p. 980). However, they have failed to recognize that everyday use of technology has a mediated impact at different stages of tourism, resulting in a substantial change in overall tourist experience (Xiang, Wang, O'Leary, & Fesenmaier, 2015).

Re-examining Tourism Experiences in Web 2.0

Tourism can be seen as a “special stage” of technology use whereby technology such as social media is used on a daily basis and therefore affects (i.e., spills over to) the use of social media while traveling (Gretzel, 2011; MacKay & Vogt, 2012; Olszewska & Roberts, 1989; White & White, 2007)

Previous research has recognized the vital role of social media in mediating tourism experiences. For example, Wang et al. (2012) examined the mediation mechanism of smartphones in tourist experience with an analysis of the customer reviews of various travel apps. They found that the use of smartphones could empower tourists by increasing their confidence to visit more places, thus enabling tourists to have rich experiences and getting to enjoy a delightful trip. Social media is thought to be influential in realizing digital immediacy (Bell & Lyall, 2005). Two types of immediacy in everyday life have exerted impacts on tourism experiences. By enabling tourists to stay connected to families and friends across their trip and keeping their significant ones up to date regardless of time and place, the synchronic communication tools have created the first type of “immediacy” (Kim & Tussyadiah, 2013; Kim et al., 2015). This type of immediacy can yield two outcomes. Keeping a sense of familiarity and support from their families, tourists can feel more secure and thus have a more enjoyable experience (Kim & Tussyadiah, 2013). Notably, the perceived social support received by tourists is moderated by tourists’ self-image representation strategies whereby they would display either a positive or honest self-image online. Such moderation is regarded as the result of the performative nature of social life (Lo & McKercher, 2015) ingrained in individuals’ everyday practices. In other words, a daily performance is turning to be ongoing performativity during travel (Dinhopl & Gretzel, 2015).

On the other hand, however, Neuhofer (2016) found that tourists seemed to lose the sense of “escapism and true relaxation” through staying connected with the home environment. The second type of immediacy refers to the ability of social media to facilitate instant sharing. Dinhopl and Gretzel (2015) proposed that such digital immediacy might lead to photos that are shared immediately and lose value after the tourist experience. Considerable research has suggested that tourists can be rewarded with “sharing happiness and showing off enjoyment” through instantly sharing their experiences online en route (Choe, Kim, & Fesenmaier, 2017; Berger & Schwartz, 2011; Litvin, Goldsmith, & Pan, 2008; Qualman, 2010; Sparks & Browning, 2011; Wang, et al., 2012; Ye, Law, & Gu, 2009). For example, adopting an experimental design method, Kim and Fesenmaier (2015) found that sharing positive experiences on social media could help increase traveler’s positive affect and decrease their negative affect, thus leading to an enhanced overall experience evaluation. Sharing negative experiences, on the other hand, also improves post-trip experiences by reducing negative perceptions of the trip.

Through mediation, the boundary between tourism experiences and everyday experiences has been blurred in multiple ways. Based on spatial appropriation theory, Jansson (2002) proposed that tourism consumption and media consumption shared the same logic inherent to people’s lifestyles and in a sense that tourists could be treated as media consumers. He categorized media into a three-dimension mediascape including symbiotic mode (i.e., documentaries, photography), antagonistic mode (i.e., tourism brochures, souvenirs), and contextual mode (i.e., sport programs, movies). Each different mode of mediascape includes a diversity of travel modes. Therefore, tourism becomes “a hermeneutic circle” (Lagerkvist, 2008, p. 349) in which tourists understand their experiences through the mediator, social media. Somehow, therefore, tourism experiences are de-exoticized (Larsen, 2008). Jansson (2007)

further purported that the imaginary and spatial boundary between tourism and everyday life was blurred with the concept of “encapsulation” and “decapsulation”. While “encapsulated” tourism experiences refer to “authentic”, “extraordinary” experiences within specific space and time, “decapsulated” tourism experiences refers to “mediated” experiences which are partly the results of tourists’ increasing participation in producing multi-sensory touristic phantasmagoria through social media. The binaries that have been used to characterize the tourism experiences, including home/away, authentic/inauthentic, leisure/work, host/guest, extraordinary/mundane, and present/absent (Hannam, Sheller, & Urry, 2006) are no longer applicable in the media-saturated era (Grezel, 2011; Larsen, 2008; Månsson, 2011; Tussyadiah, I, & To, 2013; Wang et al., 2016). Therefore, the contemporary study of the tourist experience should not highlight only the exotic and extraordinary as such, but be discussed within the theory of “everydayness” (Jansson, 2018).

Summary

Through an extensive review of tourism experiences and social media literature, it can be noted that (1) little research has looked into the power of videos in mediating tourism experiences; (2) little research has been done to examine how the spillover impacts resulted from everyday consumption of videos on social media has extended to the tourism context; (3) in spite of the recognition of tourism as an ongoing process, most current research still views tourism experiences as temporal and extraordinary experiences and design their study to explore the use of social media within a certain stage of tourism. There is a need to examine the impacts of social media across the entire tourist experience. Therefore, this study aimed to answer three questions:

- (1) Why do tourists choose to consume, create and share travel videos?

(2) How, if at all, are tourist experiences transformed through their engagement with travel videos?

(3) Does the everyday use of social media influence tourism experiences and if so, how?

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Phenomenology

Phenomenology is as a constructed meaning as positioned by Hegel (Moustakas, 1994). For him, phenomenology is knowledge as it appears as consciousness, the science of describing what one perceives, senses and knows in one's immediate awareness and experience (Moustakas, 1994, p. 26). It assumes that the everyday world is a meaningful and productive source of crucial insights into the nature of any given phenomenon. As such, phenomenology aims to discover the "inherent essences" (Li, 2000, p. 865) of shared lived experience to gain a more in-depth and intersubjective understanding of a particular phenomenon (Giorgi, 1997). As both a research methodology and a philosophical movement, it has been widely applied in a range of areas from psychology to education. In the context of tourism studies, phenomenology has been increasingly utilized as a tool for understanding tourists' experiences (Santos & Yan, 2010; Wang et al., 2014). To capture tourists' lived experiences of a particular tourism phenomenon, phenomenological researchers frequently conduct participant observation and undertake in-depth interviews with people who have directly experienced the phenomenon (Patton, 2002).

This study specifically seeks to explore tourists' lived experiences with creating, disseminating and engaging with travel videos using the social media platform Tik Tok. Thus, this study was designed using a phenomenological research paradigm, which enabled the author to develop rich descriptions of the lived experiences of the participating tourists regarding their engagement in and with travel videos using social media. This was done through in-depth, face-to-face dialogue with individuals who had relevant experiences to share (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

Sample

Sampling method

A nonprobabilistic, purposive sampling strategy was used in this study. According to Patton (2002), quantitative methods always rely on larger samples selected randomly as to ensure the generalizability of the study sample. Qualitative inquiry, however, focuses on a relatively small sample since the aim and logic of qualitative inquiry is to gain in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study. From purposefully selected information-rich cases, researchers are able to learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research (Patton, 2002).

Therefore, purposeful sampling was adopted in this study whereby participants were selected based upon three inclusion criteria. First, participants had to be 18 years old or older. Second, the participants had to be Chinese Millennials. Third, the informants had to have had experience creating travel-video by themselves, had shared at least one self-created travel video on their social media accounts, and had watched travel-related videos on social media.

Recruitment strategy

Participants were recruited from three sources. First, participants were recruited from the researcher's social media pages. An announcement with detailed description and purpose of the study, as well as the contact information of the researcher was posted on her social media pages. Second, an announcement with information about this study was posted on a video-making amateur group on WeChat, which is the most-used social media platform in China. The researcher was a member of this group. Third, a snowball approach was utilized throughout the recruiting process. The participants who completed interviews themselves introduced the researcher to some of their friends who also met the selection criteria.

Data Collection Procedures

Interview guide approach

An interview guide approach, commonly referred to as semi-structured interviews, was utilized in this study. This approach offers researchers more flexibility in probing certain subjects in greater depth by allowing researchers to achieve the same basic lines of inquiry with each interviewee using a prepared interview guide while making spontaneous adjustments based on interviewees' responses (Patton, 2002). As qualitative interviewing is a changing, ongoing process, an interview guide approach works effectively in making the whole interviewing process more systematic. Sub-questions were asked only if a participant's response to the initial question did not cover specific topics of interest.

Based on an interview guide, in-depth semi-structured interviews with the participants who had experiences creating, sharing, and consuming travel videos was used to identify the thinking and reasoning behind their engagement with travel videos via social media and as well as their feelings across multiple stages of their travel experiences.

No set, precise rules exist regarding the sample size when adopting a qualitative method. Morse (1994) recommended at least six participants for phenomenological studies, while Creswell (1998) recommended between five and twenty-five interviews for phenomenological research. In this study, following the concept of "data saturation" (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006), the interview process was repeated until no new information related to the specific research questions were heard by the interviewer. Finally, a total of 12 interviews were conducted for this study. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 1.5 hours. The interview guide of this study was provided:

- What are your experiences to date with Tik Tok or other video sharing apps?
 - How and when did you become a Tik Tok user? (Source)

- How often do you use Tik Tok? (Frequency & Loyalty)
 - What kind of videos do you like to watch on Tik Tok? (Preferences)
 - What does Tik Tok mean to you?
 - Do you interact with other users on Tik Tok? Why and why not?
- Please tell me about some tourism videos that you have watched on social media.
 - How did you get access to those videos? (e.g., system recommendation, self-search, etc.)
 - Why were they impressive?
 - How do you react to those tourism videos?
 - Please tell me about some tourism videos that you posted on social media.
 - What is going on in the video?
 - Why did you film this particular tourism attraction or activity? What does it represent about your trip (or the destination)?
 - In which phase of your trip did you create this video?
 - How would you describe the experiences of creating and sharing tourism videos?
 - What triggered you to (create) and (share) tourism videos? (1st time?)
 - What did filming and sharing a video while traveling mean to you?

Video elicitation

Video elicitation, also labeled as “stimulated call”, has been widely applied in the social sciences alongside interviews or focus group as a useful technique to provide a basis for personal reflection (Roth, 2007) and was appropriate for the current study. While watching themselves on video, the participants frequently re-experience and recollect thoughts, feelings, and beliefs they experienced during and after the event discussed (Henry & Fetters, 2012). Particularly, video elicitation can be effective to help research participants recollect accounts of the characteristics of a “invisible phenomena” (Schubert, 2006) visibly, allowing the participants to gain complete interpretation and learn more about the meaning of the practices they recorded on video (Jewitt, 2012).

The current study approached video elicitation as a means of helping participants recollect and better describe and expand upon their travel experiences through their self-

generated travel videos, which had in fact changed the intangible to be “tangible” (Lo & McKercher, 2015).

Procedures

A study approval was granted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Participants were assured that their participation was voluntary, their responses to the interview questions were completely anonymous, and all data collected would only be used for this thesis and similar subsequent studies. Prior to each interview, the researcher provided each interviewee with a brief introduction regarding the research to make sure that the interviewee understood the purpose of this study. Then, participants were asked to sign a consent form acknowledging their understanding and voluntary participation in this study. For those interviewed via Skype, an electronic consent form was sent to the interviewee before the start of the interview.

Interviews were conducted using two approaches: 1) via a face-to-face conversation, and 2) through Skype when face-to-face contact was not feasible. Each face-to-face interview was scheduled separately on a location chosen by the interview participant to ensure the interview could be done in a setting in which the interviewee would be most comfortable talking (De León, 2015; Redfern-Vance, 2007).

To ensure as much consistency as possible across the interview approaches, the few interviews that were conducted via Skype included a video-chat rather than only audio-chat. In short, based on some previously done face-to-face interviews, it was found that some interviewees wanted to show some body movements or gestures that were included either in the videos they had seen or videos they had produced. Therefore, to gain a comprehensive

understanding of what interviewees' expression of their lived experiences, Skype video-chats instead of audio-chat were conducted by the researcher.

All interviews were conducted in Chinese with Chinese tourists for two major reasons. Firstly, this study focused on a phenomenon widespread in China; the significant engagement with tourism videos on the Tik Tok social media app. Second, it was for the purpose of getting the most productive information. According to Redfern-Vance (2007) and Patton (2002), using native languages for the interview enables the interviewee to express themselves more comprehensively and explicitly. Participants' way of narration and word choices may differ when doing interviews in different languages. For example, participants may use some words or idioms which can only be understood by a native speaker. If not using native languages, some word choices may not be powerful enough to reflect what they are supposed to mean accurately. As the researcher and the participants were both Chinese, some of the shared knowledge they owned would enable them to engage in a conversation with fewer barriers. As such, the researcher was able to understand the interviewee in a better and more holistic way.

Interviews began with a brief mutual introduction of the researcher and the participant. Explicitly, an introduction enabled the researcher to get some background information about the interviewee (e.g., occupation, interest) so as to help develop some specific questions in the follow-up questions during the interview. Next, participants were asked to describe their experiences with watching tourism videos on social media apps. Then, participants were asked to describe their experiences of creating tourism videos using social media and provide detailed examples. For this part, participants were allowed to share with the author some of their self-made videos so as to recall their memory about the filming, creating and sharing of those videos.

Study Participants

A total of 12 qualified individuals participated in this study. Of the individuals who participated in this study, 2 were males, and 10 were females. Participants ranged in ages from 22-26 years old. In terms of education, eight participants reported completing a bachelor's degree, and four reported they completed a graduate degree. Their occupations included a graduate student, new media content creator, HR, real estate developer, tourism and hospitality product manager. All of the participants were assigned pseudonyms in this study. A detailed introduction of each participant is provided below:

Mickey is a bachelor graduate who is working in the tourism and hospitality industry. She is a very sociable person who always hangs out with a bunch of friends, does video chats with friends and watches what she deems to be interesting content from the internet. As a social person, she is always checking her phone. She is interested in topics including tourism, entertainment, and some volunteer work. As she is not only familiar with the tourism industry, but also very involved and pays close attention to the video industry, she provided very helpful and useful data for this research.

Stella is a 23 years old young woman who is working in the hotel industry. At the time she was interviewed in December, she had just graduated from graduate school and started her new job two months prior. Before graduation, she traveled to several countries in Europe with her friends, and she shared her experiences about this specific trip with the author.

Maya is a new master graduate student who is going to graduate school in France. For leisure, she loves traveling and reading. In the past two years, she has traveled around Europe and has created many videos along the way. When she was interviewed, she had just finished a road trip with her family in New Zealand, in which she posted a lot of great travel videos on

social media. Although she is a shy person, she got excited when talking about her travel experiences.

Mandy is 22 years old, bachelor graduate who is working as a content creator in an internet company. Due to her occupation, she has done some research in terms of people's preferences over online content. Partly because of this, her answers towards my interview questions were more well-organized than most of the participants. What's more, she is "picky" about the quality of videos, shows, and books.

Eric is currently a software engineer in an internet company. His interests are traveling, shopping, discovering great cuisines, watching movies and engaging in online communities. Before graduating from graduate school, he visited a considerable number of places around the world, such as Italy, Japan, Germany, France, Spain, etc. Being an introvert, he does not see himself as a "social" person, but instead he enjoys traveling alone while meeting many different people during his trip.

Belle is an experienced sales representative in the health industry. At leisure, she loves hiking, hanging out with friends and traveling. It is usual for her to go hiking during weekends even when she is busy with her work. Her biggest dream is to travel around the world. If time permitted, she would embark on a journey at least one time per year. Before I interviewed her, she had just finished a backpacking trip in Tibet with some like-minded backpackers who made acquaintance with each other through online backpacker groups. Besides backpacking travel, her job also provides her with many opportunities for business travel around China.

Ruby is a graduate student who is majoring in finance. She enjoys watching food and travel videos during her leisure time. Last summer, she interned at a video mobile app development program. Therefore, she had the chance to watch a variety of videos on various

mobile video platforms and made a comparison among these mobile video platforms. She adds to the richness of data by sharing her experiences from the perspectives of an “Insider”.

Hope just started her job as in human resource management this spring. She has begun to develop her interest in photography and videography since freshman year. In order to take better photos and videos, she just upgraded her equipment before we talked about her experiences. Besides photography, she enjoys watching all kinds of videos, especially animation through online video platforms.

Cora works in an advertising department in a game company. It is one of her work responsibilities to come up with interesting ideas for advertising on social media, especially video social platforms like Tik Tok. In fact, before she began her work, she was already a big “fan” of Tik Tok, calling Tik Tok her “spring of happiness for every day”.

Lily is working for a new media company as a content operation analyst. It is interesting that, although she creates content for people to consume on social media, she is not a social media maven herself. However, she loves photography, and it is her habit to explore and record the beauty of the world with her boyfriend. Lily and her boyfriend just made a 2018 end-of-the-year video together to celebrate all the memorable moments in 2018 before the author interviewed her.

Noah is working in the real estate industry. For work reasons, he has had many opportunities to go on business trips around China. It is usual for him to work during the weekdays as a businessman while exploring the exotic cities as a tourist during the weekend. He shared his experiences about how he dealt with work pressure through traveling, which was insightful and interesting.

Lydia is a graduate student who is studying in New York. In the past two years, she has been traveling around the U.S. This winter, she went on a road trip with three of her friends to Florida and made many great memories. It was her first time to record her trip with videos, and she made 15 total videos along the way. She provided very rich data for this study by sharing her experiences in detail.

Data Analysis

The goal of the data analysis was to understand the reasoning and thinking behind travelers' engagement with travel videos across the entire tourism experience. All interviews were tape recorded, and verbatim responses to each question were translated and transcribed from Chinese to English by the bilingual researcher, using a standardized transcription protocol (McLellan, MacQueen & Niedig, 2003). A qualitative data analysis software (MAXQDA 2018) was utilized to facilitate the management of transcripts and assist the coding process. Following Santos and Yan (2010), the analysis of the transcripts was conducted based on the "phenomenological attitude" — eidetic reduction. Eidetic reduction refers to how "particular features of a phenomenon are reduced or set aside so that note can be taken of that which shows itself as universal" (Ehrich 1999, p. 25). Thus, the data analysis primarily focused on the recurring and overarching themes that represented the nature of the phenomenon. First, the research did a "long preliminary soak" of the data (Hall, 1975, p.15). Each transcript was read by the researcher for numerous times. The goal was not to focus on particular words but to gain an overall understanding of the meanings within the transcripts. After four times of reading, the researcher moved on to the open-coding process. Second, all sentences or paragraphs within all transcripts that could interpret the "experiences" of travelers' engagement of consumption, creating or sharing travel videos were read carefully and coded. The purpose of open-coding was

not to miss any important information that might be useful for future analysis. Third, descriptions conveying similar messages were simplified to eliminate any redundancy. For example, “share the happy moments”, “to let them feel what I feel” and “share the beautiful sceneries”, were combined to be “sharing the wonderful life experiences”. Fourth, descriptive statements were then clustered into major interpretive themes that conveyed expressions of the participants with travel videos. For example, “gaining social recognition and enhancing tourism experiences” and “sharing the wonderful experiences” were clustered into “Hashtagging a #wonderfuljourney through sharing”. Last, major interpretive themes were synthesized with reference to the individual extended description of the meaning in the lived experiences of tourists.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Through a thorough analysis of the participant interviews, three major themes emerged from the data, which were “consuming and creating multi-sensory touristic fantasies”, “hashtagging a #beautiful travel through sharing”, and “storing memorable life in a ‘public’ diary”. All these three themes displayed that tourism experiences were affected by everyday practices in one way or another. The following chapter will provide a detailed explanation for each theme with reference to the narratives of study participants.

Consuming and Creating Multi-sensory Touristic Fantasies

The consumption and production of travel videos are interconnected processes. Tourists’ perceptions towards travel videos are first formed by watching travel and other related videos on social media platforms. They derive mental pleasure and imaginative pleasure from the consumption of these videos. The enjoyable mediated perceptions formed by leisure consumption, later, are extended to the tourism context, engaging and guiding tourists’ creation of their personal travel videos.

Close analysis of the data revealed that participants demonstrated a consistent preference for multi-sensory fantasies and “exotic” experiences as they made decisions regarding the content of travel videos both when they were consuming a travel video at leisure and when they were creating travel videos for their trip. When describing some travel videos that they believed were impressive, most often those interviewed used such words as “unique”, “exotic”, “funny”, “representing the destination”, “make me happy” “interesting experiences I have never tried”. As Lily explained,

I have never seen such a beautiful scenery before, such as the polar light, snowy mountains, extremely blue sea (more beautiful than

Sanya, a coastal vacation destination popular in China). All of these are so amazing to me.

Mickey shared a travel video about Semporna, a famous coastal destination in Malaysia with me, and she argued that watching travel videos could help shape destination image. Her descriptions of her experiences demonstrated a preference for multi-sensory integration of interactions, sceneries, sound, moods, etc.

I have seen a video about Semporna, and it was very impressive to me because the local uniqueness was very well presented in the video. In the video, you can see they (people in the video) did a lot of movements under the water, like dancing, which made me feel very unique. Also, the water was very clear, and you can see some kids jumped to the water from the boardwalk happily. I love this video so much that I even recommended this video to my friends when talking about Semporna.

The happiness documented and projected in the travel video was experienced as mental pleasure for tourists. Several participants described it as “it is so fun/happy to watch these interesting videos”. Moreover, participants explained that after watching these videos they would also experience imaginative pleasure and that they noticed that they started to experience a following on their social media by others longing to experience in person the multi-sensory experiences shown in those videos. They described it as if it was like a sense of daydreaming and that stimulates a desire for first-hand experiences. As Hope explained.

These videos can make a destination unique to me. I really want to experience [what happened in the video]. Especially, when I saw

people took some interesting moves in those representative spots in some good quality travel videos. I would also want to have a try.

Accordingly, this kind of yearning for the experience or the place shown in the video had in fact been realized by a real visit as some participants explained. When Bella was describing her intention to visit Tibet and Chongqing, she recalled that,

Actually, the reason why I wanted to visit Tibet was because I watched a video about Yang Lake. After I saw this video, I asked where it was. It's true, my original impulse to visit Tibet was because of this video. Chongqing was the same. There were many videos showing a great number of dangerous and challenging activities in Chongqing and that made me want to go on a trip to Chongqing and to challenge those activities.

The consumption of travel videos provided an idealized framework for a touristic memoryscape. Participants' pursuit of the exotic experiences in those travel videos in turn inspired their creation of their personal travel videos. As found in the content of videos made by the study participants, they include "memorable", "representative", "interesting" and "exotic" moments in their self-generated videos, showing a consistent preference for such labels when choosing what to consume. Also, their self-narratives (here refers to the construction of travel videos) did not only aim to show "It is Morocco", but also aimed to portray a multi-sensory fantasy of Morocco.

On the one hand, participants were also motivated to choose video as a tool to present their touristic fantasies because of its ability to restore a fuller picture of their travels to the utmost through bringing the static alive. In short, by visually demonstrating and "proving" their

lived experience. Many participants referred to photos when explaining what they loved about travel videos. For them, photos are only able to capture a specific, static moment, while a video can bring back the motion and movements to life.

Cora: Compared to photos, videos are better at recording things, especially some trivial details. Photos can only be used to mark down something that has dramatic impacts, but they cannot include many details.

Stella further explained the capability of video in expressing her emotional feelings and experiences,

Because the road is very beautiful. You cannot show that kind of [dynamic] feelings simply with a photo. The road seems to be endless and different sceneries show up when turning around. That kind of mood on the road can only be represented in a dynamic talent.

Stella was not alone. The “mood”, the “atmosphere”, the “moment” was commonly identified as important to represent tourism experiences and thus should be restored as fully as possible in a video. In other words, participants were not simply aiming at having their experiences alive but were also expecting to make it visually and emotionally and acoustically “tasty”.

As an indispensable component of a video, music is considered effective in communicating certain aspects of a travel (e.g., travelers’ emotions, the tone of the trip, the specific atmosphere at that moment, etc.). Participants described spending a considerable amount of time choosing the right music, and some of them even paid for the most suitable music or to transform the format of the music so as to fit their videos. It was commonly noted that only when

music and the content were suitably integrated, could a travel video become a good, meaningful video as illustrated by Hope, who had experiences editing videos for over five years.

Personally, music is more important as it can take you back to that moment and re-feel what you felt at that time. I think music is better than photo in restoring the memories of a special situation. Before I edited my video, I would first select a background music, and then picked some stock clips of the trip that I believed could blend well with the music. For example, I selected a funny, Cantonese song for my trip to Hong Kong. I and my friend both loved this song because, on the one hand, it fitted with the cheerful tone and mood of our trip; on the other hand, a Cantonese song also met the feeling of Hong Kong the destination.

In addition to music, other elements enabled by videos, and in fact by the advanced, handy video editing apps, have allowed more space for tourists to play with their creativity as to enjoy and expand their experiences to the maximum. All study participants held a positive attitude towards the development of video editing tools, expressing that “It’s the existence of these tools that gives me a motivation to make a video rather than do with a photo” (Mandy, 2018). Particularly, travel, as a special activity, provides them with the opportunity to experiment with those special effects that they have seen in others’ videos, adding more fun to their experiences. Some participants also stated that they created travel videos often because they wanted to apply a special effect or a movement function they had seen on some videos (not travel videos) on social media to their own videos. Interestingly, when describing their experiences of travel videos, these “effect” seekers would try to show me how the effects looked

by copying the same movements offered by the effect through the video chat. Moreover, participants are now able to restore a more complete experience and derive new meanings by adding activity-related or feeling-related texts to the videos and through an autonomous control of the narration of their own stories (e.g., chronological storytelling, highlight moments, etc).

As Stella recalled,

We jumped up in this video because of this effect. We all thought it was very funny to use this effect and to create a video with it.

We were not satisfied that it could only enable us to jump back and forth like it, we wanted it to do this way [a description with body movement”. To realize the idealized effect we wanted, we re-edited the video with another app. It was so fun. Videos with special effects can surely better express what we want to express.

Lydia stated,

My friend took good care of me when we both suffered from serious seasickness on a trip to key west. I was so sick that I wasn't able to shoot a video about how she took care of me along the way, but I recorded this important event of the trip by placing a clip of the sea with the text “seasickness”. Every time I read this text, I can recall the day when she cared so much about me. This “text+video” way of representation will remind me of the deeper connections behind.

One more point that should be noted, was that participants who had experiences with creating travel videos showed an intention to improve the quality of their next travel videos through studying and learning new techniques via watching other online travel-related videos.

Interestingly, the more travel experiences participants had, the stronger their desire to learn and create better videos.

Hope: As I am also an editor, watching these videos is a way of studying to me. I am interested in videos teaching you about the transfer of the lenses, some transitions and how to use some photographic equipment. I don't want to make every one of my vlogs look the same. I want them to be better.

A cycle is therefore formed via these experiences in which consumption will generate desire for production, and the desire to produce better videos will lead to a continued consumption.

Hashtagging a #Wonderfuljourney through Sharing

Creating and sharing are closely related, making it hard to differentiate the structure of tourism experiences. The self-constructed wonderful journey becomes a real wonderful journey through a re-examination of the shared public experiences. One of the most-mentioned motivations for participants to engage with travel video creating and sharing was to share the “wonderful” journey with others, which were believed to make the whole trip more enjoyable and meaningful. When asked about why did they share their videos, Bella explained,

I didn't expect any likes from anyone at first. The reason why I shared those beautiful videos about Tibet was because I wanted to tell the world that there was a beautiful place in China worth your visit.

Ruby further stated,

It is my habit to share good stuff with others. I always wanna share what I experience, the beautiful sceneries, good people or delicious cuisines. Let those people who cannot come with me, to let my friends or someone who I want him to know what I am doing, get to feel what I feel.

Similar ideas were commonly conveyed by other participants, who also stressed that only a journey which was “wonderful”, “beautiful” and “great” deserved to be shared. Specifically, it was one of the creators’ tasks to define “wonderful”. It was interesting to find that the creators demonstrated a tendency to define “what is wonderful” by their personal aesthetic standards. When presenting their experiences, creators differed by two major streams of aesthetic values. The first stream of participants preferred videos in a polished form. They stated that extra edits like music, filters, and special effects could improve the quality of the videos as to express a better self, restore the “wonderfulness” of the trip as well as to make the video more interesting in an effective way, while the other stream of participants preferred unmodified, natural beauty without many edits. For example, as one proponent of “manipulation” recalled,

I removed the original sound in this video and added a piece of music that reflected my feelings at that moment mostly because there was too much noise in the original clip. Sharing the original video would make the audience both visually and acoustically uncomfortable. If so, it’s better not to share. If you wanna share, you have to share the best stuff with others.

And an advocate of “naturalness” explained,

I do not use those special effects and filters a lot because I think they are making things unnatural. I hope what's left by the trip should be representative and memorable. In this way, if I miss the source files one day, I can still find them here (her personal social media page).

Despite a differing understanding of beauty, those interviewed shared the same goal, that was to present and share their experiences of what they believe to be beautiful to the world.

The construction of a well-designed, wonderful travel video, however, is in fact a solitary, lonely process in which participants are all by themselves without much communication and interaction with others. They were greatly driven by their inner power and a love for their intended audience. As Mandy recalled,

If I am doing it alone, I would treat it as an assignment. I would just wanna finish it within 10 minutes, especially when you were tired after a day of work [having fun]. It was love that kept me doing it.

The “loneliness” was temporal and could be resolved by sharing their videos with others. Participants, therefore, are not creating a video without asking anything in return. What they are seeking, in greater depth, is a bilateral emotional dialogue with their intended audience. If the production process was the time for spreading the seeds, sharing then was the time for harvesting. By sharing with others and being recognized for what they had done, participants were emotionally rewarded with an enjoyable feeling that their effort paid off.

Hope: I also care about others' comments. If I was told that the chosen music was good, I would definitely be happier.

Mandy: I had thought of giving up many times when I was editing the video.....but at the moment when I shared my videos, I felt everything was worth it. The whole trip became a lot better.

In this way, their self-constructed “wonderful journey” turned out to be a widely accepted “wonderful journey” through sharing with their intended audience who successfully decoded the meaning the creator attempted to transmit. The entire travel experience thus was more enjoyable.

Tourism experiences were also enhanced by having participants being recognized as “who they are”. It is not unusual for tourists to form a self-identity around travel, which is generally considered as a unique and “cool” experience. When asked about the reason to share travel videos, participants who traveled extensively internationally stated,

Stella: I wanna tell everyone immediately that I am in Morocco. I want them to know I am a cool person. For video that is shared immediately on site or right after the trip, tourists are seemed to be more particular about the “geographical characteristics” of the video content, which generally should be destination representative.

Maya: Because I wanna show I am in Switzerland and this video is representative of Switzerland so I shared it.

Beyond a desire to be recognized as a “cool” person, participants were also using social media apps to consume, create and share because the sharing environment is strong in China and it is popular to do just that. Under the influence of pop culture and from the reference group, they gradually considered it as a “cool” thing to do. As Mickey stated,

I watch videos on Tik Tok because everyone around me are doing it. I created this video and shared it because I also want to be famous.

Sharing is also a delicate act to establish or sustain intimate relationships at-a-distance. First, although those absent from the trip were not physically at the same place participating and experiencing the same activities as the video creators did, the creators enabled those absent to get access to all those beautiful moments through an instant sharing.

Lydia: I would share what I thought great with my parents to let them know what I saw during my trips. While they were watching my videos, it was like they were also having fun with the trip.

Second, the videos serve as a souvenir for the creators' fellow travelers, contributing to a recollection of a shared journey. Especially, if videos were intended as a gift, they would be elaborately designed by adding some interesting, iconic signs (such as a funny joke) which could only be understood by fellow travelers. As argued by Eric,

It represents a strong tie with my colleagues. I would not share the videos with someone who couldn't understand or resonate with what was happening in the video.

Storing My Meaningful Life in a “Public” Diary

Another essential meaning of creating and sharing a travel video can be identified as marking down and restoring memorable life experiences in a digital diary, which refers to the respondents' social media pages. Recording meaningful life experiences with a video was found to be a kind of lifestyle Millennial travelers shared and appreciated. Compared to a paper diary, a digital diary is considered to be handy to keep, easier to recap, and will not be eliminated or lost.

Mandy: Why create a video? emmm...if you go on a trip, you would definitely take photos if you don't take videos, right? It is basically the same. Videos would just take you more time as it offers more details. As my age grows, for somehow, I have an increasing desire to my everyday life with a vlog. In the past, several photos were adequate as check-in. But now, as video editing gets easier, I want to mark down these trivial details in my life. It's like a diary.

Bella: Sometimes I create a video because I don't want to write a diary. Shared photos or videos can be easily kept in your social media page. They would be forever, unlike a truly written diary, which was easy to be lost. You don't actually bother to open a paper diary and read it right? However, if sharing your videos on some social media platforms, you can easily extract your memories when you want to look back someday simply through typing in a few key words and there is it.

These participants and others alike denoted the common messages voiced by those interviewed that as exotic as travel could be, it was in its nature an integral part of individuals' everyday life. Participants did not show strong intention to separate tourism from their daily practices, but rather cherished it as many other memorable experiences. It was a daily habitual practice for those interviewed to record their lives in a visual or textual way and share their life on social media, so it was unsurprising that they would continue doing that for travel.

Lydia: I am used to sharing some interesting moments as a way to record my life every time I go out and have fun.

Mandy: I would put everything into my social media page, like my complaints, my recent feelings, my embarrassing moments. let alone travel, which is a memorable experience different from my daily life. Of course, I would mark down my travel on social media.

Regarding social media page as a diary, many participants described that they enjoyed watching their self-generated travel videos for leisure. As stated by Eric, “I have watched this video for more than 100 times, and I love it!”. They enjoyed consuming their own videos because, first, it provided them with an opportunity to recall their memories, to re-experience and relive those beautiful moments in their life. Second, new meanings could be generated from savoring these past experiences by picking up those meaningful times and allowing them to find unexpected surprises dismissed by them at the first beginning at a post-trip reflective process. One respondent made a video for the man she loved while traveling but got rejected. The video was sad for her at that moment, but she found it meaningful for being brave in this video weeks later. Similar stories came up a lot among participants.

Furthermore, according to the participants, although their tourism experiences did not see an obvious enhancement during the creation process or immediately after their trip, it was enhanced a rather long time after the trip when they reflected upon their past experiences. The video reminded them that they had physically visited a place and done something meaningful there. The lived tourism experiences of those interviewed, therefore, achieved an extension by breaking the “presumed” temporal, imaginary and spatial limitations of tourism.

Hope: I didn't have my experience enhanced a lot while I was editing the video. However, long after the trip when I turned back and thought of the video, my entire travel experience was greatly enhanced. You devoted a lot to this video, you were happy when shooting these moments, you might also recollect the feelings when you share these videos with others. Recollecting all these things can indeed enhance my overall experience.

Eric: It's mostly about recording my feelings at that moment. If I didn't make this video, I couldn't think of anything. It's like I came but I didn't leave anything behind. With videos, however, I am still able to recollect that special moment.

Moreover, while a few participants did not show much discretion, the majority of respondents were commonly "picky" about where to share and with whom to share their "personal" diary. On the one hand, even though those interviewed created travel videos using the video social app "Tik Tok" that would allow them to share their work with everyone including strangers, they would not share their most personal videos on those platforms for privacy reasons. If the video was simply about beautiful sceneries, participants would be more inclined to sharing with a wider audience. If the video had their faces in it, then the answer to share it with a completely open public would be "No".

On the other hand, the definition of "friends" was redefined. Participants noted that they all had multiple and different social circles, but that did not equate to "friend circles". In China, WeChat is the social network platform that people use most often to communicate and share their life and experiences with others. Those interviewed in this study all reported their biggest

social circle in WeChat, in which there were families, friends, colleagues, business partners, etc. According to some participants, for work reasons, they used WeChat to communicate with their business partners and colleagues often, so they had to be WeChat friend with these people. These business partners, however, were not regarded as “real” friends for them. Most of them would only be willing to expose their personal life experiences to a delicately “selected” group, within which were simply significant family members and friends who were presumed to play influential roles in their life. These groups of people were expected to understand the meaning of the video for the creator. As Lily explained,

For me, friends in weibo are purer than friends in wechat. Everyone you know is in wechat and there’s a lot of advertisement there from my business partners. I can only pick up some important moments shared by my friends among these messy posts. Friends in weibo are all well-recognized by everyone (friends), so I love to share what’s about me recently with friends on weibo.

While Lydia stated,

I only care about the comments from who I care. I don’t bother to respond to people who barely know me, who do not understand my life.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Through an exploration of twelve tourists' lived experiences, the current study suggests three interpretative themes that encapsulate tourism experiences and tourists' engagement with travel videos: consuming and creating the multi-sensory fantasies; hashtagging a #wonderfuljourney through sharing, and storing my meaningful life in a "public" diary. Overall, the study suggested that altruistic, hedonistic and social-related motivations were the three primary reasons for participants to watch, produce and share travel videos, and the spillover impacts exhibited from everyday life, especially the technology impacts, were clearly extended to a tourism context, resulting in the blurring boundaries between tourism experiences and everyday life experiences, the private life and the public life as well as the unlocking of three stages of tourism experiences. The findings contribute to research in tourism and social media literature, and the understanding of the relationship between tourism and everyday life, and have implications for elaborating on the particular role of video in representing and enhancing tourism experiences.

Theoretical Implications

Motivations for consuming, producing, and sharing travel videos

The current findings suggest that tourists' participation in social media is the result of multiple driving forces. Findings of this study are consistent with the literature documenting that intrinsic motivation like hedonism is the major motivation for and outcome of tourists' consumption and production of travel contents (Amaro et al., 2016; Chung & Buhalis, 2008; Gretzel et al., 2007; Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Kang & Schuett, 2013; Parra-López et al., 2012; Yoo & Gretzel, 2008, 2011; Yoo & Gretzel, 2011). This study confirms Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier's (2009) contention that the consumption of videos, in particular, could generate both imaginative

pleasure and mental pleasure that allowed the audience to get access to the place depicted in the videos. Especially, a longing to visit the place engendered by the hedonistic pleasure was found to trigger a real visit as further evidenced by this study, confirming the vital role of videos in shaping destination image (Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009). The study also confirms the power of pop culture in encouraging tourists to consume and create user-generated videos (Amaro et al., 2016; Jansson, 2007; Jenkins, 2006; Liu et al., 2018; Månsson, 2011; Wang et al., 2012) in tourism studies. What's innovative in this study is that the development of the simplified video editing tools has become a motivation for tourists to give it a try at creating and editing travel videos. It enhances the understandings of the spillover impacts caused by technology developments, supporting that everyday use of technology has facilitated openness to new experiences and allowed for creativity (Larsen, 2005, 2008).

While considerable previous research has contended that tourists predominantly get involved in social media practices in search of functional benefits such as rich and quality information to facilitate decision making (Fodness & Murray, 1997; Wang et al., 2012), the pursuit of knowledge acquisition is highlighted in this study. The findings of this study uncover that tourists do not only consume travel videos for fun; they are also learning from other self-generated travel videos in an attempt to improve the quality of their videos. This desire to learn is moderated by tourists' past experiences. That is, the more travel experiences they have, the more videos they have created, the stronger the desire to improve their ability of editing travel videos. This finding confirms previous research that past travel experiences can affect tourist behavior (Mazursky, 1989).

The motivations driving tourists to create and share travel videos are also closely connected. Findings of this study support that being altruistic is an essential motivator for travel

content creation and sharing (Gretzel et al., 2007; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014; von Hippel, Lakin, & Shakarchi, 2005; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2004). The altruistic motivation, to share the beautiful world, is found to be generated from the deep-rooted habitual practices of everyday life social sharing, revealing the spillover impacts of daily practices (Bystrowski, 1989; Currie, 1997; Carr, 2002; Edensor, 2000). The retained social skills, as a crucial part of everyday life spillover impacts, are also pronounced in sharing when tourists display the intention to sustain a strong relationship with families and friends at-a-distance as well as to enhance emotional bonds with a fellow traveler (Berger, 1984; Lo et.al, 2011). This study also offers strong support for the contention that tourism in its nature is an identity forming process (Baym, 2015; Haldrup & Larsen, 2009). The study findings confirm that a desire for self-presentation, social recognition and social support from the intended audience is one of the important reasons that facilitate tourists' creation and publication of personal travel videos (Goffman, 1959; Lyu, 2016; Mosemghvdlishvili & Jansz, 2012; Munar & Jacobsen, 2014). Findings also confirm that compared to other media, videos are more effective in portraying a fuller picture of tourism experiences by allowing multiple stylistic and narrative cues to communicate moods better as well as express a positive self-image (Dinhopl & Gretzel, 2015; Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009). The stress of the centrality of conveying certain moods in the videos as found by this study supports that tourism experiences are a reflective process closely related to tourists' emotional and psychological states (Botterill & Crompton, 1996; Choe et al., 2017; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1981). In terms of self-presentation, this study supports Kim and colleagues' (2013) findings that tourists adopt different strategies (modified/natural) to represent their experiences, and that the selection of the representation strategies is dependent on the perceived social recognition received through sharing.

Finally, this study also confirms that personal characteristics like lifestyles can influence tourists' engagement in social media for travel (Carr, 2002). In particular, this study found that the study participants appreciated video as an effective means of recording their life experiences, which reflected that tourists were always "seeking out opportunities to discover and construct narratives meaningful to them" in a reflexive manner (Santos & Yan, 2010, p. 56). Moreover, the study participants' evident intention to store their memories through sharing on social media platform confirms the findings of former research (Wang et al., 2012)

The Blurring boundaries

Three different kinds of blurring were revealed in the findings of this study: an unlocking of the structure of tourism experiences, the blurring between tourism experiences and everyday life experiences, and the blurring between the private life and the public life.

The results of this study further confirm that the traditional three-stage structure of tourism experiences has been unlocked in respect of the consumption and production of travel videos (Gretzel et al., 2006; Tussyadiah, 2012; Tussyadiah & Zach, 2012). Consuming, creating and sharing are closely related to each other. Sharing can not only happen post-trip but can also occur on-the-go enabled by the synchronic social networking platforms (Larsen, 2008), resulting in the advent of digital immediacy and the accompanying experiences. Findings of this study, however, contradict the assumption of digital immediacy (Bell & Lyall, 2005) that videos shared immediately would lose value after the tourist experience. By contrast, this study provides evidence that the value of videos can be sustained through a post-trip reflective consumption by the creators of these videos. This recollection process was found to bring joy to those interviewed, confirming that the reflection of past events and experiences could generate positive emotional responses (Gross & John, 2003) and further supporting Dinhopl and Gretzel's (2015)

contention that an extension of tourism experiences could be achieved through reflective consumption after the trip. Therefore, findings of this study contradict the concept that tourism is a temporal activity-based process significantly rooted in “places” (Craig-Smith & French, 1994; Feng & Fesenmaier, 2002; Graburn, 1989; Jennings, 2006; Wang et al., 2012). In addition to supporting the breaking of the spatial and temporal boundary within tourism experiences, this study recognizes the enhanced connection during travel enabled by social media and regards tourism experiences to be “an integration of the interaction and reflection among tourists, places, others, and social networks” (Kim & Tussyadiah, 2013, p. 81).

The current findings further support those of Currie (1997), Bystrowski (1989) and Carr (2002) which suggest that residual culture embedded in everyday practices can exert significant impacts on tourism experiences, reflecting the performative nature of social life (Lo & McKercher, 2015). Although the findings confirm the boundary between tourism and everyday life is getting fuzzy due to the influence of tourist culture and residual culture (Carr, 2002), this study expands on this tenet. This study suggests that the boundary between tourism experiences and everyday life experiences is further blurred through a mediation mechanism of modern technology. On the one hand, the influence of tourist culture is pronounced in choosing what to consume and what to post, reflecting tourists’ desire for extraordinary life experiences different from their ordinary life (Cohen, 1979; Carr, 2002; MacCannell, 1973, 1976; Graburn, 1977; Graburn, 1989). On the other hand, the mediated perceptions and beliefs developed through leisure consumption of videos are transformed to be spillover influences prompting tourists’ creation of their travel videos. This study, therefore, strengthens the idea that tourism is indeed “a hermeneutic circle” in which tourists understand their experiences through messages communicated by social media (Jansson, 2002). Findings also contribute to the concept of

“decapsulated” tourism experiences, wherein it confirms that tourism should be understood by its imbrication in the everyday practices (Edensor, 2000, 2001; Grezel, 2011; Larsen, 2008; Kim & Tussyadiah, 2013; Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987; Moore et.al., 1995; Månsson, 2011; Wang et al., 2016), contradicting the contention of previous research that tourism was a temporal reversal of ordinary daily practices (Cohen, 1974; Hannam et al., 2006; Urry, 1990).

This study provides evidence that tourism and everyday life can further be linked to an existential quest for meaning (Smith & Godbey, 1991; Jennings & Weiler, 2006; Wang et al, 2016), confirming that the construction and sharing of tourism lived experiences with a video can be considered as embodied, social, reflexive practices to make sense of tourists’ lives (Chalfen, 1981; Gabriel, 2000; Stylianou-Lambert, 2012; Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009). Similar to tourist photography, the video is a powerful communication tool infused with “personal meanings” (Larsen, 2005), uncovering tourists’ interpretations of “who they are as human beings” (Jansson, 2007; Kang & Gretzel, 2012; Tussyadiah & Fesenmaier, 2009).

Similar to Jansson (2018), Munnar and colleagues’ (2014) findings, participants of this study demonstrated a preference to share a diary which was supposedly kept to the owners themselves with a selected “public”, who were referred to be “the right people” that would be able to understand the meaning the participants intended to communicate through the videos. This study contradicts much previous contention that tourists had actively sought after the attention from global audiences with the aid of social platforms with broader reach (Axup & Viller, 2005; Bamford, Coulton, & Edwards, 2007; Schmallegger, Carson, & Jacobsen, 2010). Traditional friends and families are still the central focus of modern tourists. The findings of this study further confirm that the motivation to keep a diary reflects the ontological aspect of tourism (Santos & Yan, 2010), while the sharing with a selected public shows tourists’ needs for

social affirmation (Jansson, 2018). This seemingly paradoxical struggle engendered by the needs for self-reflection and public recognition, therefore, contributes to a blurring boundary between the private life and public life.

Whether technology is doing good or doing harm to our life is always a heated debate. While previous studies have argued that social media can negatively affect people's life experiences by causing a distraction (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), damaging social relationships (Dwyer, 2007) and mystifying the sense of escapism and relaxation during travel (Neuhofer, 2016), this study suggests that the use of social media, especially sharing through social media, can, in fact, enhance tourism experiences to a great extent (Kim & Tussyadiah, 2013). This study contributes to the understanding of the impacts of social media. Finally, findings of this study contribute to the method that video elicitation is a useful technique to be utilized alongside interviews to generate richer data to understand tourists' narratives better.

Practical Implications

From a managerial perspective, these findings confirm that video can be a powerful tool for tourism marketing. Especially, this study suggests that lifestyles of Millennial travelers can influence their behavior (Carr, 2002). Given the growing connection of tourism with everyday life, destination marketers can promote the destinations with slogans or advertisement stressing "lifestyles", "slow pace of life" etc. Understanding tourists' preferences over the contents of the videos, tourism markets can create multi-sensory and hedonistic fantasies specific to a destination or an activity and fulfill tourists' longing for exotic experiences. Moreover, tourists' desires to apply interesting special effects and other types of functions can enable online video platforms to design and customize more "participatory" editing functions that will encourage more creative user-generated contents in return. As a response to tourists' motivation to improve

their skills by consuming other user-generated videos, online media platforms like Tik Tok should update their recommendation system and recommend more skill-related videos to their users automatically. In this way, they will be able to enhance user experiences to increase user loyalty.

Limitation and Directions for Future Research

Some limitations of this study result from the homogeneity of the sample. This study only focused on Chinese Millennials' tourism experiences, and the participants of this study were all reported to be well-educated. Whether other personal characteristics, such as incomes, lifestyles, occupation, and ethnicity, would influence the results of this study is unknown. Whether the sharing culture is as popular in other countries as that in China also deserves to be examined. Future research can further confirm the results of this study by taking more personal characteristics and culture variables into control. For example, it could be feasible to do a cross-generation analysis or a cross-culture comparison.

The participants interviewed for this study were found to only share their videos with certain groups of people on specific social media platforms. Wechat, the most-used social networking platform for intimate communication in China was the most-shared platform among study participants. While they were reported to consume a lot on some social video platforms that allowed for a public audience, participants did not share their videos on those platforms a lot. However, there are millions of active users out there sharing their works to the world. Do those who would like to share their video to everyone have different personalities? Do they have different attitudes towards technology? Do these people share similar motivations to create and post with the study participants? It has been found that many online user-generated platforms have cultivated numerous professional user-generated content creators who are making a lot of

money by contributing customized contents to the markets. This could be a reason. More studies are needed to explore what adds to this result. This study found that tourists regarded their social media page as a personal diary, a statement that has not ever shown up in previous research. Whether “social media page = diary” is a common perception shared by other tourists (e.g., those who are not fascinated by travel video sharing) should be further examined. Additionally, this study found that the desire to improve the quality of self-generated videos was moderated by tourists’ past experiences. Quantitative research should be conducted to further examine to what extent such a desire can be moderated.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (EN)

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH STUDY
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN**

Dear Participant,

My name is Xin Du. I am a master student in the department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism at the University of Illinois. I am working under the supervision of Dr. Carla Santos, a Professor from the Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism and Director of the European Union Center at the University of Illinois. We would like to include you, along with other participants, in a research project to understand your experiences of using “Tik Tok”, the short-video making app as a tourist.

Your participation in this project is voluntary and we anticipate that there are no risks to this study greater than what you experience in normal life. As a participant in the research, we will ask you to participate in an in-depth interview, which will last no more than 90 minutes, and to talk about your experiences of using “Tik Tok”, the short-video making app as a tourist. By giving your consent to participate in this research, you acknowledge that you are at least 18 years of age. You are free to stop participating at any time, or to decline to answer any specific questions. You are also free to withdraw your permission for participation at any time and for any reason by contacting one of us.

Your participation in this research project will involve participation in an in-depth interview, which will last approximately 90 minutes. With your permission, we would like to audio record the interview. Allowing audio recording is not a requirement for participation. If you agree to be audio recorded, the audio recording obtained during this research project will be kept strictly secure and all identifying information, such as your name or the names of anyone you may mention will be replaced with a pseudonym to protect your identity. The audio recording will be kept in a locked file cabinet and will be accessible only to the investigators. The audio recording will be transcribed into a WORD file and will be kept in secure, password protected computers of the University of Illinois, which will be accessible only to the investigators. In addition, audio recordings will be erased after transcription.

The results of this study may be used for reports, journal articles, and conference presentations. In any publication or public presentation, pseudonyms will be substituted for any identifying information.

.....

Confidentiality: In general, we will not tell anyone any information about you. When this research is discussed or published, no one will know that you were in the study. However, laws and university rules might require us to disclose information about you. For example, if required by laws or University Policy, study information which identifies you and the consent form signed by you may be seen or copied by the following people or groups: a) The university committee and office that reviews and approves research studies, the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Office for Protection of Research Subjects; and b) University and state auditors, and Departments of the

university responsible for oversight of research; and c) Federal government regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections in the Department of Health and Human Services or the National Institutes for Health.

Voluntary Consent:

1. I agree to participate in the interview.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from this research project at any time without it affecting my relationship with the University of Illinois. If you decide to withdraw from the research please notify xindu2@illinois.edu or +1-217-305-0081 (or +86 13246154704).
3. I understand that my responses in the interview are confidential and that I have the right to skip questions that I prefer not to answer.
4. I certify that I am 18 years of age or older.
5. I certify that I have read the preceding, or it has been read to me, and I understand its contents. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or if you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, including questions, concerns, complaints, or to offer input, you may call the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) at 217-333-2670 or e-mail OPRS at irb@illinois.edu
6. A copy of this consent will be given to me. My signature below means that I have freely agreed to participate in this project.

XIN DU _____
Print _____
Date _____



Signature

Investigator's Certification: I certify that I have explained the nature and purpose of this interview to the above-named individual(s), and I have discussed the potential benefits and possible risks of completing the interview. Any questions the individual(s) have about this survey have been answered, and we will always be available to address future questions as they arise.

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Role in Research Study

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (CN)

受访者深度访谈知情同意书

尊敬的受访者：

您好。我是杜昕，目前是伊利诺伊大学香槟分校运动，休闲与旅游系二年级的硕士研究生。我正在伊利诺伊大学运动，休闲与旅游系教授 Dr. Carla Santos 的指导下完成我的毕业论文。我们邀请您参加访谈，分享您在旅游中使用“抖音”观看旅游视频，并在旅途中创造、分享旅游视频的体验。

您在本项目中的参与将是自愿的。您的参与将能帮助我们更好地理解短视频在旅游中的运用。我们将会与您进行不多于90分钟的访谈，让您分享您在旅游中使用“抖音”的体验。参与本次访谈，您必须年满18周岁。您具有随时终止本次访谈，或者拒绝某些特定问题的权利。您具有随时联系我，撤销我们使用您的访谈内容进行研究的权利。

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